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Integrating Ubuntu Philosophy in Enhancing Community Policing in Curbing Crime in Nigeria

James Emokhai Uzualu[1]*, and Toluwalase T. Ajibade[2]

[1]*Faculty of Law, Edo State University, Nigeria, Email: uzualu.james@edouniversity.edu.ng*

[2]*School of Law and Security Studies, Babcock University, Email address: ajibadet@babcock.edu.ng*

** Correspondence: uzualu.james@edouniversity.edu.ng*

Abstract: The research investigates how Ubuntu Philosophy can improve policing methods in Nigerian crime control efforts. Nigeria faces rising criminal activities such as kidnapping and terrorism because citizens do not trust the police. The study will assess current community policing methods while creating an Afrocentric community policing approach which uses Ubuntu principles to achieve better cooperation. The research uses doctrinal methodology and systematic review methods to combine primary legal documents with secondary academic materials. The research results demonstrate that community policing has enhanced intelligence capacity but corruption and colonial history elements obstruct its complete effectiveness. The Ubuntu philosophy, which values human connections and communal accountability, provides an innovative solution to restore human dignity in law enforcement and rebuild public trust in police services. The study demonstrates that Ubuntu principles require formal implementation through legal changes and training programs to create enduring security frameworks. The recommendations propose that formal police systems should incorporate local traditional values into their operations.

Keywords: Ubuntu Philosophy, Community Policing, Crime, Nigeria

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian police force established community policing as a system to move the country from its existing authoritarian law enforcement practices toward a system that focuses on solving public safety issues through preventive policing methods[1]. The program, which became part of the national strategy in 2004, establishes a framework for police and community members to work together as safety partners. The security situation continues to be critical despite the programs that UK-DFID established and tested in Kogi, Abia, and Lagos[2]. The Boko Haram insurgency and banditry, and coordinated assassinations create security

[1] Agbonaye, Otitiosa U., I. O. Agbede, and Ademola Taiwo. "Analysising Restorative Justice System as a Tool for Dispute Resolution in the Administration of Justice in Lagos State, Nigeria." *LASJURE* 5 (2024): 166.

[2] Aguene, Ignatius N., and Innocent Aja Ngene. "Cultural Elements, Peace Promotion and Social Stability in Nigeria." *African Journal of Social and Behavioural Sciences* 15, no. 6 (2025): 1–13.

challenges that conventional methods cannot handle[3]. The existing policing system, which developed from colonial "occupation forces", brings policing methods that keep officers from developing relationships with citizens because they work in areas where they lack understanding of local customs and languages[4]. The distance between officers and citizens results in delays in making decisions because officers lack access to community knowledge[5]. The police force has achieved some success in sharing information, yet people still believe the Nigeria Police Force maintains a distance from the community. Citizens choose to use vigilante groups and traditional elders for dispute resolution because they see the formal justice system as their final option[6]. The existing community engagement system needs immediate review because it has proven to be ineffective according to the current operational model.

The Ubuntu Philosophy shows people and their cultures in their full human complexity, which contradicts the current Western policing methods which focus only on individual suspects. The Nguni saying "umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu" leads to the conclusion that "a person is a person through other people", which shows that people achieve their full potential through ethical connections with others. Ubuntu changes policing from its standard approach of punitive punishment toward methods which restore justice and maintain social peace[7]. This philosophical system teaches that all humans share a fundamental bond which creates social duty because people see crime as a threat to community welfare instead of a breach of national laws[8]. The community policing system will benefit from Ubuntu because it promotes essential elements for police relationship repair, which include kindness, compassion and respect. The system enables participatory decision-making through African traditional peacebuilding techniques which existed before European colonial powers established their control[9]. Policing shifts from using force to create a service-oriented culture when officers adopt community partnership roles instead of being seen as dangerous outsiders. The Nigerian community goals for security protection will find their solution through Ubuntu, which matches modern security needs with the people's cultural identity and real-world experiences[10].

The police and Nigerian public fail to establish effective community policing programs because they maintain a deep communication gap and trust deficit. The Police Act 2020 and 1999 Constitution Section 214 establish essential funding and control mechanisms for police operations, yet these regulations fail to protect the system from operational corruption and police violence, and lack accountability[11]. Citizens avoid reporting vital information to authorities because the Special Anti-Robbery Squad SARS and multiple decades of human rights violations have created a climate of fear among the population. The Nigerian police force uses military force because military culture guides its operations, which causes police officers to use excessive force against citizens. Police departments face public mistrust because they pursue

[3] Akpah, Bartholomew Chizoba. "Negotiating Nigerian National Cohesion and the Rhetoric of Herdsmen Attack in Ahmed Yerima's *Hendu*." *African Identities* (2025): 1–17.
[4] Ibid
[5] Ibid
[6] Godswill Owoche Antai and Paul Atagamen Aidonojie, "Legal Mechanisms for Combating Transnational Corruption and Enhancing Economic Resilience in Selected West African Countries," *Journal of Sustainable Development Law and Policy* 17, no. 3 (2026): 223–250.
[7] Alemie, Ajanaw, and Hone Mandefro. "Roles of Indigenous Conflict Resolution Mechanisms for Maintaining Social Solidarity and Strengthening Communities in Alefa District, North West of Ethiopia." *Journal of Indigenous Social Development* 7, no. 2 (2018).
[8] Ibid
[9] Alli, Warisu O., and Aduku A. Akubo. "Restorative and Community Justice: A Critical Appraisal." *About the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR)* 14 (2002): 50.
[10] Ibid
[11] Amusan, Lere, and Siphiwe Mchunu. "An Assessment of Xenophobic/Afrophobic Attacks in South Africa (2008–2015): Whither Batho Pele and Ubuntu Principles?" *South African Review of Sociology* 48, no. 4 (2017): 1–18.

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"community-oriented" strategies, which citizens see as fake attempts to build relationships[12]. The Child Rights Act 2003 permits diversion and restorative justice implementation, yet their actual application continues to be limited because it depends on unauthorised personnel to make discretionary decisions. The legal system will keep creating obstacles to human needs until Ubuntu establishes itself as the core value system for moral development and organizational conduct.

The literature review shows that the studies conducted by Audu[13] in Kogi State and Otodo et al.[14] in Abia State and Akintude et al.,[15] present evidence about the operational difficulties which police forces experience, yet their primary attention falls on outbreaks of administrative shortcomings and police implementation activities at the state level. The philosophical study of restorative justice exists within Kenku and Shitu[16] yet researchers have yet to investigate how Ubuntu functions as a connection between community policing. The existing literature contains a significant research gap which prevents scholars from understanding how African indigenous knowledge systems can be used to transform the "alien" colonial framework that defines the Nigeria Police Force. Most research approaches security from a Eurocentric lens, which emphasizes technology and personnel strength while excluding the social customs that bind families and respect ancestors to determine local behavior. The topic presents an innovative concept because it uses an Afrocentric perspective to promote a cultural fusion which achieves harmony between contemporary legal demands and traditional Ubuntu practices of shared accountability. The study enables African Theological Ethics and criminological theory to examine their intersection while establishing a framework to decolonize public safety.

The study aims to analyze how various stakeholders understand community policing while studying the police-community relationships which exist in Nigeria. The study assesses how community policing programs from 2002/3 affected the police force while identifying the factors which caused ongoing communication difficulties. The primary objective of this study is to prove that Ubuntu philosophy functions as both an anti-corruption measure and a police force capacity-building tool. The research investigates how traditional African justice systems and contemporary legal frameworks intersect while establishing a security model that merges both traditions. The study will help policymakers understand how community-led safety strategies work and evolve within their communities. The research study proposes methods for establishing community-based policing systems which will incorporate traditional conflict resolution practices to enhance public trust and maintain long-term community unity.

2. METHOD

The research uses a doctrinal approach which analyzes all primary and secondary research materials that study Ubuntu's implementation in Nigerian police work. The primary doctrinal materials for the study include the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria, the Police Act 2020 and the Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA) 2015. The research used secondary sources from academic databases SCOPUS, JSTOR, and Google Scholar, which contained peer-reviewed journal articles and books on African philosophy and government reports from

[12] Ibid

[13] Audu, Aminu Musa. "Community Policing: Exploring the Police/Community Relationship for Crime Control in Nigeria." PhD thesis, University of Liverpool, 2016

[14] Ifeanyichukwu, Otodo, Iton Enobong Etim, Kenneth Ngalgomo Njibi, and Mohammed Waziri. "The Impact of Community Policing on Crime Prevention and Community Relations in Umuahia, Abia State." *East African Scholars Journal of Education, Humanities and Literature* 8, no. 2 (2025): 59–70

[15] Akintunde, Caleb Akinniran, Belynda Dongnaan Gurumyen, and Amos Kumai James. "Geographical Spread and the Assessment of Critical Issues in Restorative and Transformative Justice in Nigeria: A Review." *African Journal of Geographical Sciences* 7, no. 2 (2026): 53–63.

[16] Kenku, Akeem A., and Shitu Shuiabu Umar. "Community Policing as a Strategy for Enhancing Public Safety in Nigeria." *Public Policy and Administration International Journal* 13, no. 3 (2025): 30–49.

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CLEEN Foundation and UNODC. The research used the keywords "Ubuntu theory", "Community Policing Nigeria" and "Restorative Justice" to find both foundational texts and current academic discussions. The research method permits an academic examination of Eurocentric models which have not succeeded in post-colonial Africa while showing how indigenous legal systems continue to hold their original legal value. The study applies a research method which combines historical anthropological texts with current criminological studies to create a research base that respects cultural differences while providing strong analytical capabilities.

The research method uses an analytical content analysis together with an interpretative framework to study how stakeholders experience their research environment and what they believe. The researchers systematically organized data into different themes, which included corruption effects, family value impacts and the functions of informal policing institutions. The study used thematic analysis to discover the basic ethical principles and established meanings which participants associate with community security. The interpretative aspect of the study expands its findings beyond summary results to show how Ubuntu can change police operational standards. The approach defines human existence as a result of social connections while developing methods to unite diverse cultures within Nigeria's security organizations.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Conceptual Clarifications on Community Policing of Crime in Nigeria

Community policing, which people commonly call neighbourhood policing or proximity policing, exists as a core transformation that changes law enforcement from its traditional reactive methods into a new proactive, collaborative approach.[17] The approach functions as a management philosophy which requires citizens and police officers to work together to find solutions to community crime issues[18]. The model differs from traditional policing methods, which control operations through strict systems, because it allows public members to participate in decision-making processes while treating them as partners. The main goal of the project establishes a protected space which enables community members to control their personal security matters. The process requires police departments to transfer decision-making power from their officers to create an environment which supports cooperation between police personnel and community members[19]. Through its mission definition of social order maintenance and fear reduction, community policing works to prevent criminal activities which occur in communities due to existing social disorder and neighbourhood decay. The Peelian principle states that police officers serve as community members who belong to public safety, which creates the foundation for law enforcement and community cooperation[20].

Nigerian community policing programs operate according to two main principles, which mandate police departments to develop effective solutions for their respective police departments[21]. Police officers need to operate as security producers who deliver services through their main duties while using SARA methods, which include Scanning, Analysis,

[17] Ayuk, Awunghe Achu, Ndifon Neji Obi, Augustine Betialikong Aboh, Afu Njong Cleverty, Eja Alobo Eni, Lazarus Bassey Abonor, Vera Ene Henshaw, Daniel Bisong Bisong, Oyen Etta Etta, Honey Ojiho Isaac, John Fidelis Inaku, and Runyi Daniel James. "Being Secured in an Unsecured Environment: West African Security Architectural Conundrum." *African Renaissance* 23, no. 1 (2026): 145.

[18] Balogun, Cecy Edijala. "Community Development." In *Conceptualizations of Africa: Perspectives from Sciences and Humanities*, 281–298. 2025.

[19] Afunugo, Nnaemeka Kenechi, and Emmanuel Nnatuanya Chinedu. "Cult-Driven Youth Killings and Insecurity in Awka Metropolis: Implications for Socioeconomic Stability." *African Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies* 14, no. 2 (2025): 31.

[20] Doma, Joffrey A., Abiola A. Isikalu, Uzzibi M. Irmiya, and Goodnews Osah. "The Fragmentation of Public Power: Non-State Security Actors and Community Security in Rural Southwest Nigeria." *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 42, no. 4 (2024): 596–611.

[21] Ibid

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Response and Assessment to examine criminal activities[22]. The organization needs to establish security priorities through community partnerships which involve government agencies, private businesses, and local leaders. Police departments need to implement proactive strategies which include deploying officers in standard police uniforms who patrol on foot or bicycles to establish personal relationships with residents[23]. The model needs an organizational structure change which allows junior officers to manage their tasks independently instead of needing to consult the central office repeatedly. The public needs to obtain more authority in police operations through advisory boards, which require police organizations to adopt civilian oversight systems[24]. The Nigeria Police Force wants to transform from a law enforcement organization into a public service organization which delivers professional services to meet customer needs while protecting human rights.

The urgent need for this model is underscored by alarming facts and figures regarding Nigeria's deteriorating security landscape[25]. The National Bureau of Statistics NBS reports from 2023 that Nigeria experienced a 156 per cent rise in reported crime incidents between 2019 and 2022, while kidnapping and armed robbery represented the most common crimes. The Nigeria Security Tracker 2023 documented more than 10000 fatalities from violent attacks throughout 2022, while the Global Peace Index continues to rank Nigeria among the least peaceful countries due to ongoing insurgency and banditry activities[26]. A significant trust gap persists because 2022 Afrobarometer survey results show 65 per cent of Nigerians do not trust the police due to their belief in systemic extortion practices, police brutality, and police operational inefficiency. The existing police system suffers from multiple structural problems which lead to public distrust because the police-to-citizen ratio stands at 1 police officer for every 540 citizens, whereas United Nations guidelines recommend 1 police officer for every 450 citizens[27]. The CLEEN Foundation 2012 reported that 75 per cent of Nigerians experience permanent anxiety about becoming victims of crime. The existing statistical evidence shows that centralised security systems have not succeeded in improving public security; therefore, communities need to implement their own security measures to restore safe public spaces and promote social unity[28].

Table: Statistical Realities of Crime and Policing in Nigeria

Security Indicator	Statistic / Fact	Institutional Source
Rise in Crime Incidents	15.6% increase in reported crime cases between 2019 and 2022.	National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)
Violent Attack Fatalities	Over 10,000 deaths linked to violent attacks recorded in 2022 alone.	Nigeria Security Tracker (NST)

[22] Paul Atagamen Aidonojie et al., "Examining Human Rights Abuses on Religious, Cultural, and Political Intolerance in Nigeria," *Journal of Sustainable Development and Regulatory Issues* 3, no. 1 (2025): 78–94.

[23] Dixon, Bill. "Using Theory from the Global South: From Social Cohesion and Collective Efficacy to Ubuntu." *Theoretical Criminology* 28, no. 3 (2024): 267–286.

[24] Ekanade, Israel. "From Ubuntu to Makwerekwere: Reinvigorating Belonging in Democratic South Africa." In *Democracy and Africanness: Contemporary Issues in Africa's Democratization and Governance*, 73–88. 2022.

[25] Ibid

[26] Gcumeni, Fungisai, and Christa Rautenbach. "Integrating Ubuntu Ethics into Legal Approaches to Sexual Violence in Africa." *Journal of International and Comparative Law* 12 (2025): 53.

[27] Erma Rusdiana et al., "Augment Legal Efforts through Artificial Intelligence in Curtailing Economic Fraud in Nigeria: Issues and Challenges," *Indonesian Journal of Criminal Law Studies* 10, no. 1 (2025): 115–148

[28]Ibid

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Public Trust Deficit	65% of Nigerians express explicit distrust in the police force.	Afrobarometer Survey (2022)
Manpower Shortage	A ratio of 1:540 (police to citizens), which is below the UN target of 1:450.	UNODC / NPF
Fear of Victimization	75% of the population live in fear of becoming victims of crime.	CLEEN Foundation
Global Peace Standing	Nigeria is consistently ranked among the world's least peaceful nations.	Global Peace Index (GPI)

Sources: Afrobarometer[29], CLEEN Foundation[30], Institute for Economics and Peace[31], National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)[32], and Nigeria Security Tracker (NST)[33]

The security situation in this area has worsened because centralized policing methods, which only respond to incidents, have failed to control threats that include kidnapping, armed robbery and insurgency[34]. The trust gap remains a primary barrier, as citizens cite systemic extortion, brutality, and inefficiency as the core reasons for their reluctance to cooperate with formal law enforcement. The 75% fear rate indicates that people throughout the area experience a deep feeling of danger, which requires a shift to a security system based on community participation. The current statistical data demands immediate structural changes, which should include indigenous values such as Ubuntu, to help restore public trust and increase the efficiency of crime-fighting operations[35]. The historical evolution of policing in Nigeria shows an enduring gap between indigenous values and the present centralized policing system. Pre-colonial societies which existed before colonial rule used their traditional systems to create law enforcement mechanisms that operated through shared responsibilities. The British colonial government established the Armed Hausa Police Force in 1889, which served as an occupation force to suppress local resistance while enabling resource extraction. The Imperial Policing system established a military style of operation, which created a mindset that divided people into two groups that still exists within the Nigeria Police Force, which functions as a centralized organization that the federal government controls completely[36]. The police became a tool for political intimidation under both military and civilian governments throughout the post-colonial period, which led to growing public distrust. The rise of Amotekun and Ebube Agu vigilante groups represents a current community policing movement through which citizens seek to restore traditional justice systems that existed before European colonization[37].

The complete implementation of community policing, which Nigeria officially adopted in 2004, currently struggles with both institutional problems and socio-cultural challenges. The

[29] Afrobarometer, *Afrobarometer Round 9 Survey in Nigeria* (2022).
[30] CLEEN Foundation, *Summary Report of the Crime and Safety Survey* (2012).
[31] Institute for Economics and Peace, *Global Peace Index (GPI)* (2023).
[32] National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), *Annual Abstract of Statistics* (2023).
[33] Nigeria Security Tracker (NST), *Violent Attack Fatalities Report* (2023).
[34] Simon Ejokema Imoisi and Paul Atagamen Aidonojie, "Legal and Socio-Economic Issues Concerning Black Marketers' Activities of Petroleum Products in Nigeria," *Yuridika* 38, no. 2 (2023): 61–84.
[35] Govender, Doraval, and Krisandren Pillay. "Policing in South Africa: A Critical Evaluation." *Insight on Africa* 14, no. 1 (2022): 40–56.
[36] Isiaka, Monsurat, Ismail Ayatullah Nasirudeen, Tolha Ayinde Yusuf, Austin Ayodele, and Wasiu Bolaji Sheu. "The Adoption of Restorative Justice Models in Criminal Justice System: Decongesting Backlogs in Conventional Court System in Nigeria." *Contemporary Justice Review* 28, no. 4 (2025): 431–458.
[37] Ibid

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states of Enugu, Kano and Lagos implemented pilot programs, yet the programs produced mixed results because of insufficient legal support and variable financial resources. The "communication gap" represents a major obstacle because 60% of Nigerians do not know about their local community policing programs. Systemic corruption, which includes bribery and favoritism activities destroys the transparency needed to establish authentic partnerships[38]. Traditional police officers strongly oppose the service-oriented decentralized model because they believe it threatens their existing power and "canteen culture". Residents tend to avoid reporting their family members who commit crimes because of socio-cultural norms which treat such actions as an "abomination"[39]. The experts propose three solutions to address these obstacles, which include establishing dedicated community policing legislation and increasing human rights training funding, and creating independent oversight bodies for police officer monitoring.

3.2. Critical Analysis of the Legal Framework in Nigeria

Section 214 of the 1999 Constitution serves as the main legal framework which governs policing in Nigeria by establishing one National Police Force which protects the entire country while forbidding the establishment of additional police forces[40]. The federal government maintains complete control over authority in this centralized system, which has existed since its inception and serves as a barrier to establishing community policing initiatives. The Police Act 2020 seeks to modernise policing through its provisions, which declare that the Act will establish a police service that meets public needs while implementing operational procedures which guarantee fairness and justice and equitable treatment for all people[41]. The Act directs the NPF under Section 4(h) to develop community partnerships which will help the force achieve its official duties. The organization has transformed from a reactive force system towards a service system which seeks to build trust. The legal framework continues to exist because community programs operate through federal agencies, which do not provide communities with their own independent authority, while the Constitution needs amendments to achieve resolution[42].

The Administration of Criminal Justice Act[43] (ACJA) 2015 supports community policing through its two main objectives, which involve managing criminal justice facilities and safeguarding the rights of suspects, defendants and victims. The ACJA enables community policing to uphold its local authority through its judicial process, which operates together with the Administration of Criminal Justice Monitoring Committee that works to decrease prison overcrowding while handling cases through quick resolution[44]. The ACJA Part 44 establishes non-custodial options that include community service orders, which the Community Service Centres supervise in every Judicial Division. The legal system uses these provisions to solve minor community-level offences through restorative practices instead of strictly punitive methods. The law establishes a procedural pathway for community-based conflict resolution that supports grassroots crime control through its social objectives[45]. The proposed Constitution (Sixth Alteration) Bill, 2025[46] aims to restructure the entire Nigerian security system through its

[38] Budiyanto et al., "Problems of Legal Implementation of the Criminal Offense of Spreading Fake News and Hate Speech in Papua," *Law Reform* 20, no. 2 (2024): 278–300

[39] Ibid

[40] Ikeke, Mark O. "Promoting Human Dignities in Nigeria Through Indigenous Cultural Practices/Beliefs." *Journal of Philosophy, Policy and Strategic Studies* 1, no. 5 (2025): 54–64.

[41] Jejelola, O. J., Akin Olawale Oluwadayisi, and Alaba Ibironke Kekere. "An Appraisal of the Theories of Criminal Punishment: Towards Peace and Security in Africa." *AFJCLJ* 3 (2018): 104.

[42] Ibid

[43]The Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA) 2015

[44] Mukhlis et al., "Rejection of Former Shia Community in Sampang Perspective on Human Rights Law: Discourse of Religious Rights and Freedom in Indonesia," *Lex Scientia Law Review* 7, no. 2 (2023): 959–994.

[45] Ibid

[46] The proposed Constitution (Sixth Alteration) Bill, 2025

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legislative framework. The Bill changes Section 214 to permit National Assembly and State House of Assembly members to create laws which establish police units at community, state, and local levels. The legal development aims to address the existing jurisdictional gap which exists between federal police forces and community police departments. The Bill establishes Section 216A, which identifies informal security systems such as neighbourhood watches and vigilante groups as official methods for community safety. The law establishes a regulatory system which governs the activities of organizations that currently function outside established legal boundaries through their inclusion in the constitutional system. The proposed change would enable organizations to share community-based intelligence with the state security system, which operates to combat crime at its original point of occurrence.

The Terrorism (Prevention) Act (TPA)[47] After its amendments, it establishes a legal system that handles high-level insurgencies which frequently affect community security. The TPA gives law enforcement powers to conduct activities which include terrorist asset confiscation and emergency search operations that need no search warrant. The UNODC User's Guide identifies a connection between the TPA and non-terrorism criminal statutes which include kidnapping offences. Police departments need to train their officers to recognise local criminal activities and identify terrorism-related offences because terrorists can be detained for 90 days under court authorisation[48]. The TPA requires agencies to safeguard the identity and existence of individuals who provide information because this practice serves as the primary method to build community intelligence networks. People need this legal protection because it enables them to work with law enforcement without worrying about potential revenge from their surroundings[49]. The Police Service Commission (PSC) Act 2001[50] and the 1999 Constitution establish the PSC as an independent federal body which handles the appointment, promotion and discipline of NPF members except for the Inspector-General. The PSC mission statement describes its purpose as transforming the Nigeria Police Force into the Nigeria Police Service through implementation of modern democratic policing standards. The institutional oversight of community policing functions as a critical system which enables civilian organizations to hold police officers accountable for their misconduct. The PSC possesses legal power to conduct investigations into petitions and complaints, which enables it to monitor whether officers conduct themselves according to established professional standards in their assigned areas. The PSC faces operational difficulties because department heads exercise their authority to discipline officers who hold lower ranks by transferring disciplinary duties back to the NPF leadership. The system creates a situation which could lead to a conflict of interest that undermines community confidence in the supervision procedure.

The National Security Agencies Act[51] Together with its related bills, including the Protection of Officers' Identity Bill, it establishes secret protections for intelligence work that requires execution at local community sites. The National Security Agencies Act enables the President to grant intelligence agency personnel superior police authority so they can conduct their special community work. The Identity Bill establishes protection measures that prevent officers from disclosing their personal details through unauthorized means, which proves essential for officers operating in dangerous local situations[52]. The laws establish a system that operates through multiple interconnected security layers. The Constitution establishes a central foundation, while the Police Act and ACJA function as operational partners that create

[47] The Terrorism (Prevention) Act (TPA)
[48] Kenku, Akeem A., and Shuiabu Umar Shitu. "Community Policing as a Strategy for Enhancing Public Safety in Nigeria." *Public Policy and Administration International Journal* 13, no. 3 (2025): 30–49.
[49] Khosa, Dee, and Kabir Abdulkareem. "Breaking the Cycle: Presenting Insights and Strategies to Overcome Violent Conflicts Hindering Social Cohesion and Progress in South African Communities." *Global Change, Peace & Security* 35, no. 2 (2023): 161–184.
[50] The Police Service Commission (PSC) Act 2001
[51] The National Security Agencies Act
[52] Ibid

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procedural fairness, and the Sixth Alteration Bill establishes a decentralized legal system that empowers local communities. The developing system indicates that Nigeria will implement a strategy which combines national and regional methods to fight crime.

3.3. Legal Issues and Challenges in Nigeria's Community Policing Framework

The main legal challenge that community policing programs face involves the constitutional battle which establishes centralized control versus local police requirements. The present Section 214 regulation of the 1999 Constitution vests all policing authority in the federal government, which renders every state and local community police system technically illegal[53]. The legal system experiences a major gap because different states have created "security outfits" which conduct police functions without possessing the official constitutional authority to make arrests or conduct investigations unless they receive approval from the NPF. The Police Act 2020 establishes "community partnership" as a requirement for police work, but it does not empower communities to operate their own law enforcement agencies[54]. The existing power struggle creates judicial uncertainty about authority limits, which produces conflicts between federal law enforcement and local security organizations. The main problem exists because there are no official laws that establish rules for controlling informal security systems. Current laws in Nigeria fail to recognize the existence of vigilante groups and neighborhood watch systems because these groups operate throughout the country without proper legal classification[55]. The situation poses a severe threat because these organizations possess weapons and use force without established rules or systems that would enable them to face human rights violations. The Sixth Alteration Bill establishes a requirement that these organizations must operate according to Chapter IV of the Constitution, which protects Fundamental Rights. The bill will establish nationwide procedures to assess group members and determine accountability for their misconduct once it officially becomes law. The absence of regulations creates a possibility that "parallel armed forces" will emerge, which the Constitution explicitly prohibits[56].

The bodies responsible for monitoring community police activities face a significant financial and logistical operational shortcoming. The Police Service Commission (PSC) data shows that the "Capital" expenditure category has faced permanent funding shortages, which decreased from 37% in 2005 to a mere 6% in 2006. The existing investment deficiencies create a critical deficit of both office space and essential field investigation equipment. The PSC requires sufficient funding to achieve its dual mission of police performance assessment and remote community misconduct investigations[57]. The situation creates a "vicious cycle" which results in police abuses going unpunished and leads to a decline in community trust, which stops people from working with police on community policing efforts. The law requires oversight activities to occur, but state authorities do not supply the necessary physical assets which would enable that mandate to be executed. The existing legal system lacks proper procedures to handle situations when multiple criminal laws intersect with each other. The UNODC guide shows that authorities may pursue kidnapping charges through different legal statutes and that if an officer wrongly applies non-terrorism charges to a suspect then the community loses

[53] Muwaffiq Jufri et al., "Standardisation of the Legislation as a Follow-Up to the Constitutional Court's Decision on Judicial Review of Omnibus Law," *Jurnal Konstitusi* 21, no. 3 (2024): 366–391.
[54] Masutha, Thingahangwi Cecilia, Angelina Maphula, Salaminah Moloko-Phiri, Molokedi Matsipane, and Rodwell Gundo. "Measures Used by Stakeholders to Mitigate Gender-Based Violence through the Ubuntu Philosophy Lens in South Africa." *Frontiers in Sociology* 10 (2025): 1587793.
[55] Mishra, Paresh, and Saneta Maiko. "Combating Corruption with Care: Developing Ethical Leaders in Africa." *Africa Journal of Management* 3, no. 1 (2017): 128–143.
[56] Ibid
[57] Praditha Dewa Gede Edi et al., "The Future of Bali's Kerauhan Tradition: Legal Pluralism, Reforms, and Conflict Adjudication Challenges," *Journal of Sustainable Development and Regulatory Issues* 4, no. 1 (2026): 118–137.

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essential police powers which include the 90 days for comprehensive investigation[58]. The framework which regulates community policing practices does not provide law enforcement agencies with methods to focus on victims of particular offenses. The TPA does not provide specific legal protections or redress options for community-level victims of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), which insurgent groups use as a tactic[59]. The absence of explicit legal guidelines in the law results in community policing officers not receiving essential legal education, which enables them to manage delicate local incidents that involve women and children.

The NPF centralized appointment system and command structure cause a "delegation gap" which prevents local authorities from responding to their communities. The PSC holds legal responsibility for appointments and discipline, but most of this authority has been assigned to the Inspector-General, who operates under presidential appointment[60]. The Nigeria Police Council, which includes State Governors, has the responsibility to advise on IGP appointments, but its members have no power to manage the actual police operations. State Governors serve as primary security officers for their states, yet they lack official power to instruct police forces about community issues[61]. The command structure from above the organization runs directly counter to the community policing approach, which depends on local input, resulting in a "command lapse" which leads to federal mandates taking priority over local security concerns.

3.4. Critical Analysis: Ubuntu Philosophy in Enhancing Community Policing in Nigeria

The combination of Ubuntu philosophy with community policing creates a new way to solve Nigeria's security issues because it replaces punishment through individual-based methods with practices that promote social relationships and community vitality. Ubuntu defines human existence through the African saying, which states, "umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu"; people need other people to exist as human beings[62]. The Eurocentric European prison system, which views criminal offences as state violations, needs to be replaced with this approach that sees criminal activities as violations of natural and ethical cosmic order. The police and the public establish a partnership through this framework, which allows them to work together as safety "co-producers" who share law enforcement responsibilities[63]. The Ubuntu system establishes ethical principles which enable people to work together in order to solve Nigeria's significant "trust gap" problem. The philosophy promotes empathy and compassion, which enables police officers to work with the community as they understand that their personal value depends on serving the public. The Afrocentric method creates security plans which match the traditional cultural practices and actual experiences of local community members[64].

The current centralized security system in Nigeria operates as a colonial system which exists to control citizens instead of protecting their needs. The indigenous policing methods of pre-colonial Nigerian societies included the Igbo age grades and the Northern dogarai, which

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focused on reconciliation through community monitoring[65]. British rule established a militarized Imperial Policing system which replaced these indigenous systems and used violent force to control public demonstrations while extracting resources from the country. The Nigeria Police Force upholds a hierarchical command system which prevents officers from making decisions based on their local knowledge[66]. The absence of African policing methods in law enforcement has resulted in the development of an organisation that exists outside the public's trust. Ubuntu provides a method for decolonising public safety through its recommendation to restore traditional ancestral methods of peacemaking, which establish order through community vigilance and loving relationships instead of using punishment. Through the restoration of these values, Nigeria will construct a security system that unifies its cultural identity with effective community-based security operations[67].

The two main obstacles that prevent Nigerian communities from developing the necessary trust for implementing community policing programs are systemic corruption and police violence. The data shows that 65% of Nigerians show distrust towards police officers because they believe police engage in extortion and commit human rights abuses including the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) legacy[68]. Ubuntu serves as a moral solution to the "canteen culture" by promoting character development and leadership that depend on people who show integrity. The philosophy maintains that an action becomes morally correct through its power to spread goodwill and communal identity, although corrupt activities become violations against a community's shared human existence. Ubuntu teaches that people should treat others as human beings, which creates a method to end violence because it shows that torture turns both the victim and the torturer into less than human beings[69]. The police can begin to restore their reputation through the process of establishing zero tolerance for corruption, which depends on their shared responsibility as a community. Citizens must establish this moral authority because it motivates them to report criminal activities that involve kidnapping and terrorism.

Ubuntu-based systems need to change their justice approach from retributive methods to restorative methods which focus on healing communities. The Nigerian legal system treats crime as a personal offense against the government, which results in the loss of important social relationships. Ubuntu-based systems that use Igbo umunna processes focus on discovering sources of harm to create ways for offenders to make restitution and return to society[70]. The approach shows that people who commit individual offenses usually show wider community problems which include poverty and social dislocation. The community policing system uses Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and peace committees to handle local land disputes which would otherwise take too long to process through formal court systems. The process needs to find a balance between communitarian ethical standards and the 1999 Constitution requirements which protect women's and youth's individual rights. Ubuntu aims to restore the social order which crime destroys by establishing lasting peace through reconciliation instead of using punishment. The existing legal and policy framework in Nigeria, which includes the Police Act 2020, does acknowledge community policing, but it lacks an effective plan to

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[66] Okolo, Benjamin Ikani, and Aduku A. Akubo. "Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria: Implications for National Security and Restorative Justice." *African Journal on Conflict Resolution* 19, no. 2 (2019): 109–132.
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[68] Thani, Xolile Carol. "Ubuntu Philosophy in Times of Crises: COVID-19 Pandemic Period and Beyond." In *Research Handbook on Public Management and COVID-19*, 243–256. 2024.
[69] Ominde, Eliud Shani, Atieno Kili K'Odhiambo, and Samson Okuro Gunga. "Analysis of Praxis of African Communalism: A Model of Ethical Values in Primary School Curriculum in Kenya." *Journal of Educational Research in Developing Areas* 1, no. 3 (2020): 278–288.
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implement decentralized policing [71] . The centralized command in Abuja creates a communication gap because officers must work in areas where they lack knowledge of local customs and languages. The standard approach prevents law enforcement from effectively handling specific criminal activities which happen in different regions, such as banditry and insurgency. Ubuntu philosophy supports the call for state or local policing because it requires officers to work within the neighborhoods which they protect[72]. A hybrid structure that uses Ubuntu-based accountability would enable community advisory boards to monitor operations while maintaining operational integrity, according to critics who warn about potential political misuse. The absence of a national policy that integrates indigenous jurisprudence with formal law remains a conceptual hurdle. Local communities need to participate through a constitutional process which establishes their own policing system because this is essential for establishing sustainable security.

The establishment of regional security groups through Amotekun and Ebube Agu demonstrates that local communities need police alternatives which match their traditional cultural practices. The national police system loses legitimacy to these informal institutions because they follow traditional structures while better understanding local community needs[73]. The organization creates operational challenges because it can conduct extrajudicial killings, which result in ethnic divisions between communities when its activities remain uncontrolled. The critical Ubuntu perspective asserts that these groups need to connect with state operations through methodological frameworks which enable effective collaboration between the two entities[74]. This "marriage of cultures" requires training police in the African concept of oneness while educating informal guards on human rights. Ubuntu functions as the essential unifying force which enables different organizations to work together toward achieving public safety objectives. Nigeria can build a security system which serves its citizens and protects public safety through the development of mutual trust among its people.

4. CONCLUSION

The research shows that community policing in Nigeria has failed because Nigerian police forces still use their colonial policing system, which prevents them from adopting local community policing methods. The 2004 initiatives have not succeeded because people do not trust the system, because corruption exists, and because the legal system remains centralized. Traditional approaches to justice deal with punishment, which destroys the relationships and reparative needs of justice that communities need to achieve healing. The Ubuntu philosophy develops an advanced solution which restores the human connection between police officers and citizens through the view of shared social connections. The research results show that community policing helps law enforcement agencies to collect intelligence, but the system needs fundamental changes to implement restorative justice practices and give officers local responsibility. The establishment of an effective security system needs to develop indigenous

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legal systems alongside existing formal judicial systems for rights protection, social unity and public safety.

The following recommendations are proposed to enhance the effectiveness of community policing through Ubuntu philosophy. The Nigerian government needs to create laws that will establish police force decentralization which will enable the development of state and local police systems that require officers to live among the communities they patrol. The police training curriculum should be redesigned to integrate Africana jurisprudence and Ubuntu-based ethics, which teach compassion, dialogue and conflict resolution methods. The implementation of restorative justice mechanisms needs to include community peace committees and mediation forums, which will handle minor disputes while decreasing prison overcrowding. Independent oversight bodies need to be established by the government, through which community leaders will help maintain accountability while restoring public confidence. The security network needs to use surveillance technology together with grassroots human intelligence to create proactive monitoring systems. Police organizations need to enforce zero-tolerance corruption policies through legal penalties and community-based moral education programs to restore their public image.

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