COMMUNITY POLICING AND RISING INSECURITY IN NIGERIA: CHALLENGES IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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Abstract: *In Nigeria, the citizens and their police have been daggers-drawn over prolonged insecurity. The police are to protect citizens and property; prevent and detect crime and enforce laws to guarantee a peaceful environment for socio-economic growth and development. The police efforts have not yielded the expected results. So, it adopted a citizens-based policing policy to improve and improve public trust. However, herdsmen and lukurawal (a new bandit group that recently emerged from Katsina and Jigawa states) banditries have supported the increasing number of hostage-takings and fatal killings among other brutal attacks by Boko Haram terrorists throughout the nation, further exacerbating Nigeria's already dire security situation. While community policing has drawn more attention from academics, its relationship with public administration has received less attention. This paper assesses the relationship between community policing and public administration, examining the challenges public administration faces in enhancing the efficiency of community policing in Nigeria. Interviews were used to get primary data for this paper, while published materials like textbooks and journals were used to gather secondary data. Descriptive analysis was used to examine the data. Employing social structure theory as a theoretical framework, the paper identifies a strong interdependent relationship between community policing and public administration. Public administration leverages community policing as a mechanism for implementing security policies. The paper concludes that community policing is the most effective approach for public administration to manage security in Nigeria. It suggests, among other recommendations, that state institutional deficits should be addressed to improve the weak socio-economic conditions of the community. When government policies fail to alleviate poverty, hunger, hardship, injustice, and unemployment, individuals may resort to desperate measures for survival, rendering community policing ineffective in managing disorder. Additionally, the paper advocates for rebranding police and other governmental leadership to emphasize people-oriented governance practices.*

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1. Introduction

The police are tasked with providing law enforcement and protection as part of the executive branch of government. These include the implementation of all laws, regulations, and policies pertaining to security and police in order to protect people and property by preventing and detecting criminal activity and bringing criminals to justice. This can improve the necessary social order and harmony in the nation. Additionally, the goal of nation building for national progress will be achieved by creating an atmosphere that allows people to freely participate in political, socioeconomic, and cultural activities. The foregoing agree with Arase (2017) that police represent the foundation upon which security administration is built in any country. Toyo and Bassey (2019, p. 162) posited that the police are a critical apparatus of the state for keeping law and maintaining order for people to enjoy their safety and social justice. On his part, Alemika (2012) argued that the state's legitimacy and authority over its people can be sustained if only security of lives and property is certain. The police, as ubiquitous agents of the state and public defenders, therefore, act as the mirror through which the readiness and responses of the government to the security of the people can be viewed. From the above, it can be deduced that a country which is vulnerable to threats of insecurity will struggle for development with little or no success. This will lead to survival challenges as no meaningful socio-economic activities will be feasible in any country where people are living in fear and cannot go out to look for what food to eat and are even afraid to go to places of worship because of fear of being kidnapped to pay ransom or killed for money rituals. But all of these are often expected in a country that has a poor quality of police service.

However, literature on the science of policing in Nigeria shows that the idea of finding the best policing paradigm has been a recurrent one by both successive and incumbent governments as well as the police leadership. Just to point out a few examples of the regular police major reforms done, sections 105 (1) and (4) of the 1963 Constitution of Nigeria provided for a national and regional police system that was thought would manage security in the country. To achieve this constitutional function, the police adopted the "Reactive Policing Method", in which police action often commences after an offence may have been reportedly committed. But sections 174 (1) and (2) of the 1979 Constitution cancelled the regional police forces and

established a single national police system. However, sections 214 (1) and (2) of the amended 1999 Constitution adopted the single national police style and retained the reactive technique. Regarding the specific functions the police should be doing, sections 215 (3) and (4) of the amended 1999 Constitution directed the police to maintain internal security and enforce laws to prevent threats to national security (The Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1963; 1979; 1999). Still in efforts to improve police performance, the federal government in 2006, 2008 and 2012 conducted Presidential Police Reforms. In addition, how to reposition the Nigeria police was included in the agenda discussed in the 2014 National Conference in Nigeria conveyed by the Jonathan Administration. Besides, the Police Summit was organised in 2016 by the then Inspector General of Police, Dr Solomon E. Arase, under the Buhari administration (Ojukwu, 2016).

Naturally, despite numerous reforms, police performance has not improved much. This, along with the fact that most members of the public have a growingly hostile relationship with the police, led to the idea of moving away from the original paradigm of incident-driven policing and toward community-oriented policing, which requires the public and police to work together to solve crime-related issues. When police and community people work together as a team, it is thought that collaborative partnership policing will prevent any type of bandit conducting crimes and evading capture in the neighbourhood. Also, it is considered that the police and the members of the public will begin to trust each other in solving crime-related issues and disorder to make Nigeria safe. In fact, this stance conforms to the view credited to Ray Davies, the Chief of Santa Ana Police Department in Nwakanma (2010, p. 104) that: "Community-oriented policing is a policy initiative in the Santa Ana Police Department that all members of the police and the public are under obligation to work together in making Santa Ana secure. This is also related to the thought of Ojukwu (2016, p. 69) that "community policing is a way of life in the day-to-day business of policing. It is an initiative aimed at repositioning the police and the public to co-operate in a win-win situation of mutual consultation and partnership, so that both of them will have a common medium for addressing problems of crime and social disorder." From here, community policing serves to encourage an open, transparent and accountable police service that will be efficient and effective enough in delivering quality security service to the people. This is where trust building amongst the police and the public in controlling, taming, or managing crime and disorder becomes a sacrosanct characteristic of community policing. So, any police department that complies with the policy of the police-community neighbourhood watch method will at all times be proactive in crime

prevention and control of disorder, which will be effective in guaranteeing the security of lives and property in the country for efficient public administration.

In Nigeria, Arase (2019), Idris (2019) and Thomas (2019) seem to have credited the birth of community policing to the former Inspector General of Police, Adebayo Mustapha Balogun, and the Olusegun Obasanjo Administration. According to Arase (2019:650), "the Inspector General of Police and the Secretary to the Federal Government under the Obasanjo Administration both formerly launched the community policing project in Enugu State in April 2004. In 2005, the Inspector General of Police, Sunday Ehindero, extended the project to cover Benue, Jigawa, Kano, Ondo and Ogun States." For Idris (2019:340), "the idea of finding the best policing practices due to failure of the reactive policing technique in which police action commences after an offence might have committed led to introduction of the community policing on 27th April 2004 by the former President Olusegun Obasanjo in Enugu State." To Thomas (2019, p. 718), the former Inspector General of Police, Mr. Tafa Balogun went on a tour to the United States and visited the Houston, Atlanta, and Chicago Police Departments, where he was tutored on the concept of community policing and its operations. On April 27th, 2004, the former President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, launched community policing using Enugu State, as a pilot scheme in Nigeria.

However, in Oikhala (2024, pp. 47-48) the practice of community policing in Nigeria started during Mohammadu Buhari's Military Administration, when the former Inspector General of Police, Etim Okon Inyang, on May 8th, 1984, introduced the Police-Community Relations Committee (PCRC) for the police and the community members to work together in attempt to improve quality of police service and image in Nigeria. Another method of community policing was witnessed between 1986 and 1989 under General Ibrahim Babangida's Military Administration, who instructed the then Inspector General of Police, Mohammadu A. Gambo, to transfer Edo police tribes to their localities in the defunct Bendel State to keep the alarming crime problems in that state (Ezeife, 1994). What looks like the third appearance of community policing in Nigeria came during the then Inspector General of Police, Adebayo Mustapha Balogun, under the former President Olusegun Obasanjo, who later launched it on 27th April 2004. But in the year 2020, a new community policing committee was adopted in Nigeria (Police Act No. 2, 2020).

But this paper is not to determine who is right or wrong about when community policing was introduced in Nigeria. Adequate literature is available in this aspect by many scholars and police practitioners. For example, the studies of Arase (2019),

Idris (2019), (Thomas, 2019), Azeife (1994), Alemika (2012), and Oikhala (2024) with many others are relevant. Neither is this paper conceived to investigate whether the idea of community policing is working or not in Nigeria. Here, sufficient security and policing literature is already available to show that Nigerians, governments, intellectuals and even police practitioners are all facing a high rate of crime threat to people, property, and lawful authority, which showed the performance challenge of the teamwork policing method in Nigeria (Dawodu, 2007; Oikhala, 2019; Akpuru-Aja, 2019; Toyo and Bassey, 2019). The paper also does not aim to assess the causes of the inability of community policing to tame the daily rise of crime and insecurity in Nigeria because so many works by scholars are also available on these aspects (Arase, 2017; Oikhala 2022; Aba, 2014; Adamu, 2019). This paper is intended to explore the intersection of public administration within the context of the failure of the community policing paradigm to reduce and prevent rising insecurity in Nigeria, which has not actually been given attention by scholars.

2. Conceptual Clarifications

At this stage, the issue of concept clarification becomes important in order for us to have a common understanding of the intention of this paper. Based on the focus of this article, two key variables were clarified. These are community policing and public administration

2.1. Community Policing

Community policing has been variously defined by different scholars. This is because it covers a range of activities in diverse ways and dimensions towards making and promoting good order in society. While some thinkers looked at it as a policy, some others as a project, or elements of choice. There are also some of them who perceive it as both a framework or policy, and a project. According to Davies (1997), community policing is a policy initiative in Santo-Anna that obliges every member of the police and the public to be involved in police duties to achieve adequate security of the land. Here, policing is an inclusive framework that involves the police and the citizens. In contrast, Nwakanma (2010:104) posited that community policing is a project whereby some police officers are selected, trained and deployed in Nigeria to work and relate with community members with a view to reducing the crime rate and gaining public trust. What is underscored in this clarification is that even though only selected members of the police personnel are equipped to practice community policing, the purpose is to have strong relationships with the members of the communities they are deployed to service

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with a view to having assess timely crime information for timely responses in order to make the communities safe from criminal threats as well as to start enjoying public trust.

Gimba (2019, p. 616) defined community policing as a partnership approach to policing that emphasises the teamwork between the Community Relation Committee (PCRC). To her, this PCRC was established in Nigeria in 1973 to provide a veritable platform for the community to engage and partner with the police to improve their safety needs, improve police service delivery and build a cordial police-public relationship. As she puts it, "the partnership of the committee cuts across the different strata of people in the country." Apart from the logistics and infrastructural support, they offer to the police in the states like Ogun, Anambra, Rivers and many other state commands". According to her, the PCRC has been instrumental in the establishment of the vigilante groups and neighbourhood watches, and also financed their operations. Looking at the assertion of Morabito (2010), citizens are considered as co-producers of public security and order in community policing. Therefore, citizens' collaborations are designed to develop the community together as a partner against criminal activities. Drawing from the foregoing, the neighbourhood watch that has been formed by some communities is a partnership approach because it involves community watchfulness. Through this approach, community inhabitants are enthused to come together and act as the 'eye and ear' of the police as they work closely with the police to protect their neighbourhood. Importantly, the neighbourhood watch raises a kind of community identity amongst its members while the inhabitants are being sensitised and mobilised to always make financial contributions, holding regular town-hall meetings and contributing other logistics support to the police. Also, Gimba (2019:616) emphasised the provision of equipment and a conducive working environment for the police to operate as central to community policing benefits. As she puts it, "the Epon community in the Igueben local government area of Edo State donated a facility valued at about thirty million naira (N30m) to the Edo State Command of the Nigeria Police Force. The facility comprised a block of six office rooms, seven toilets, an armoury, male and female cells. The community also donated an SUV, a motorcycle, a 6.5 KVA generator and an officer's quarter for the divisional police officer.

The receding discourse corroborated the definition given by Goldstein (1990) that community policing is a problem-solving paradigm. Accepting community policing as a problem-solving solution, community policing is presented as making the police to reason, associate and work with community residents in assessing, identifying,

analysing and addressing the various socio-economic issues that are crime-related or potential to cause disorder in the community by the communal people. Because of this, community policing is not just handy in fighting and preventing crime or disorder, its antics have a tendency to simply make policing smarter by being a proactive policing that is consciously involved in timely gathering and sharing crime or criminal information with the police to prevent such a crime or any likely disorder. Hence, through problem-solving characters, Goldstein (1990) described community policing as a paradigm that is central to crime prevention. In doing this, Goldstein asserted that community policing, through problem-solving, continuously undertakes research to discover some new issues and criminal behaviour in the community, especially those with characteristics of hard living in the community, due to inadequate responses of the state social and economic institutions for the police to liaise with the appropriate government agencies in addressing them.

Furthermore, Thomas (2019) posited that community policing is an organisational policy and a philosophy that promotes a new partnership between police and the people they serve. This is premised on the belief that the police cannot be separated from the people they are employed to protect. Thus, both the police and community dwellers must work together to identify government or community deficits that have the potential for putting community into a state of decay, disorder or promoting crime issues to be given proper accelerated attention for redressing them together. This viewpoint supported Okeke (2007), who professed that, as a philosophy, community policing supports organisational policies to solve the causes and reduce the fear of crime with other issues of social disorder through problem-solving tactics and police-community partnership. In all, community policing also rests on the establishment of a community policing department where its officers are trained and managed to operate as community-based problem-solvers. The officers are deployed to permanently work directly with the community citizens to make their neighbourhoods well-fortified and secure. In the light of the foregoing and based on what this article is intended to achieve, the paper adopted the definition of community policing by Trojanowicz (1986, p. 162) that: "Community policing is a philosophy of full-service personalised policing, where the same officer patrol and work in the same area on a permanent basis, a decentralised place, working in a proactive partnership with citizens to identify and solve problems."

As evidenced in this paper concerning Nigeria, community policing was considered first as a policy context for the police to manage its operation between 1984 and 1986 to address the rising crime through the adoption of Police-community relations

committee (PCRC) pattern, which was modified in 2004 into a project community and community policing detachment was established and selection of some traditional police officers were made and sent for training their and deployed to work with communities for crime control and prevention. This policy was also reviewed in 2020 by the State Community Policing Committee (SCPC) and Divisional Community Policing Sub-Committee (DCPSC) now in operation (The Nigeria Police Acts 2020). But experience has shown that with all the reforms, the rising insecurity in Nigeria has continued to increase. This agreed with Abubakar (2019:350) that: "the unfolding atmosphere of insecurity in Nigeria continues to attract the fervent concerns of Nigerians and the government at all levels with civil society organisations." Our major concern here is that policing in Nigeria is citizen-inclusive. Why has the rising insecurity continued to deteriorate on daily basis, and why has the relationship between the police and the community members not friendly? So, it is now necessary to clarify the term 'public administration' in order to pave the way for the understanding of its relevance to the subject matter of this paper.

2.2. Public Administration

Clarifying public administration in this segment is fundamentally focused on the aspects relating to community policing and internal security management. As defined by Starling (2013), public administration is often thought of as the accomplishing side of government. It is supposed to consist of all those activities involved in implementing the policies of elected public officials and some other activities concerned with the development of those policies. Rosenbloom, et al. (2009) gave clarification of public administration as what government does. To them, public administration involves all public organisations or personnel that are concerned with putting laws and rules adopted into effect. This presented public administration as the action side of government responsible for the execution of public laws or policies. Beyond policy implementation, Dye (2011) defined public administration as a phase in the public policymaking cycle. According to Shafritz et al. (2013), public administration is theoretically measured by serving the needs of society rather than purely seeking gain. Because of this, the major gain that public administration seeks is public satisfaction in its service delivery. And for Rosenbloom, Kravehuk and Clerkin (2009), public administration is the executive function in government.

Furthermore, public administration has also been clarified as all operations of the government that are having for their purpose, the enforcement of public policy

(Okoli & Onah, 2002). In the same vein, Heywood (2003) described public administration as the mechanisms and institutions through which the public is put into effect. Towing the same line, Adebayo (2001) is of the opinion that public administration at institutional level is the machinery for implementing government policies. These scholars have a common perception that public administration is involved in public policy implementation. By this, public policy can be formal or stated decisions of government bodies and public policy rests on three levels, which all involve public administration. It is central to intentions, actions and results. At the level of intentions, policy reflects what the government says it will do. At the level of actions, it is mirrored in what the government actually does. This is anchored in government behaviour. And at the level of results, it reflects the repercussions of government action.

Drawing from the foregoing, the clarifications so far support the definition offered by Woodrow Wilson as cited in Oikhala (2024, p. 58) that public administration is "the systematic application of law." Viewing public administration in this sense, it emphasises public administration as a law in action. In this case, public administration is further presented as government in action, which implies the functional instrument of government with respect to translating or converting the public to concrete results. By this token, public administration has transcended from means to ends of society. With reference to Nigeria, Section 14 (2) (b) of the amended 1999 Constitution defined the purpose of government as the provision of security and welfare services to citizens. To realise these statutory tasks, appropriate social, economic, political, cultural and administrative institutions were created to provide the total services for accomplishing the goals. Amongst others, a national police structure was established as the internal security architecture for enforcing the law and to serve and protect lives and property with integrity. As may necessarily be expedient, the police in liaison with the superintending federal government will assist to draw some inputs with respect to adequate maintenance a for robust policing, which will be competent to effectively and efficiently manage crime to guarantee national security in Nigeria for the continuous growth and development of all. It is this aspect that internal security is linked to public administration when Azelama (2016) defined it as the bedrock of societal stability and progress. When a country is vulnerable to marauders, herdsmen attacks, terrorists, rapists, ritual killers, grave hunters for corpse exhumation and sensitives organ harvesters for quick riches or political power, kidnappers, armed robbers, secession agitations, ethno-communal clashes, wanton killers, rape, religious extremists, militancy, and insurgency, sales of babies, slavery, product adulteration, human trafficking; in a country that people are forced to accept poverty, hardship, unemployment,

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underemployment and injustice as normal communal lifestyles, then, how will development sustain? It is here that public administration is clarified as a goal-getter that harvests available human and non-human resources to achieve to studiously implement the policy intentions of the necessary social and economic structural institutions set by government in concrete terms.

3. Theoretical Framework

This paper adopted the theory of social structure of community policing that was propounded by Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay as a theoretical framework. The main thrust of this theory, which is related to this paper, is central to the understanding that the various criminals are neither spirits nor strangers to the community. They live in the community where they plan, commit crimes and hide. So, people, through community policing, will be properly disposed of and given timely, reliable and accurate information to the police. When the police and the neighbourhood people co-operate to work together, there will be no hideout for criminals. On this note, Arase (2019, p. 635) asserted that "citizens represent the most critical component of internal security management as they are the most vital information-generating asset in policing." That is why there is a strong demand for the police to shift paradigm from its incidence-induced policing method to neighbourhood watch, which is more comprehensive type of community-oriented policing characterised with people policing the people. With reference to this paper, genuine collaborative efforts between the police and members of the community are the apt prescription to deal with the rising crimes, criminalities and drive away the incessant rising insecurity in Nigeria.

One other aspect to which the social structure theory is related to this paper is its belief that the rates of high crime in the community are not just dependent on the choices of individuals to participate in criminal activities, but are highly influenced by the weak social and economic characteristics of any community. Therefore, when policies are not able to push poverty, hunger, insecurity, poor income, unemployment and other socio-economic woes away from a community, the chances of people engaging in crime, including violent ones, surviving will become very high. In fact, the crime situation will grow out of control if the weak conditions of the social and economic institutions in the community are not quickly revived, the level of insecurity will transcend the community to national insecurity. For instance, Nigerians have been subjected to suffering where poverty and hunger have been made to become their normal style of living. Here, Adamu (2019), recalled that

Nigeria was listed by the United Nations as amongst the fifteen (15) countries most vulnerable to insecurity almost a decade ago. In 2018, the outcome of the International Transparency survey showed Nigeria as the headquarters of poverty in the world. From 2019 till today, the position of Nigeria's poverty, insecurity and social injustice has continued to degenerate on a daily basis.

Drawing from the daily deteriorating brutal killings, organ harvestings and kidnappings for ransom amongst others by Boko Haram, herdsmen, lakurawa (a new terrorist group in that emerged from the Northern part of Nigeria) and other banditries across Nigeria, Usigbe (2025, p. 4) cited Atiku Abubakar saying: "Tinubu Administration is incapable of addressing the deepening security crisis in Nigeria." Also, lamenting the deepening rates of insecurity, hunger, poverty and moral collapse in Nigeria, Maruf (2025, p. 4) quoted Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah who said: "Mr President, Nigeria is reaching a breaking point. "The nation is gradually becoming a huge national morgue". Understanding from the Bishop's statements is that the Tinubu administration has failed to address the worsening Nigeria's socio-economic conditions, which is the fallout of fuel subsidy removal. In essence, the country has, since then, continued to experience more persistence of insecurity and normalisation of violence, rampant kidnappings, lawlessness and a growing sense of helplessness amongst citizens than ever before in the country. Furthermore, Babajide (2025, p. 2) documented that fifty (50) communities spread across twenty-five (25) council wards in five local governments out of twenty (20) in Benue State were lost to herdsmen attack in just a day.

The rising insecurity in Nigeria has just become too disturbing and complex to tame in recent times in Nigeria. Experience from the recent killings of sixteen (16) herdsmen identified to be terrorists and kidnappers by the local security self-help network known as vigilantes on 27th March 2025 in Uromi at a junction called Ago-90. Both the state and federal governments saw the action as illegal and unacceptable. But as Amaize and Aliu (2025, p. 9) documented, "In Delta, Edo, and Bayelsa states, the situation is as if herders plotted and intensified their operations in the first three months of this year to make life unbearable for the people, with the federal and state governments doing little to protect the citizens. As reported in national newspapers, over twenty-four (24) more other communities in Edo Central, Edo North and Edo South senatorial districts have been displaced and taken over by herdsmen, allegedly from Northern Nigeria. Expressing their agonies, bewildered women had on several occasions stormed the palace of Onojie (King) of Uromi to protest against the growing number of kidnappings and killings (Amaize and Aliu, 2025). The insecurity situation in the area was said to become more frightening in

January this year when the paramount ruler called the Onojie of Uzea under Esan South North local government area,

His Royal Highness Solomon Itoya Iluobe, asked Hausa and Fulani to leave the forests under his kingdom because of their suspected criminal atrocities. According to him, "our women go to their farms; they rape them; and, at times, they even set them ablaze. I have paid ransom three times to Fulani herdsmen; they kidnapped my elder sister, and they have also kidnapped two people from this palace last month and I paid a ransom.

To even sleep in this palace is by the grace of God Almighty. To access this road, you need security, which is a problem. I, as Onojie (King) of Uzea, no longer want Fulani in my forests. "They will kidnap us, keep us in our land, and we will pay ransom" (Amaize and Aliu, 2025, p. 9). From the perception of this theory, it is when public administration is efficient that community policing will maintain insecurity in Nigeria.

4. Methodology

A survey design was adopted in this paper. It covered the six geo-political zones of Nigeria where one State each was purposively selected namely: Anambra (Southeast), Benue (North Central), Borno (Northeast), Edo (South-South), Kaduna (Northwest) and Osun (Southwest) because of their history of high crime rate in Nigeria. Also, one local government area was conveniently selected from each of the selected States on the account of their high incidence of crime rate. Interviews were conducted with 90 respondents chosen at random, including 30 police officers and 60 significant members of the public.

Secondary data was also collected from relevant published textbooks, journals, and newspapers, among other sources, to supplement the main data and for triangulation purposes. The data was analyzed using the descriptive approach. Tables 1 and 2 indicate how respondents for the interview were distributed, as well as an interview guide for police and civilian respondents.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents for Interview

S/N	Geo-political zones	States	Local Government Area	Respondents for Police	Respondents for Members of the Public	Total Respondents for Interview
1	North Central	Benue	Logo	5	10	15
2	North East	Borno	Chibok	5	10	15
3	North West	Kaduna	Zangon Kataf	5	10	15
4	South East	Anambra	Ihiala	5	10	15
5	South-South	Edo	Esan North East	5	10	15
6	South West	Osun	Ilesa West	5	10	15

Table 2. Interview Guide for Police and Civilian Respondents

S/N	Questions
1	To what extent do you understand the idea of community policing?
2	How has the idea of community policing improved police service in your neighbourhood?
3	What will be your comment on government's response to the basic needs in your community?
4	In your view, what are the main causes of rising insecurity in Nigeria?
5	How do you think the present socio-economic issues and political crises in Nigeria contributed to the rise in insecurity?
6	How will you comment on the current effects of insecurity on social and economic activities in your community?
7	The Nigerian Police Force established community policing in 1984, 2004 and 2020. What is your opinion on these changes?
8	What would you say about the current community policing committee's effectiveness in your neighbourhood?
9	What will be your suggestion for improving the relationship between the police and community members in your neighbourhood?
10	To what extent do you think that political leadership can improve community policing in your neighbourhood?

5. Results

5.1 Analysis of Responses from Interview

Interview Question One: To what extent do you understand the idea of community policing?

The results of the interviews conducted by ninety (90) participants in this survey showed that members of the community and police officers had a clear and very good knowledge of community policing in Nigeria. According to the Chairman of Logo Local Government Community Development Association in Benue State, "we all know that community policing requires us (the public) to work with the police to prevent crime and criminals in our areas". As responded by the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) of Iwo in Osun State, it is collaborative policing in which the police and the citizens work as a team to fight crimes, dislodge criminals and prevent possible disorder. In fact, all the responses captured the view of Arase (2019:645) who cited the 2008 Presidential Committee on Police Reform, that community policing "is a concept of shared responsibility between the police and the community, with a focus on the provision of efficient and effective services".

Interview Question Two: How has the idea of community policing improved police service in your neighbourhood?

There was a unanimous view of most respondents in the selected study area that community policing has neither improved police performance, reduced fear of crimes and criminals, nor unfriendly relationships between the police and members of the community. One of the Paramount Rulers in Iwo local government of Osun State partially agreed, though the police-community relations committee (PCRC) was established to collaborate with the police in 1984 to reduce crime, police misbehaviour and unfriendly conditions of the police towards the public. The high rise of insecurity, brutality, extortion, and extra-judicial killings of armless and innocent citizens were not stopped as Lawrence Anini and his gang of armed was killing both the police and robbing banks and members of the public. However, the high chief agreed that when the former military head of state, General Ibrahim Babangida, in 1986 directed the then Inspector General of Police, the late Muhammadu Gambo, to transfer back all police from Edo and Delta (Bendel) to their state that led to the timely arrest of the notorious armed robber with his gang. Otherwise, the situation of insecurity in Nigeria continues to grow worse across Nigeria till today.

Interview Question Three: What will be your comment on government's response to the basic needs in your community?

The responses of respondents are equally unanimous that their social and economic needs have never received serious attention from them at all levels. The respondents believe that the failure of the government to show concern about their basic needs led to serious insecurity, poverty, hardship, unemployment, healthcare problems in which most of them are now made to believe that suffering and insecurity are rights that Nigerians should enjoy in their communities. In response, one high chief of the Obedu community in Uromi simply asked: "I am sure you have heard about the killings of 16 kidnappers here in Uromi on 28th March 2025 or so; this cannot happen if the government cares for citizens." We are on our own. I can say that those government authorities are only after what they are to gain. Whether citizens are dying or suffering is not their concern. Where were the police when Uromi people couldn't go out even to look for food to eat again? Let me tell you, the police, the local government chair and the governor of Edo state are all aware. See, from 1st January to 7th January 2025, 23 people were kidnapped on Ugboha road. His Royal Highness, the Onojie (King) of Udo kingdom, was kidnapped, and he was in the bush with kidnappers for weeks and released after paying a huge amount of ransom. See, they were kidnapped at the market, road, school and anywhere and anytime. If we manage to sleep and wake up, we thank God. It is not only here. It is so in every part of Nigeria. I do not want to talk much about the poverty, unemployment, or hardship Nigerians are going through. These are now essential commodities that Nigerians are made to enjoy in the hands of our rulers. "Or is there any need to discuss the characters of our rulers who have imputed politics on security and suffering on the Nigerian masses." Interestingly, other responses from respondents in the study area have no contradiction.

Interview Question Four: In your view, what are the main causes of rising insecurity in Nigeria?

Responses on the causes of insecurity in Nigeria were not unanimous. While respondents from Zango Kartaf (Kaduna) and Chibok (Borno) ascribed the causes mainly to the governance crisis in Nigeria, other respondents from Esan North East (Edo), Iwo (Osun), Ihiala (Anambra) and Logo (Benue) were a little bit of indifference. Even though they believe that a governance deficit, which, amongst others, includes politicisation of the safety and basic needs of people by the government, insensiation of political leadership, corruption in the public sector, and

the promotion of injustice responsible for the insecurity in this country, there are additional many other causes such as poor reaction to some sensitive issues by some community members to religion, greed amongst some both government officials and individuals in our community. According to one community leader in Uzea in Esan North East of Edo State, "when I was born, I was told that a Royal Father (King) does not sleep outside his palace and he cannot go to parties or belong to a political party culture and tradition. It has been so, until recently, that most of them can now go to parties or belong to a political party in line with culture and tradition. But in recent times, most of them have ignored these ethical values.

Interview Question Five: How do you think the present socio-economic issues and political crises in Nigeria contributed to the rise in insecurity?

On the question of how socioeconomic difficulties might lead to insecurity, respondents share similar perspectives. Among the reactions is the fact that Nigeria's current socioeconomic environment suggests poor functioning or shortfalls in government institutions such as power, employment institutions and generation, security apparatuses, and public order. According to one of the responses, when individuals are hungry and there is nothing to eat, they act unreasonably. This unreasonable behaviour may lead to theft and conflict. When this happens, insecurity begins.

Interview Question Six: How will you comment on the current effects of insecurity on social and economic activities in your community?

On the aspect of effects that insecurity has on Nigerian communities, respondents in their responses believe unanimously that insecurity is a sickness that a community has never expected. In the words of the Head of one of the Community Development Associations in Zango Kartaf local government, Kaduna, insecurity means disorder where people in a community have no peace and cannot sleep well or engage in any meaningful activities. What kind of development is expected in that community? From this, it means that nothing good is expected in a community that is engulfed by violent crime such as continuous attacks by terrorists, kidnapping and banditries. In the Eguare community under Isan North-East local government, the leader of the community explained insecurity as a very bad state of life that would not allow rest of mind for good planning. When people are in the street while watching the invasion of bandits and herdsmen, the following morning, how would they go to

the farm to do their daily work, and without farming, what would the people in the community eat? Speaking further, the leader asked where communities are constantly attacked, and people are displaced into internally displaced camps, as in the case of Benue, Borno, Kaduna and Edo states, amongst others. How would people escape from hardship and hunger? This means communities cannot experience development where insecurity persists.

Interview Question Seven: The Nigerian Police Force established community policing in 1984, 2004 and 2020. What is your opinion on these changes?

On the aspect of frequent changes and launchings of different phases of community policing in Nigeria, respondents gave two versions of responses. Some of them believe that it is an improvement to perform better as time and crime begin to change and evolve. To these people, it means that the trend of crime at a particular time influences the changes in policing strategy to be able to manage crime better. According to the police respondent, it is an intensified effort to an approach to community policing that could serve better as new crimes are evolving. The responses of some of the members of the community were not against this view. But others disagree with this view. To them, it was a failure in policy and an inability of the police and government to plan well. On the one hand, it is a method that is consistent in Nigerian public service that does not work in the spirit of continuity. This response was in support of Ikuteyijo and Rotimi (2012) that the major gain is "attention-grabbing" and the opportunity to spend public money and award contracts.

Interview Question Eight: What would you say about the current community policing committee's effectiveness in your neighbourhood?

The current community policing committee, introduced in the year 2020, according to the responses from the respondents, has not been doing well. The respondents were not in agreement that community policing as it is at present is effective at all. As one of the respondents rightly put it, "how can one talk about the efficiency of the present community policing when it was established in January 2020 and in October, there was a violent protest across the community by the public to press for 'EndSars'? Till today, protests and demonstrations against police brutality, incivility towards members of the public, extortion and unfriendly relationships between the police and the members of the communities and continued to be strained". This response is the position of most members of the public. On the part of the police

respondent, present community policing was brought to bring the people and the community closer. Although the reverse is presently the case, it is supposed to help in promoting policing, but this is not working because most members of the public still do not like the police. And he asked, how will the police work with people who do not like them? These responses actually showed that the police and members of the communities are not on the same page, and this manifests into an inability to combat insecurity and reduce crime rates in Nigerian communities.

Interview Question Nine: What will be your suggestion for improving the relationship between the police and community members in your neighbourhood?

From the responses of the respondents, both the policy and members of the public require a critical re-orientation. This will encourage the police not to present themselves as masters and also the training will re-culture members of the public to embrace the police as their protector. The police are to be open to the members of the public by carrying them along on crime-related issues while the community should also cooperate with the police by sharing crime information with the police on time. Also, town hall meetings are to be regularly held to discuss issues of common interest between the police and the members of the community.

Interview Question Ten: To what extent do you think that political leadership can improve community policing in your neighbourhood?

From the responses of the respondents, it is clear that governance is anchored in political leadership. Community policing is a function of governance that tends to unite the police and the people in ensuring crime reduction to promote national security. This will also help to allow progress in every socio-economic activities of the government. As one of the respondents in Borno state pointed out, insecurity is a failure of governance which leadership champions. Community policing can only be effective when political leadership allows commitment and zero tolerance to corruption and tribalism. He asked: how will a community do well when a terrorist that has killed people in a community is made to be a member of the forces now enforcing the law in the name of a converted terrorist? And this is responsible for decision of political leadership. As he puts it, 'a thief is a thief'. When one commits a crime, the political leaders should not side with them. Another respondent added that political thugs used by politicians are the major causes of insecurity in Nigeria today. To address this issue, this calls for a rethink of political leadership by putting the interests of the public above the politics of selfish interests. This supports the respondents in Benue, Kaduna, Osun, Kaduna, Edo and Anambra that when poor

responses from political leadership were what brought rising insecurity in Nigeria. Promise is a debt that must be paid and these are political leaders must bear in mind.

6. Discussion

6.1. Community Policing and Public Administration Relationship

The state of insecurity has manifested in several acts of violent and non-violent crimes. Amongst the violent crimes are armed robbery, kidnapping, terrorism, secession agitations, ethno-communal clashes, cattle rustling, wanton killings, rape, religious extremism, militancy, and insurgency. Amongst the non-violent are sales of babies, slavery, product adulteration, human trafficking, obtaining goods and services under false pretences". This situation of insecurity in Nigeria today has manifested in hardships and poverty to the extent that it has become the headquarters of poverty and insecurity across the world. Now, we proceed to assess the issue of the relationship between community policing and public administration in Nigeria.

The link between community policing and public administration is complex and critical to the efficient operation of both the police force and the larger government system. Community policing is a technique that aims to foster partnerships between the police and the communities they serve, with an emphasis on proactive measures to solve public safety concerns. Public administration, on the other hand, refers to the organisation, management, and implementation of government policies and activities. Understanding how these two notions interact is critical to creating safer communities and enhancing government. One of the most important parts of the partnership is public administration's role in providing the resources required for community policing projects. Effective community policing necessitates funds for training, outreach programs, and community engagement initiatives. Budget allocation is the responsibility of public administration, which ensures that police agencies have the resources they need to pursue community-focused programs. This financial support is critical for employing employees, purchasing equipment, and developing programs that promote community connection. Training is another important component of how public administration supports community policing. Police officers must be trained not only in law enforcement techniques, but also in communication, conflict resolution, and cultural competence. Public administration can provide training programs that stress the value of community ties, allowing officers to better appreciate their role as community partners. This training promotes

a paradigm shift amongst law enforcement officers, urging them to see themselves as part of the community rather than an external authority.

Public administration also plays an important part in developing community policing policies. Policies encouraging community engagement and collaborative problem-solving are critical to the success of community policing efforts. Public administrators can collaborate with law enforcement agencies to develop policies that promote community involvement in policing techniques, ensuring that people's perspectives are heard and considered during decision-making processes. Accountability and transparency are core values in both community policing and public administration. Effective public administration creates oversight systems to keep police forces accountable for their activities. This accountability is crucial for building trust between the police and the community. When residents see that their concerns are taken seriously and that officers are held accountable for their behaviour, it fosters a positive relationship that is essential for successful community policing.

Community policing can also have an impact on public administration by fostering a collaborative culture and encouraging citizen participation. When police officers interact with neighbourhood members, they gain vital insight into local issues and concerns. This data can help inform public administration plans, resulting in more responsive and effective government services. Prioritising community participation allows public officials to establish policies that accommodate citizens' specific needs, thereby increasing the quality of life in the community. Furthermore, community policing projects frequently necessitate coordination between a variety of stakeholders, including local government agencies, non-profit organisations, and community groups. Public management is critical for facilitating these collaborations and ensuring that all parties have similar aims and objectives. Through effective coordination, public administrators can help create a unified approach to addressing public safety concerns, leveraging the strengths of different organisations to achieve common goals. The role of technology in the relationship between community policing and public administration cannot be overlooked. Public administration can invest in technology that enhances communication between the police and the community, such as social media platforms and community engagement apps. These systems enable real-time communication, allowing residents to report problems and provide feedback to law enforcement. Furthermore, technology can assist police departments in analysing data to discover crime trends and distribute resources more effectively. Community policing emphasises the significance of developing connections and trust within the

community. Public officials can help with this effort by promoting community activities, forums, and workshops that bring residents and police personnel together. These interactions facilitate communication, allowing community people to express their concerns and share their opinions with law enforcement. Building these relationships is critical to instilling a feeling of collective responsibility for public safety.

Evaluation and appraisal play an important role in the connection as well. Public administration can use assessment frameworks to assess the efficacy of community policing projects. By gathering information on crime rates, community satisfaction, and officer performance, public officials may evaluate the effectiveness of community policing strategies and make necessary changes. This data-driven strategy ensures that community policing initiatives are constantly improved and adjusted to meet the requirements of the community. During times of crisis or public upheaval, the link between community police and public administration becomes even more apparent. Effective public administration can give police agencies the assistance and resources they require in difficult situations. This support may include crisis management training, mental health resources, and community outreach efforts to address public concerns. Working together, public administration and community police can negotiate tough situations and rebuild trust in the community. The historical backdrop of policing and public administration influences their connection. In many places, past confrontations between law enforcement and marginalised populations have bred suspicion. Public administration must address historical injustices and try to repair confidence through community policing efforts. This entails actively collaborating with community leaders and residents to resolve previous grievances and foster healing.

Furthermore, the link between community police and public administration is influenced by the larger socio-political context. Changes in government policy, financing priorities, and public opinions of law enforcement can all have an impact on how effective community policing projects are. Public officials must be alert to these developments and adjust their policies accordingly, ensuring that community policing remains a viable approach to public safety. The effectiveness of community policing is dependent on good collaboration and support from public administration, resulting in a virtuous circle of increased public safety and community well-being.

6.2. Public Administration Challenges in making Community Policing Functional in Nigeria

Public administration in Nigeria faces some serious challenges when it comes to making community policing work efficiently. The challenges include:

1. *Corruption:* One major problem that seriously disrupts things is corruption. It's difficult to complete any task effectively when those in authority are accepting bribes or abusing cash. Progress is slowed down when resources that ought to be allocated to community projects are diverted. This has an impact on how Nigerian community police operate.

2. *Poor Governance:* Poor governance is another issue that hinders police efficacy in Nigerian communities. There are instances when local government is subpar. This may indicate inadequate planning, subpar administration, and a failure to consult the community when making decisions. Community policies are difficult to implement when leaders are not held accountable.

3. *Inadequate Funding:* For police operations in the community to be successful, funding is frequently required. These policies cannot be effectively executed if insufficient funds are allotted to them. As previously stated, this may be the result of inadequate government funding, bad financial management, or corruption.

4. *Ethnic and Religious Conflicts:* There are occasionally disputes between various ethnic and religious groups in Nigeria due to its diverse population. Because individuals may not trust one another or be prepared to work together, these disputes can make it challenging to develop and implement policies for the police to operate effectively in the community.

5. *Illiteracy and Lack of Awareness:* It's possible that a large number of residents are unaware of the existing community policing or how they might help them. Lack of education and illiteracy can also make it difficult for people to comprehend and take part in the implementation of policies.

6. *Weak Institutional Capacity:* Local organizations, such as government offices and community leaders, may lack the knowledge, tools, or training necessary to carry out policies in an efficient manner. This may result in a lack of follow-through, poor monitoring, and bad planning. Local organizations, such as government offices and community leaders, may lack the knowledge, tools, or training necessary to carry out policies in an efficient manner. This may result

in inadequate planning, monitoring, and follow-through, which will impair community policing's ability to function.

7. *Lack of Community Participation:* If community members aren't involved in the planning and implementation of policies that will effective and efficient community policing, they might not feel like they own them. This can lead to a lack of support and cooperation, making it harder for the policies to succeed.

8. *Political Interference:* Sometimes, politicians might interfere with community policies for their own benefit. This can lead to projects being prioritized based on political considerations rather than community needs, which can undermine the effectiveness of the policies.

7. Concluding Remarks and Wayforward

This paper examined the relationship between community policing and public administration and interrogated the challenges of public administration maintaining efficient community policing in Nigeria. To achieve this, the paper utilized the conduct of interview with ninety (90) respondents purposely drew from the six geo-political zones in Nigeria. Materials that were relevant to the subject matters of discourse were utilized for purpose of complementing the primary data for a robust and reliable information. The paper found a strong positive relationship between community policing and public administration. While public administration is the action side of government that is responsible for translating policies of government into concrete results, community policing is a philosophy of putting the police and members of the public together to work towards implementing internal security policy in Nigeria. It was also found that community policing has been unable to reduce crime rate in Nigeria due to deficit of public administration in the country. Majority of concentration of policing was securing the elites as against the common citizens in the country. The paper found factors such as: corruption, poor governance, inadequate funding, government insensitivity to community needs, weak institutional structure with its antecedent of poverty, hardship, hunger, among others as challenges of public administration in making community policing functional in Nigeria. The paper therefore concluded that community policing is a strategy that engage the police and the community members in one understanding of solving crime related issues and disorder. Although, it has not been effective due to public administration deficit, it is the way forward for addressing insecurity in Nigeria.

Base on the findings and conclusion, the paper suggested as a way forward the following:

1. Public administration should collaborate with law enforcement agencies to develop policies that promote community involvement in community policing techniques, ensuring that people' perspectives are heard and considered during decision-making processes in relation to issues of security and order;

2. Public administration should invest in technology that enhances communication between the police and the community, such as social media platforms and community engagement apps. These systems enable real-time communication, allowing residents to report problems and provide feedback to law enforcement agencies for necessary actions;

3. Public administration must address historical injustices and try to repair confidence through community policing efforts. This entails actively collaborating with community leaders and residents to resolve previous grievances and foster healing;

4. Accountability and transparency are core values in both community policing and public administration and must be taken seriously. This accountability is crucial for building trust between the police and the community. When residents see that their concerns are taken seriously and that officers are held accountable for their behaviour, it fosters a positive relationship that is essential for successful community policing;

5. Through effective coordination, public administration can help create a unified approach to addressing public safety concerns, leveraging the strengths of different organizations to achieve common goals.

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