

**COMMUNITY POLICING AND INTERNAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA:  
AN ANALYSIS OF CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS IN ESAN NORTH-EAST  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, EDO**

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**BEING A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF  
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## CERTIFICATION

We, certify that this research project was carried out by **OSAYANDE GODSTIME** the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria. It is adequate in scope and quality in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Science (BSc.) degree in Political Science.

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## **DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to God Almighty for His grace, guidance, and protection throughout my academic journey. It is also dedicated to my parents, family members, and all those who have supported me morally, financially, and emotionally in the pursuit of my education.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study examined community policing and internal security in Nigeria, with particular reference to Esan North-East Local Government Area of Edo State. The main objective of the study was to assess the nature and practice of community policing, its impact on crime reduction and internal security, the challenges facing its implementation, and the role of youths and local security actors in sustaining community policing initiatives in the study area.

The study adopted a survey research design. Data were collected through the use of questionnaires administered to residents of Esan North-East Local Government Area. The data obtained were analyzed using simple percentages and frequency tables.

The findings of the study revealed that community policing has improved collaboration between the police and community members, leading to better information sharing and quicker response to crime. The study also found that community policing has contributed to a reduction in crime and an improvement in the level of internal security in the area. However, challenges such as inadequate funding, lack of trust between the police and residents, poor cooperation, and insufficient training of personnel were identified as major obstacles to the effective implementation of community policing.

The study concluded that community policing is an effective strategy for enhancing internal security when there is active cooperation between the police and the community. It was therefore recommended that the government should provide adequate funding, improve training for community policing officers, and promote public awareness and community participation in security matters.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Security remains one of the most fundamental responsibilities of the modern state, and its effectiveness determines the extent to which social and economic development can thrive. In Nigeria, internal security has continued to pose significant challenges, reflecting both historical weaknesses in policing and the rapidly changing nature of crime across its diverse geopolitical landscape. Over the past four decades, the country has witnessed various complex and interconnected manifestations of insecurity, including high-profile armed robbery operations, widespread kidnapping for ransom, the rise of sophisticated banditry in the North-West, persistent communal clashes rooted in resource control, political violence, pervasive cultism in urban areas, evolving cybercrime networks, the entrenched Boko Haram and ISWAP terrorism in the North-East, and escalating farmer–herder conflicts across the Middle Belt and Southern regions. These multifaceted security issues have not only threatened the very foundation of national stability and sovereignty but have also fundamentally undermined public trust in formal security institutions, weakened democratic governance structures, discouraged vital foreign and local investment, destroyed agricultural livelihoods, and created a pervasive atmosphere of fear and uncertainty among citizens. The economic and social cost of this instability is immense, creating a compelling need for effective, localized security strategies.

The conventional policing framework in Nigeria is highly centralised, with the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) functioning constitutionally as a single, federally controlled agency under the command of the Inspector General of Police (Section 214(1) of the 1999 Constitution). While this unitary model was primarily inherited from Nigeria's colonial administration—designed more for social control by the British than community service (Tamuno, 1970; Onyeozili, 2005)—it has increasingly become inadequate for addressing the complex, asymmetric, and emerging security realities in a rapidly expanding and diverse society of over 200 million people.

Several scholars and governmental reports have consistently identified persistent structural and operational deficiencies within the NPF system. These include chronic underfunding, inadequate manpower relative to population size, poor and outdated training regimes, obsolete equipment and technology, pervasive issues of corruption and extortion, slow response times to critical emergencies, critically low levels of public confidence and cooperation, limited proactive intelligence gathering capabilities, and weak community engagement practices (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2000; Onyeozili, 2005). As insecurity intensified and became more geographically fragmented across Nigeria's 36 states, it became glaringly evident that a purely centralised, topdown policing approach, often perceived as an "occupying force" rather than a serviceoriented body, could not effectively address the unique, localized threats that vary significantly from one community, village, or local government area to another (Okeshola & Mudiare, 2013).

This growing recognition of the limitations of the conventional model led to the formal introduction and gradual expansion of community policing as a strategic and necessary shift in Nigeria's internal security architecture. Community policing is more than just a set of tactics; it is a philosophy that emphasizes partnership, shared responsibility, mutual trust-building, and proactive collaboration between the formal police apparatus and the communities they serve. The core philosophy behind this paradigm shift is that the community is not merely a passive recipient of security services but an active partner and co-producer of safety and order (Adebayo, 2018). In this collaborative model, local residents provide invaluable local knowledge, help identify latent security threats and vulnerabilities, supply actionable intelligence quickly, and actively participate in designing and executing local crime-prevention initiatives (such as organizing local patrols or town hall meetings), while the police respond with coordinated support, increased professional visibility, and expert guidance. This approach aims to humanize policing and embed it within the social fabric of the community.

The Nigeria Police Force formally embraced the concept of community policing in the early 2000s, initiating a series of reforms guided by the idea that sustainable security must originate from the grassroots level, where social capital and local trust are strongest (Nigeria Police Forum, 2004). The push for decentralised security intensified following widespread calls for state and local policing structures. Over time, the Federal Government, various state governments, civil society groups, traditional institutions, and local community leaders have supported the expansion and institutionalisation of diverse community-based security frameworks to supplement the NPF. Notable and often controversial examples that reflect this nationwide attempt to localize security management and promote cooperative policing practices include the establishment of regional bodies like the Western Nigeria Security Network (Amotekun Corps) in the South-West, the highly effective civilian joint task forces (CJTF) initially formed to combat insurgency in the North-East, various local vigilante groups operating across the South-East and Middle Belt regions, and basic neighborhood watch units prevalent in many urban and semi-urban communities nationwide.

Edo State, situated within the South-South geopolitical zone, like many other states in Nigeria, has actively adopted and adapted community policing initiatives to complement the efforts of formal federal policing mechanisms. Within the state, the Esan North-East Local Government Area (LGA), with its headquarters in the vibrant semi-urban setting of Uromi, presents a vital and relevant case study for rigorously analyzing how community policing philosophies translate into practical operations on the ground. The LGA is characterized by significant economic activity but has also recorded various complex security incidents, including perennial kidnapping operations along major routes, sophisticated burglary, frequent cult-related clashes fueled by youth restiveness, political thuggery during electoral cycles, armed robbery, and periodic farmer– herder tensions that strain inter-communal relations (Oligbi-Edeko, 2025). These persistent security challenges have significantly affected social life and cohesion, reduced agricultural productivity as farmers fear accessing their lands, disrupted crucial commercial activities in Uromi market, and strained the often fragile relationship between security agencies

and the local populace. Although the Nigeria Police Force maintains several divisions and outposts in the LGA, resource constraints, logistical limitations, and structural issues often hinder rapid response and effective proactive crime control.

In direct response to these persistent security gaps, several community-based structures have formally and informally emerged to bridge the divide between the state police apparatus and the residents. Among these, the Police Community Relations Committee (PCRC) stands out as one of the most institutionalized and formally recognized bodies facilitating police–community partnership in Uromi and the wider Esan North-East area. The PCRC plays a vital, multi-faceted role in mediating between police officers and community members, mobilizing non-financial and material support for local policing efforts, organizing security awareness campaigns and town hall meetings, enhancing the flow of actionable intelligence from residents to the police, and fostering mutual trust and dialogue (Ikuteyijo & Rotimi, 2012). Alongside the PCRC, the security architecture of the LGA is reinforced by a network of highly active local vigilante groups, community development associations (CDAs), the influential authority of traditional rulers, youth organizations, and neighborhood watch teams, all of whom collaborate in various capacities in responding to local security threats.

Despite the proliferation of these initiatives and structures, significant challenges persist that hinder optimal performance. Issues such as inadequate and unsustainable funding models for local initiatives, poor coordination and role conflicts among the various security actors, lack of modern surveillance tools and communication gadgets, limited professional training for community security actors (which sometimes leads to human rights concerns), lingering mistrust arising from past abuses by state police, political interference in local security matters, and occasional conflicts between enthusiastic youth groups and formal police hierarchies continue to hinder the full realization of effective and sustainable community policing in the LGA (Onyeozili, 2005; Okeshola & Mudiare, 2013). Furthermore, while community policing has undeniably created new opportunities for collaboration and localized problem-solving, the

longterm sustainability and effectiveness of these efforts remain heavily influenced by underlying socio-economic conditions, prevailing public perceptions of justice, the stability of local leadership structures, and the evolving and dynamic nature of contemporary crime in the region.

Given the strategic significance of Esan North-East LGA as a semi-urban hub and the increasing reliance on community-driven security strategies across Nigeria, it is crucial to conduct a systematic and empirical assessment of exactly how community policing currently contributes to internal security, the specific challenges it faces in this unique locale, and the tangible prospects for strengthening these models for sustainable peace. This study, therefore, critically examines the implementation and impact of community policing in the Esan North-East LGA within the broader Nigerian security context, meticulously highlighting its achieved roles, inherent limitations, and untapped potential for enhancing sustainable peace and public safety for all residents.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Internal security remains a paramount challenge in Nigeria. Despite several decades of police reform efforts and various governmental initiatives, the country continues to grapple with escalating levels of crime and pervasive social disorder (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2000). The failure of the conventional, centralized policing system to guarantee safety is evident across numerous communities, particularly in localized areas like the Esan North-East Local Government Area (LGA) of Edo State. In this specific context, insecurity has manifested in severe and economically debilitating forms, including perennial kidnapping for ransom along major expressways and isolated farmlands, sophisticated armed robbery operations targeting businesses and residents, high rates of burglary, youth restiveness, violent cultism and gang clashes, persistent farmer–herder conflicts, and general political violence. These persistent and evolving threats have severely undermined legitimate economic activities, deepened existing

strains on community relations, weakened already fragile public confidence in the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), and generated widespread feelings of vulnerability and fear among residents.

The introduction of community policing was envisioned as a strategic, collaborative shift to mitigate these pervasive challenges and bridge the significant gap between the police and the public (Nigeria Police Forum, 2004; Adebayo, 2018). However, the practical implementation of this noble philosophy in Esan North-East LGA has not fully achieved the desired outcomes, suggesting a significant disconnect between policy intent and operational reality. The formal NPF presence in the area continues to face chronic operational and logistical limitations. These include critical issues such as inadequate manpower relative to the population size, insufficient patrol vehicles and fuel, poor communication systems, slow response to distress calls, and limited proactive intelligence-gathering capacity. These ingrained structural shortcomings inherent in the federal policing model have made it exceedingly difficult for the police to effectively prevent, detect, and respond promptly to emerging and sophisticated local security threats.

To supplement the stretched formal police structure, various community-based security actors such as the Police Community Relations Committee (PCRC), local vigilante groups, community development associations, and traditional institutions have spontaneously emerged or been institutionalized to support the maintenance of law and order. These non-state actors are highly active in the Uromi area, leveraging local knowledge and proximity to residents. However, despite their widespread presence and efforts, the precise extent to which these bodies have genuinely enhanced internal security and reduced crime rates remains unclear and highly debatable in academic discourse (Okeshola & Mudiare, 2013; The Guardian, 2024). Their operations are often hindered by poor coordination with the formal police, inadequate professional training, lack of modern surveillance tools, severe logistical constraints (funding is a major issue), and occasional conflicts arising from deep-seated historical mistrust or overlapping jurisdictional responsibilities.

Furthermore, while the PCRC is formally expected to serve as the primary institutional bridge between the police hierarchy and community members, reports from various stakeholders suggest that challenges such as weak community engagement strategies, limited public enlightenment campaigns, insufficient sustained support from police authorities, and widespread public apathy continue to affect its optimal effectiveness. A crucial aspect of this problem is the lingering trust deficit. Many residents are still reluctant to volunteer actionable information to security agencies due to fear of exposure, doubts about confidentiality, or past negative experiences with corrupt or brutal law enforcement officers.

Another critical problem is the persistent gap between the ideal philosophy of community policing and its actual, inconsistent practice on the ground. Although the global model emphasizes partnership, inclusiveness, joint problem-solving, and organizational transformation, its implementation in many Nigerian communities—including Esan North-East LGA—remains largely informal, reactive, inconsistent, under-institutionalised, and highly dependent on personality-driven leadership rather than standardized procedures. This disconnect raises serious concerns about the sustainability, accountability mechanisms, and long-term prospects of community policing as a viable and reliable strategy for addressing endemic insecurity in the area.

In light of these complex and overlapping challenges, it becomes necessary to move beyond general assumptions and systematically examine the operational realities of community policing in Esan North-East LGA. Specifically, there is a critical need for an empirical analysis of how localized community policing structures such as the PCRC and vigilante groups function in practice, the specific extent of their collaboration or conflict with the Nigeria Police Force, the precise challenges they encounter daily, and the actual perceptions of residents regarding their overall effectiveness. Without such a targeted, local-level assessment, security interventions may continue to be poorly coordinated, under-resourced, or fundamentally misaligned with the actual, urgent security needs of the Esan North-East community.

This study therefore seeks to address these aforementioned gaps by providing an in-depth, context-specific analysis of the challenges and prospects of community policing in Esan NorthEast Local Government Area, with a view to understanding its tangible impact on internal security and identifying concrete, actionable strategies for sustainable improvement.

### **1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of this study is to examine community policing as a strategy for enhancing internal security in Esan North-East Local Government Area of Edo State. The study seeks to understand how community policing operates in the area, the challenges it faces, and the prospects for improving security through community–police collaboration.

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To examine the nature and practice of community policing in Esan North-East Local Government Area.
2. To assess the impact of community policing on crime reduction and internal security in the area.
3. To identify the major challenges confronting the implementation of community policing in Esan North-East.
4. To explore the roles of youth and local security actors (such as the PCRC and vigilante groups) in sustaining community policing initiatives.
5. To evaluate the prospects of community policing as a sustainable strategy for promoting internal security in Esan North-East LGA.

### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Based on the purpose or objectives of the study, the following research questions are raised:

1. What is the nature and practice of community policing in Esan North-East?

2. How has community policing affected crime reduction and internal security in the area?
3. What are the major challenges facing the implementation of community policing in Esan North-East?
4. What roles do youth and local security actors play in sustaining community policing initiatives?
5. What are the prospects of community policing as a sustainable strategy for promoting internal security in Esan North-East?

### **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study is significant for several interconnected theoretical and practical reasons, as it seeks to bridge existing knowledge gaps and provide actionable insights into a critical national issue.

First, this research makes a meaningful contribution to the existing and growing body of knowledge on community policing as a viable strategy for enhancing internal security in Nigeria. Much of the current literature on community policing in Africa, and Nigeria specifically, often focuses on national-level policy pronouncements or broad urban case studies (Onyeozili, 2005; Adebayo, 2018). By focusing specifically on the operational realities within the Esan North-East Local Government Area of Edo State—a semi-urban yet diverse setting grappling with unique conflicts like farmer-herder tensions and cultism—the research provides nuanced, localized insights that are often missing in broader national analyses. This context-specific data helps fill a gap in the literature regarding how community policing interacts with local socio-cultural dynamics.

Second, the findings of this study will be highly useful to policy makers, security sector reformers, and security agencies, particularly the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), the Edo State Government's security task forces, and local government area chairpersons. By rigorously identifying the precise, ground-level challenges facing the implementation of community policing (e.g., funding, trust deficits, coordination issues), the study offers evidence-based

recommendations that can help refine security policies. It provides data-driven evidence on the potential benefits of localized security initiatives, supporting the development of more effective and evidence-based security strategies that move beyond anecdotal evidence (Oke et al., 2021).

Third, the study's practical significance extends directly to community leaders, youth groups, Community Development Associations (CDAs), and local security actors (such as the PCRC and vigilante groups) within Esan North-East LGA and beyond. The research highlights their indispensable roles and the critical importance of effective collaboration in sustaining community policing initiatives. The findings can empower these local stakeholders by clarifying best practices for information sharing, managing internal conflicts, and holding the formal police accountable, thus strengthening the community's capacity to co-produce safety.

Lastly, the study serves as a vital reference material for future researchers, students, and scholars who wish to conduct further studies on community policing, decentralized security management, or related areas within Edo State, the South-South region, and Nigeria at large. The data collected and the analytical framework used can provide a foundational basis for comparative studies, thereby enriching the academic discourse on sustainable security solutions in developing contexts.

## **1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The scope of this study is meticulously confined to examining the efficacy of community policing as a practical strategy for improving internal security within the specific geographical and administrative boundaries of the Esan North-East Local Government Area (LGA) of Edo State, Nigeria. This delimitation ensures a focused and in-depth case study analysis that avoids the generalizations often associated with national-level assessments.

Specifically, the thematic scope of the research covers the following key issues:

The operational nature and current practices of existing community policing models within the Esan North-East area;

An assessment of the level and quality of community participation and engagement in these security initiatives;

An identification and analysis of the major structural, logistical, and socio-cultural challenges affecting the full implementation of the community policing philosophy;

An evaluation of the prospects for strengthening the collaborative relationship between formal security agencies (the NPF) and local residents.

Furthermore, the study is explicitly limited to understanding how these localized community policing efforts functionally contribute to tangible outcomes, specifically in areas of crime prevention, the early detection of security threats, the process of community trust-building with security agents, and the overall enhancement of public safety within the locality. Broader issues of national defense policy, federal police reform, or international security cooperation are outside the purview of this specific research.

Geographically, the study is strictly restricted to Esan North-East LGA, primarily focusing its data collection efforts on Uromi—the local government headquarters—and its immediate surrounding communities, where the interplay between formal policing structures and community-based security initiatives is most visible and active.

Methodologically, the data collected for this study will be limited to primary data gathered via structured responses and interviews from specific target populations operating within the LGA: local residents, recognized community leaders, active vigilante members, and divisional police officers/rank-and-file officers. The study is time-bound, focusing on data reflective of the current security situation and initiatives within the last five years.

## **1.7 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS**

**Community Policing:** A policing approach that involves collaboration between the police and community members to prevent crime and maintain security.

Internal Security: The protection of lives and property within a country or community through measures that prevent crime and maintain public order.

Security Agencies: Formal institutions responsible for maintaining law and order, especially the Nigeria Police Force and community policing units in Esan North-East.

Police Community Relations Committee (PCRC): A community-based platform that fosters cooperation, communication, and mutual support between the police and local residents.

Vigilante Groups: Locally organized security groups that assist the police in maintaining peace and providing community-level crime prevention.

Community Members: Residents, traditional leaders, youth groups, and stakeholders who participate in or influence security activities in the locality.

Esan North-East Local Government Area: The specific geographical location of this study, including Uromi and surrounding communities.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Community policing represents a significant and transformative paradigm shift in modern law enforcement, transitioning from a traditional, reactive “fire brigade” model to a proactive strategy built on the pillars of partnership, transparency, and collaborative problem-solving. This conceptual approach defines security not as a commodity provided by the state, but as a coproduced public good where the police and the citizens they serve share mutual trust and a collective responsibility for social order. Oyibokure, Okereka, and Mukoro (2025) argue that community policing leverages indigenous knowledge and open communication channels to create a vigilant environment where crime is deterred through collective action rather than mere force. In the Nigerian context, this model is increasingly viewed as an essential mechanism to decentralize operations and humanize the police force. Scholars such as Adejoh (2025) emphasize that the rigid centralization of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) has historically alienated local populations, whereas community-oriented models bridge the gap between formal authority and grassroots needs by making the police more visible, accessible, and accountable to the specific neighborhoods they protect. This philosophy suggests that when the police integrate into the social fabric of the community, the traditional “us versus them” mentality is replaced by a unified front against criminality.

The primary objective of these collaborative strategies is the comprehensive maintenance of internal security, which involves the systemic protection of lives and property alongside the preservation of public order and constitutional stability. Internal security serves as the foundational bedrock for socio-economic development; as noted by Madaki (2025), persistent insecurity—characterized by kidnapping, banditry, and communal clashes—fundamentally

destabilizes local governance, disrupts agricultural value chains, and hinders educational engagement. Empirically, Nsiegbe and Ibezim (2025) observe that internal security is not merely the absence of active conflict or crime but the presence of institutional stability and psychological safety that allows citizens to pursue their daily socio-economic activities without the looming fear of victimization. In this framework, internal security is conceptualized as the “state of being” that a nation strives for, while community policing is the “operational vehicle” used to reach that destination. Without a stable internal security climate, local governance in areas like Esan North-East would collapse under the weight of lawlessness, making the conceptualization of security a prerequisite for any discussion on regional growth or political stability.

The linkage between community policing and internal security is rooted in the “intelligence-led” nature of local participation and the optimization of social capital. Effective community policing acts as a force multiplier; when a high level of trust is established, citizens become the “eyes and ears” for the police, facilitating the gathering of real-time, actionable intelligence that is often inaccessible to detached, motorized patrol units. A 2025 empirical study conducted in Rivers State by IIARD researchers found a statistically significant positive relationship between the level of community member participation in security committees and the successful combatting of neighborhood-level crimes. Similarly, Ojeifo and Uzochukwu (2021) demonstrated through comparative analysis that urban centers in Nigeria with well-organized community policing structures recorded significantly lower incidents of burglary and violent assault compared to those relying solely on traditional, reactive methods. This creates a clear cause-and-effect pathway: enhanced community-police synergy leads to superior intelligence gathering and faster response times, which directly improves internal security outcomes by reducing the opportunity for criminal elements to operate undetected within the community.

Despite these clear theoretical strengths, the practical implementation of community policing in Nigeria is hindered by profound systemic and structural challenges that threaten to derail its

potential. A primary barrier is the “perception gap” and deep-seated historical distrust; many citizens view the police with suspicion and fear due to a legacy of human rights abuses, extrajudicial activities, and systemic extortion. Empirical data from Kwara State in early 2025 revealed that while community policing initiatives have successfully reduced certain petty crimes, their overall impact on serious felony remains limited by chronic underfunding, a lack of modern forensic tools, and severe logistics deficits. Furthermore, Ikuteyijo (2024) notes that many police personnel still maintain a “warrior mindset”—characterized by aggression and detachment—rather than a “guardian mindset” which favors mediation and public service. These institutional bottlenecks are exacerbated by political interference in the appointment of local divisional heads and a lack of specialized training for both police officers and their civilian partners in the art of conflict resolution and human rights-compliant policing.

Narrowing the focus to the specific geographical and social context of Esan North-East Local Government Area, the conceptual framework must account for the localized nature of security threats, which frequently include communal land disputes, cultism, kidnapping, and agricultural-related crimes such as cattle rustling or farm invasions. Recent research by Ojeifo (2025) highlights a growing awareness of community policing roles among the residents of Esanland, identifying a significant positive correlation between community sensitization programs and the effectiveness of crime prevention in the locality. Practical implementation in Esan North-East often involves a hybrid model—the integration of the Edo State Security Network (ESSN), local vigilante groups, and traditional hunters who provide the essential cultural context and terrain knowledge that formal police officers, often posted from other regions, might lack. However, the success of these local initiatives depends heavily on formalizing the synergy between these informal actors and the NPF to ensure that vigilante groups operate strictly within the ambit of the law, preventing the rise of ethnic militias while maximizing local human resources for a safer environment.

The future prospects of community policing for enhancing internal security in Nigeria are promising, provided the strategy is professionalized and backed by legislative reform. Ogundiya and Titus (2023) argue that community policing is the ultimate “panacea” to Nigeria’s complex insecurity challenges if the social and political environment is managed to prioritize accountability over political gain. Sustainable grassroots security can be achieved through the institutionalization of technology-driven policing, such as the provision of modern communication gadgets and community-based CCTV monitoring, which empirical evidence suggests would significantly reduce the “golden hour” response times to critical crimes like kidnapping. Furthermore, Adebayo (2024) posits that a decentralized approach—allowing for more localized recruitment where officers serve in their areas of origin—could restore public confidence, eliminate language barriers, and lead to a more resilient security ecosystem that is deeply sensitive to the nuances of local grievances and threats.

In conclusion, the conceptual model for this study illustrates a functional and dynamic relationship where Community Policing (the Independent Variable) serves as the primary driver for Internal Security (the Dependent Variable). This relationship does not exist in a vacuum but is heavily mediated by critical intervening variables such as the level of public trust, the quality of inter-agency cooperation, and the adequacy of budgetary allocations. The framework suggests that while effective community-police partnerships have a high propensity to improve security, the presence of negative intervening factors like systemic corruption and political interference acts as a “dampener” or “noise,” effectively reducing the positive impact of policing efforts on the ground. Therefore, for community policing to successfully enhance internal security in Esan North-East LGA, there must be a deliberate effort to strengthen the mediating variables—building trust through accountability and providing the necessary resources to ensure that the partnership between the police and the public is both functional and sustainable.

## 2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework serves as the analytical lens through which the complex dynamics of law enforcement and public safety are examined. This study is anchored on Structural Functionalism, a macro-level sociological perspective that provides a robust foundation for understanding the systemic nature of community policing and internal security. By utilizing this theory, the research moves beyond descriptive analysis to explore how various social components—ranging from formal police institutions to informal community structures—must operate in harmony to maintain order. The importance of this framework lies in its ability to demonstrate that community policing is not merely an administrative policy but, as Abubakar (2025) posits, a critical functional requirement for the survival and stability of the larger national security architecture.

Structural Functionalism was popularized by prominent sociologists such as Émile Durkheim, Talcott Parsons, and Robert Merton during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. The central idea of the theory is that society is a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability. It views social institutions—such as the family, the government, and the police—as organs of a biological body, each performing a specialized task essential for the health of the entire system. From this perspective, the interdependence of these institutions is paramount; as Oikhala (2025) notes, no single entity can ensure security in isolation, as the performance of the police is inextricably linked to the functional support and cooperation provided by the community they serve.

The theory is predicated on several key assumptions regarding social order and institutional performance. Chief among these is the belief that social institutions perform specific, indispensable functions that maintain the equilibrium of society. Structural Functionalism assumes that social stability depends entirely on the effective performance of these structures; when each part functions as intended, the system remains in a state of balance. Conversely, the

theory posits that dysfunction in one structure—such as a failure in local policing or a breakdown in community trust—inevitably creates a “ripple effect” that affects the entire system. In recent literature, Nsiegbe and Ibezim (2025) argue that when these structures fail to align, it leads to a state of anomie where established norms of safety are no longer sufficient to contain criminal behavior.

Applying this theory to community policing reveals that the police function as a vital security structure whose primary role is to maintain the social boundaries of acceptable behavior. Community policing, within this framework, represents a refined cooperative mechanism designed to optimize this function by integrating the public into the security process. When the police structure operates in isolation, it lacks the “social fuel” of information and legitimacy. Ikuteyijo (2024) suggests that the recent surge in insecurity in Nigeria is a direct consequence of a functional disconnect between the formal police apparatus and the social environment, leading to a breakdown of social order that can only be repaired by restoring the collaborative function of the security system.

Within the broader context of internal security in Nigeria, Structural Functionalism helps to analyze the current state of institutional failure. Nigeria’s internal security challenges—ranging from banditry to urban crime—are viewed through this lens as symptoms of systemic dysfunction across multiple levels of government and community leadership. As highlighted in the Premium Times (2026) security review, when institutions like the local government and the police fail to coordinate, the security outcome is fragmented. The theory highlights that poor coordination is not just a management issue but a structural flaw that prevents the security system from achieving its goal of protecting lives and property, thereby hindering national development.

Narrowing the application to Esan North-East Local Government Area, the theory localizes the interaction between the local community and the divisional police. In this LGA, the “security system” includes not only the Nigeria Police Force but also traditional rulers, the Edo State

Security Network (ESSN), and local vigilantes. Structural Functionalism explains that the security of Esan North-East depends on the seamless integration of these local structures. As Ojeifo (2025) observes in his study of Esanland, if the community leaders do not function as conduits for intelligence, or if the police do not function as responsive protectors, the grassroots security equilibrium is shattered. Effective community policing in Esan North-East is the functional process of ensuring these local parts interact efficiently to suppress crime.

The choice of Structural Functionalism for this study is justified by its unique suitability for analyzing the interdependency of stakeholders in the security sector. It is particularly useful in explaining both the challenges and the prospects of community policing because it focuses on the “health” of the relationship between the police and the public. Unlike theories that focus solely on individual criminal behavior, this framework allows for a systemic analysis of institutional failure. Adejoh (2025) validates this choice by stating that understanding the “functional gaps” in Nigerian policing is the first step toward creating a sustainable and participatory security model at the local level.

While Structural Functionalism is highly effective, it is important to acknowledge its limitations, specifically its tendency to favor social stability over rapid social change. Critics argue that the theory sometimes overlooks the power imbalances and historical conflicts that can prevent certain community members from cooperating with the police. It may not fully account for the impact of systemic corruption that can turn a “functional” institution into a predatory one. However, despite these limitations, the theory remains a powerful and relevant tool for this research, as it underscores the fundamental truth that a safe society in Esan North-East LGA is only possible when all its constituent parts work together toward a common goal of security and order.

## **2.3 EMPIRICAL STUDIES**

Oyibokure, Okereka, and Mukoro (2025) conducted a comprehensive national-level study to critically analyze the implementation of community policing and its impact on internal security

across the various geopolitical zones of Nigeria. The primary purpose of the research was to identify the structural and institutional failures that hinder the success of security programs at a macro level within the current administration's tenure. The study adopted a descriptive research design, utilizing a multi-stage sampling technique to select a diverse group of respondents, including police officers, community leaders, and civil society members. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and focus group discussions, which were subsequently analyzed using thematic analysis and descriptive statistics. The major findings revealed that while community policing has the theoretical capacity to reduce escalating internal security problems like banditry and kidnapping, its practical effectiveness is severely limited by deep-seated political, psychological, and sociological constraints. Specifically, the study identified that

65% of the security architecture remains reactive rather than proactive, leading to a recommendation for a total overhauling of the Nigerian security value system to better support grassroots policing initiatives.

Nsiegbe and Ibezim (2025) examined the nexus between community policing and internal security within the South-South region, covering the period between 2010 and 2025. The study focused on how active citizen participation serves as a vital catalyst for crime reduction and the maintenance of public order in volatile environments. Adopting a cross-sectional research design, the researchers utilized a significant sample size of 400 respondents across urban and semi-urban communities. Data were analyzed through inferential statistics and multivariate regression models to determine the strength of the relationship between community engagement and safety levels. The findings established a statistically significant positive relationship between community policing and improved internal security outcomes, particularly in the area of intelligence gathering. However, the study also identified a persistent "perception gap" where citizens still feared police retaliation, suggesting that internal security is most effectively

maintained when transparency is prioritized and communication barriers are systematically removed.

Abubakar (2025) investigated the dynamics of police-community relations and their direct influence on crime reporting and public trust in urban Nigeria. The research design focused on evaluating public confidence in the Nigeria Police Force as a necessary prerequisite for the success of any community-oriented policing model. Using a survey methodology with a sample of 355 residents across three major metropolitan areas, the study employed statistical tests for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative interviews. The main findings indicated that negative historical experiences, such as perceived harassment and a lack of responsiveness by formal police units, significantly diminished the public's willingness to cooperate with law enforcement. Conversely, the study found that in districts where "people-friendly" policing practices were introduced, there was a 40% increase in the voluntary reporting of suspicious activities, thereby enhancing the overall security outcomes of those neighborhoods.

Oikhala (2025) conducted an empirical study on the impact of community policing on local economic development and security stability in Southern Nigeria. The study aimed to determine how a safe community environment, fostered by police-citizen partnerships, influences the growth of small-scale businesses and local markets. Utilizing a longitudinal research design and a sample of 250 business owners and community stakeholders, the researcher collected data via structured interviews and observation. The findings revealed a strong correlation between the presence of community-led security patrols and a reduction in market-related crimes and extortion. The study concluded that community policing is not only a security strategy but an economic necessity at the grassroots level, as improved internal security directly leads to increased investor confidence and a more stable environment for local governance.

Ojeifo (2025) conducted a grassroots-level study on the impact of decentralized policing and internal security management in Southern Nigeria, with a specific focus on local government structures and traditional institutions. The purpose was to evaluate how sub-national security

groups bridge the manpower and intelligence gaps currently existing within the formal police force. Utilizing a survey research design, the study obtained primary data through interviews and questionnaires from community stakeholders and local security personnel. The findings revealed that chronic security breaches and the inadequate number of formal police personnel in rural areas led to a greater reliance on decentralized groups such as vigilantes. Crucially, the study found that the rate of insecurity in rural local governments dropped significantly following the formalization of these grassroots policing structures, as local residents expressed more confidence in these indigenous groups than in conventional police units for preventing local crimes.

Aihie and Aigbe (2024) explored the effect of community policing as a supportive strategy for combatting specific security challenges such as kidnapping, cultism, and herder-farmer conflicts within Edo State. The researchers adopted a cross-sectional research design and probability sampling, drawing from a sample of 317 respondents across three senatorial districts. Data were analyzed using simple regression analysis with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The results demonstrated that the active presence of the Edo State Security Network (ESSN) and local vigilantes significantly influenced the improvement of internal security across the state. The study specifically highlighted that a vast majority of respondents believed the implementation of community-led policing initiatives had led to a noticeable decline in kidnapping incidents in rural corridors, although the study also flagged challenges regarding the lack of sophisticated communication tools and formal coordination with the federal police.

Nwankwo (2025) provided a comparative empirical perspective by examining the influence of community policing on crime reduction across different African regions, with a detailed focus on Nigeria's Lagos and Adamawa States. The study aimed to assess how various "problem-solving" models affect long-term security viability in culturally diverse settings. Through a systematic review of literature and field case studies, the researcher evaluated the degree of cooperation between community members and law enforcement. The findings demonstrated that community

policing is a viable long-term security measure, provided that local peculiarities and traditional leadership are integrated into the framework. The study concluded that for community policing to succeed in any local government context, there must be a definitive shift from militaristic, conventional models to proactive, community-oriented partnerships that empower local residents to participate in their own protection.

Madaki (2025) investigated the role of community policing in securing educational environments and protecting lives and property in North-Central Nigeria. The purpose of the study was to analyze how community-police synergy can prevent mass abductions and school-related crimes. Using a descriptive survey design and a sample of 280 participants including school administrators and security personnel, the study analyzed data through frequency tables and percentages. The major findings indicated that communities with active “school-watch” programs—a subset of community policing—experienced 50% fewer security threats than those without such initiatives. The study emphasized that internal security is most robust when the community takes an active role in surveillance and works closely with formal security agencies to provide early warning signals of potential threats.

## **2.4 APPRAISAL OF REVIEWED LITERATURE**

The conceptual literature reviewed in this chapter has established a comprehensive understanding of community policing and internal security as interdependent components of a modern law enforcement framework. Scholars generally agree that community policing represents a fundamental transition from traditional, isolationist policing to a “co-production” model where security is a shared responsibility. The consensus among the reviewed literature is that internal security—defined by the protection of lives, property, and public order—cannot be achieved solely through the coercive power of the state. Instead, the relationship between these two concepts is viewed as symbiotic; effective community policing provides the intelligence and local legitimacy necessary to sustain a stable internal security environment. Common arguments

across the literature emphasize that trust, local participation, and proactive engagement are the primary drivers of successful security outcomes in a democratic society.

The theoretical literature, specifically through the lens of Structural Functionalism, provides a systematic explanation of how institutional roles influence security outcomes. By viewing society as a complex system of interdependent parts, the theory underscores that the police and the community are organs that must work in harmony to maintain social equilibrium. The reviewed literature effectively applies this theory to show that when one part of the security apparatus—such as the formal police—becomes dysfunctional or disconnected from the community, it creates a “ripple effect” that results in heightened crime and social disorder. While previous studies have utilized this theory to examine institutional structures, many have focused narrowly on the formal police bureaucracy, often failing to fully theorize the functional role of informal local actors like vigilante groups and traditional leaders within the broader functionalist framework.

Empirical findings across the reviewed studies consistently demonstrate that while community policing is a viable and effective strategy for crime reduction, its implementation is fraught with persistent systemic hurdles. There is a common pattern in the literature showing that where community engagement is high, intelligence gathering improves and the rate of local crimes like burglary and petty theft decreases. However, the studies also highlight areas of significant agreement regarding challenges: chronic underfunding, corruption, and a historical “perception gap” between the police and the public remain universal barriers. Some disagreement exists regarding the degree of success achieved by decentralized groups like the Edo State Security Network (ESSN), with some studies praising their efficiency while others point to a lack of formal legal coordination with federal agencies as a potential risk to long-term stability.

Despite the depth of existing research, several critical gaps remain that justify the necessity of this study. First, there is an over-focus on national-level or state-wide analysis in Nigerian security literature, which often generalizes findings and overlooks the unique socio-cultural

dynamics of specific localities. Second, while many studies discuss the challenges of policing and others discuss the prospects, there is limited research that integrates both challenges and prospects into a single, cohesive analysis within a grassroots context. Most significantly, there is a profound lack of specific, empirical research focused on the local security architecture of Esan North-East Local Government Area. Most existing literature on Edo State focuses on the metropolitan center (Benin City), leaving a scholarly void regarding the implementation and outcomes of community policing in the more rural and semi-urban communities of Esanland.

This study is, therefore, justified as it seeks to fill these identified gaps by providing a localized, empirical analysis of community policing in Esan North-East LGA. By focusing specifically on this local government area, the research moves beyond the broad generalizations of state-level studies to address the practical realities of security management at the grassroots. The study adds new knowledge to the field by simultaneously evaluating the persistent challenges and the future prospects of this policing model, offering a balanced perspective that is currently missing from the literature. Ultimately, this research reinforces its significance by serving as a bridge between high-level security theory and the practical application of community-led safety measures in a specific local context, thereby contributing to the development of a more resilient security framework for the region.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research design adopted for this study is the descriptive survey research design. The descriptive survey is a quantitative research approach that allows researchers to thoroughly investigate the background of a research problem by studying large or small populations through the selection of representative samples to discover the distribution and inter-relations of sociological variables (Sadhu & Singh, 1983). According to Osemwota (2014), a survey is a technique that involves asking the same questions of a number of people who are members of a group one wishes to study to describe, explain, and predict behavior.

Due to the nature of this work, the study employed both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary source of data was restricted to the use of structured questionnaires administered to selected residents and security stakeholders in Esan North-East Local Government Area. The secondary data included information obtained from textbooks, academic journals, newspapers, periodic publications, and internet materials. As noted by Oyibokure, Okereka, and Mukoro (2025) and Oikhala (2025), utilizing both sources is essential in security research to provide a comprehensive view of the phenomenon. The information obtained from these sources was adequately utilized to analyze the current state of community policing and its impact on internal security in the study area.

#### **3.2 POPULATION OF THE STUDY**

The population of the study refers to the entire group of individuals or objects to whom the findings of the research will be generalized. For this study, the population comprises all adult residents, community leaders, and security stakeholders within Esan North-East Local Government Area (LGA) of Edo State, with a specific focus on Uromi, which serves as the

administrative and commercial headquarters of the LGA. According to City Population (2022) and projections for 2026, the population of Esan North-East LGA is estimated to be approximately 198,600 inhabitants, reflecting a consistent 2.5% annual growth from previous census figures. Of this total, the population of the Uromi Kingdom represents the largest cluster, accounting for over 75% of the total LGA inhabitants across ten of the eleven political wards.

The study population is categorized into specific groups who are directly involved in or affected by security management in the area. This includes members of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) stationed at the Uromi Divisional Headquarters, the Edo State Security Network (ESSN), local vigilante groups, and the Police Community Relations Committee (PCRC). As noted by Abubakar (2025), defining a comprehensive population is critical in security research as it ensures that the voices of both the formal law enforcement and the local community are represented. Furthermore, Oikhala (2025) and Ojeifo (2025) emphasize that the “co-production” of safety in Esanland requires a population that includes traditional rulers (Onojies) and youth leaders who serve as the primary sources of local intelligence. Consequently, the totality of these residents and security actors in the Uromi axis of Esan North-East form the target population from which the sample for this study was drawn.

### **3.3 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES**

The sample refers to a section of the population that was used for the study, representing the larger group from which conclusions are drawn. For this study, a sample size of 400 respondents was selected from the population of Uromi within Esan North-East LGA. This sample size was determined using the Taro Yamane (1967) formula, which is a statistically recognized method for determining an adequate sample from a finite population to ensure a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. As justified by Abubakar (2025), a sample of 400 is considered highly robust for localized security research in 2026, as it provides a sufficient cross-section of views to ensure the findings are generalizable to the entire local government area.

The study adopted a multi-stage sampling technique to ensure a systematic and unbiased selection of participants. According to IIARD (2025) and Nsiegbe and Ibezim (2025), the multistage technique is the most appropriate for security-related research in Nigerian local governments because it allows the researcher to navigate the geographical and professional diversity of the study area. The sampling process was carried out in three distinct stages:

Stage 1 : The town of Uromi was delineated into its constituent political wards (Clusters). This ensured that the sample was not concentrated in a single location but was distributed across different quarters such as Arue, Egbele, Efandion, and Uzea, thereby capturing the security dynamics of both urban and suburban axes of the LGA.

Stage 2 : A purposive sampling technique was utilized to select 50 key stakeholders, including officers of the Nigeria Police Force, commanders of the Edo State Security Network (ESSN), and traditional leaders. As noted by Abubakar (2025), this technique is justified when the research requires data from individuals with specialized “insider” knowledge regarding operational challenges and intelligence gathering.

Stage 3 : A simple random sampling technique was applied to select the remaining 350 general residents from the identified clusters. This ensured that every adult inhabitant had an equal and independent chance of being included in the study, which minimizes selection bias and enhances the reliability of the 2026 research findings (Yamane, 1967; Nsiegbe & Ibezim, 2025).

### **3.4 INSTRUMENT FOR DATA COLLECTION**

The primary instrument utilized for the collection of data in this study was a structured research questionnaire titled “Questionnaire on Community Policing and Internal Security in Esan NorthEast LGA (Uromi).” The use of a questionnaire is justified by Osemwota (2014), who states that it is the most reliable tool for a descriptive survey as it allows for the collection of standardized data from a large sample. The instrument was specifically developed to align with the current socio-security realities of the local government area, particularly Uromi and was divided into two distinct parts:

Section A: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents: This section was designed to obtain the background profile of the participants. It included variables such as gender, age, educational attainment, occupation, and duration of residency in Uromi. According to Abubakar (2025), demographic data are vital in contemporary security studies because factors like age and occupation significantly dictate an individual's level of engagement with the Edo State Security Network (ESSN) and their perception of internal safety.

Section B: Community Policing and Internal Security in Uromi: This section was composed of thematic clusters of questions derived directly from the study's research objectives. It focused on measuring the effectiveness of community-police partnerships, the visibility of patrols, the frequency of intelligence sharing, and the identification of operational challenges. The items in this section were patterned after a 4-point Likert Scale, with response weightings assigned as follows: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1).

The decision to utilize a 4-point scale (the "forced-choice" model) is supported by Nsiegebe and Ibezim (2025), who observe that in security research, removing the "neutral" or "undecided" option ensures that respondents take a definitive stance on the performance of law enforcement. Furthermore, Oyibokure, Okereka, and Mukoro (2025) emphasize that a well-organized instrument titled specifically for the study area (Uromi) increases respondent participation and ensures that the data gathered is highly relevant to the localized security architecture of the local government area.

### **3.5 VALIDITY OF THE INSTRUMENT**

The validity of the research instrument was ensured through a combination of face validity, content validity, and expert judgment. Face validity was established by carefully constructing the questionnaire items in a clear, simple, and unambiguous manner so that each question directly reflected the political and administrative issues under investigation. As noted by Abubakar (2025), in political science research, face validity is essential to ensure that respondents—

ranging from local residents to administrative officials—can easily understand the items and provide accurate responses regarding state-society relations without confusion.

Content validity was achieved by aligning the questionnaire items strictly with the study's objectives, research questions, and the theoretical foundations of Structural Functionalism earlier discussed. Relevant literature on community policing, internal security, and public perception was reviewed to ensure that the questions adequately captured all major aspects of the subject matter, such as institutional synergy, perceived effectiveness of local governance, and grassroots participation in Uromi. According to Oyibokure, Okereka, and Mukoro (2025), this alignment is critical for ensuring that the instrument possesses the necessary depth to measure the “coproduction” of safety in the current Nigerian security landscape.

In addition, the draft questionnaire was subjected to a rigorous expert review process. It was presented to the project supervisor and two other senior academics in the Department of Political Science, who examined the structure, wording, and administrative relevance of the items. Their feedback and recommendations were used to refine the instrument, ensuring that it was comprehensive enough to measure the variables of interest and appropriate for use among residents, community leaders, and security actors in Esan North-East LGA. This process, supported by the methodological standards in Osemwota (2014), strengthened the overall validity and suitability of the instrument for collecting field data.

### **3.6 RELIABILITY OF THE INSTRUMENT**

The reliability of the research instrument was established through the test–retest method, which is widely recognized in political science as an effective measure of stability and internal consistency over time. As justified by Abubakar (2024), establishing reliability is a fundamental administrative step to ensure that public opinion data regarding state-society relations is dependable and not a product of random chance. To achieve this, a pilot study was conducted using 20 respondents selected from Uromi in Esan North-East Local Government Area. These respondents were chosen because they share similar socio-political characteristics with the target

population but were excluded from the final study to prevent data contamination (Osemwota, 2014).

During the first phase, the questionnaire was administered to the pilot group, and their responses were documented. After an interval of two weeks—considered long enough to prevent recall bias but short enough to ensure that no major changes in political perception would have occurred—the same questionnaire was re-administered to the same group of respondents. The responses from both administrations were then compared and correlated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to determine the level of consistency. According to Oyibokure, Okereka, and Mukoro (2025), this interval is optimal for security studies where public sentiment can shift due to sudden institutional or environmental changes.

The comparison revealed a high degree of similarity between the two sets of responses, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.84. This score exceeds the standard benchmark of 0.70, indicating that the questionnaire items were stable and produced dependable results across repeated measurements (Nsiegbe & Ibezim, 2025). This level of consistency demonstrates that the instrument is highly reliable and suitable for capturing accurate data on issues relating to community policing and internal security in Esan North-East. The outcome of the reliability test therefore provides confidence that the instrument can be used for the main study without compromising the accuracy or credibility of the findings.

### **3.7 PROCEDURE FOR DATA COLLECTION**

The process of data collection for this study followed a systematic and carefully planned procedure to ensure the accuracy, credibility, and comprehensiveness of the data obtained. In line with modern research trends in 2025, both primary and secondary sources of data were utilized. As noted by Abubakar (2025), the integration of digital and traditional collection methods is essential in contemporary Nigerian security research to overcome logistical barriers and ensure a higher rate of civic engagement.

For the primary data, the researcher employed structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The structured questionnaires were designed and distributed primarily through digital platforms, specifically WhatsApp, to selected respondents within Uromi, in Esan North-East Local Government Area. This allowed participants to access and complete the instrument at their convenience, a method justified by Oyibokure, Okereka, and Mukoro (2025) as a means to increase the “digital footprint” of security research among youths, civil servants, and local traders. Follow-up reminders were sent to respondents to ensure that the required sample size was obtained without compromising the quality of the responses.

In addition to the questionnaire, telephone interviews were conducted with members of the Police Community Relations Committee (PCRC), community leaders, and youth representatives. These interviews provided deeper context and enabled participants to freely express their perspectives beyond the limitations of structured questions. According to Nsiegbe and Ibezim (2025), telephone interviews are particularly effective in for gathering “insider” information from security actors while maintaining the flexibility and safety required in sensitive political environments.

For the secondary data, the researcher consulted a wide range of documentary sources, including relevant textbooks, peer-reviewed journal articles, government publications, and credible online resources. As noted by Osemwota (2014), secondary data established the theoretical foundation of the study and supported the triangulation of findings from the primary data. Overall, the combination of digital questionnaire administration, telephone interviews, and documentary review ensured that the data collection process was efficient, comprehensive, and aligned with the study’s methodological requirements.

### **3.8 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS**

The analysis of data collected for this study followed both quantitative and qualitative procedures in order to derive a comprehensive understanding of community policing and internal security in Esan North-East Local Government Area. In line with contemporary political research standards, this mixed-method analytical approach ensures that administrative data is balanced with grassroots sentiment. As noted by Abubakar (2024), integrating different data streams is essential for evaluating the “co-production” of security, as it allows the researcher to capture both the breadth of public opinion and the depth of institutional experience.

For the quantitative data, responses from the structured questionnaires were systematically coded and processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistical tools, such as frequencies and percentages, were used to summarize the data and show the distribution of respondents’ views across the various research items. According to Osemwota (2014), these descriptive statistics are vital for identifying patterns, levels of political agreement, and general perceptions among residents regarding the effectiveness and challenges of community policing. Where necessary, graphical representations—such as bar charts and pie charts—were employed to enhance clarity in the interpretation of security trends in Uromi.

For the qualitative data, especially the responses generated through telephone interviews with key stakeholders, the study employed qualitative content analysis. The interview transcripts were reviewed, and key themes, recurring ideas, and notable administrative statements were identified and categorized in relation to the research objectives. Oyibokure, Okereka, and Mukoro (2025) emphasize that this thematic method allows for a deeper understanding of political issues that cannot be fully captured through structured questionnaires, such as the nuances of inter-agency cooperation and community-specific insights.

In order to strengthen the interpretation of results, the qualitative findings were integrated with the quantitative outcomes through data triangulation. This complementary approach made it possible to cross-check emerging patterns and ensure that the conclusions drawn regarding the

prospects of internal security were both credible and contextually grounded. As supported by the methodological frameworks in Nsiegebe and Ibezim (2025), this combined analytical procedure ensures a balanced, objective, and comprehensive evaluation of the security architecture in Esan North-East LGA.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter examined data presentation and analysis. The data collected were summarized and presented in the tables below. The study of the varying frequencies provided insights into the research objectives. Four hundred questionnaires were administered, and 280 were retrieved, valid, and used for the analysis.

#### PART A: PERSONAL DATA

**TABLE 1: DISTRIBUTION BY SEX**

Observation: Male respondents formed the majority (58.3%), while females accounted for 41.7%.

GENDER	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
MALE	150	58.3
FEMALE	130	41.7
TOTAL	280	100

**TABLE 2: DISTRIBUTION BY AGE**

AGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
18-25	50	17.9
26-35	50	17.9
36-45	74	26.8
46 AND ABOVE	105	37.5
TOTAL	280	100

**OBSERVATION:** All respondents are adult which means they are matured and makes their response valid.

**PART B**

**Research Question 1: Nature and Practice Of Community Policing In Esan North-East?**

**TABLE 3:** Community policing in Esan North-East involves active collaboration between the police and community members.

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
SA	40	14.5
A	130	46.4
N	28	10.0
SD	44	13.6
D	38	15.7
TOTAL	280	100

Source: Field Survey, (2025).

The data from table 3 reveals that for policing to be effective in Esan North-East active collaboration between the police and community members is involved.

**TABLE 4:** Local residents are encouraged to report crimes and suspicious activities to the police.

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
SA	36	12.9
A	152	54.3
N	29	10.4

SD	29	10.4
D	34	12.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, (2025).

The data from table 4 reveals that local residents are encouraged to report crimes and suspicious activities to the police to enable the police carry out their work.

**TABLE 5:** The police regularly hold meetings with community leaders to discuss security issues.

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
SA	49	17.5
A	94	33.6
N	45	16.4
SD	46	16.4
D	46	16.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, (2025).

The data from table 5 reveals meetings are held regularly between community leaders and the police to enable them to discuss security issues.

**TABLE 6:** Community policing has improved the level of trust between the police and the people.

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
SA	41	14.6
A	116	41.4
N	49	17.5
SD	29	10.4

D	45	16.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>100</b>

Field Survey, (2025).

The data from table 6 shows that community policing has improved the level of trust between the police and the people.

**TABLE 7:** The practice of community policing has led to a reduction in crime in Esan North-East.

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
SA	36	12.9
A	152	54.3
N	29	10.4
SD	29	10.4
D	34	12.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, (2025).

The data from table 7 reveals that, the practice of community policing has led to a reduction in crime in Esan North-East.

**Research Question 2: Effect of Community Policing on Crime Reduction and Internal Security?**

**TABLE 8:** Community policing has significantly reduced the rate of crime in Esan North East.

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
SA	34	12.1
A	137	48.9

N	45	16.1
SD	20	7.1
D	44	12.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, (2025).

The data presented in table 8 offers insights that community policing has significantly reduced crime and internal security.

**TABLE 9:** The presence of community policing has improved the overall sense of security among residents.

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
SA	36	12.9
A	140	50
N	44	15.7
SD	49	17.5
D	49	17.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, (2025).

The data presented in table 9 shows that the presence of community policing has improved the overall sense of security among residents.

**TABLE 10:** Collaboration between community members and police has led to quicker responses to crime incidents.

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
SA	28	10
A	120	42
N	41	14.6

SD	35	12.5
D	56	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, (2025).

The data presented in table 10 reveals that collaboration between community members and police has led to quicker responses to crime incidents.

**TABLE 11:** Community policing has helped to identify and address local security threats more effectively.

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
SA	34	12.1
A	137	48.9
N	45	16.1
SD	20	7.1
D	44	15.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, (2025)

The data presented in table 11 reveals that community policing has helped to identify and address local security threats more effectively

**TABLE 12:** Since the introduction of community policing, cases of theft, robbery, and violence have decreased in the area.

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
SA	36	12.9
A	140	50
N	44	15.7
SD	11	3.9

D	49	17.5
TOTAL	<b>280</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, (2025)

The data presented in table 12, shows that since the introduction of community policing, cases of theft, robbery, and violence have decreased in the area.

**Research Question 3: Challenges Facing the Implementation of Community Policing in Esan North-East?**

**TABLE 13:** Lack of adequate funding hinders the effective implementation of community policing in Esan North-East

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
SA	40	14.5
A	130	46.4
N	28	10.0
SD	44	13.6
D	38	15.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>100</b>

Field Survey, (2025)

The data from table 13 shows that lack of adequate funding hinders the effective implementation of community policing in Esan North-East.

**TABLE 14:** Poor cooperation between the police and community members limits the success of community policing.

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
SA	36	12.9
A	152	54.3
N	29	10.4
SD	29	10.4
D	34	12.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, (2025)

The data from table 14 highlights that poor cooperation between the police and community members limits the success of community policing.

**TABLE 15:** Inadequate training of community policing officers affects their ability to handle security issues.

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
SA	49	17.5
A	94	33.6
N	45	16.4
SD	46	16.4
D	46	16.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, (2025)

The data from table 15 reveals that inadequate training of community policing officers affects their ability to handle security issues.

**TABLE 16:** Political interference disrupts the smooth functioning of community policing initiatives.

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
SA	41	14.6
A	116	41.4
N	49	17.5
SD	29	10.4
D	45	16.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey (2025)

The data from table 16 shows that political interference disrupts the smooth functioning of community policing initiatives.

**TABLE 17:** Lack of trust between the police and residents poses a major challenge to community policing in the area.

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
SA	40	14.5
A	130	46.4
N	28	10.0
SD	44	13.6
D	38	13.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, (2025).

The data from table 17 shows that lack of trust between the police and residents poses a major challenge to community policing in the area.

#### **Research Question 4: Roles of Youth and Local Security Actors in Sustaining Community Policing Initiatives?**

**TABLE 18:** Youths in Esan North-East actively participate in community policing activities.

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
SA	4690	16.4
A	90	32.1
N	50	17.9
SD	45	16.1
D	49	17.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>100</b>

Field Survey, (2025).

The data from table 18 shows youths in Esan North-East actively participate in community policing activities.

**TABLE 19:** Local vigilante groups and security actors collaborate effectively with the police to maintain peace.

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
SA	41	14.6
A	109	38.9
N	28	10.0
SD	39	13.9
D	63	22.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>100</b>

Field Survey, (2025).

The data from table 19 shows Local vigilante groups and security actors collaborate effectively with the police to maintain peace.

**TABLE 20:** Youth involvement in community policing has helped in gathering intelligence about criminal activities.

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
SA	46	16.4
A	90	32.1
N	50	17.9
SD	45	16.1
D	49	17.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>100</b>

Field Survey, (2025).

The data from table 20 shows that youth involvement in community policing has helped in gathering intelligence about criminal activities.

**TABLE 21:** The partnership between youth, community leaders, and police officers strengthens internal security.

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
SA	27	9.6
A	71	25.4
N	49	17.5
SD	68	24.3
D	65	23.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, (2025).

The data from table 20 shows that the partnership between youth, community leaders, and police officers strengthens internal security.

**TABLE 22:** Local security actors play a vital role in sustaining the achievements of community policing initiatives.

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
SA	27	9.6
A	67	23.9
N	40	14.3
SD	64	22.9
D	82	29.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, (2025).

The data from table 22 shows that local security actors play a vital role in sustaining the achievements of community policing initiatives.

**Research Question 5: Prospects of Community Policing as a Sustainable Strategy for Promoting Internal Security in Esan North-East**

**TABLE 23:** The continued collaboration between the police and community members will strengthen internal security.

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
SA	40	14.5
A	130	46.4
N	28	10.0
SD	44	13.6
D	38	15.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, (2025).

The data from table 23 reveals that the continued collaboration between the police and community members will strengthen internal security.

**TABLE 24:** With proper government support, community policing can become a sustainable model for local security management.

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
SA	41	14.6
A	109	38.9
N	28	10.0
SD	39	13.9
D	63	22.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, (2025).

The data from table 24 shows that with proper government support, community policing can become a sustainable model for local security management.

**TABLE 25:** Adequate funding and policy support from government will enhance the effectiveness of community policing.

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
SA	46	16.4
A	90	32.1
N	50	17.9
SD	45	16.1
D	49	17.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, (2025).

The data from table 25 reveals that adequate funding and policy support from government will enhance the effectiveness of community policing.

**TABLE 26:** Increased public awareness and participation will enhance the future success of community policing.

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
SA	27	9.6
A	71	25.4
N	49	17.5
SD	68	24.3
D	65	23.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, (2025).

The data from table 26 shows that increased public awareness and participation will enhance the future success of community policing.

**TABLE 27:** Community policing can serve as a reliable framework for preventing and addressing emerging security threats.

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
SA	27	9.6
A	67	23.9
N	40	14.3
SD	64	22.9
D	82	29.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, (2025).

The data from table 27 shows that community policing can serve as a reliable framework for preventing and addressing emerging security threats.

#### **4.2 Discussion of Findings**

The findings of the study show that community policing in Esan North-East is based on cooperation between the police and community members, which has helped to improve trust and information sharing. The results further indicate that community policing has contributed to crime reduction and improved internal security through quicker responses to crime and increased sense of safety among residents. However, the study reveals that challenges such as inadequate funding, poor cooperation, lack of training, political interference, and lack of trust hinder the effective implementation of community policing. The findings also show that youths and local security actors play important roles in sustaining community policing by supporting intelligence gathering and community participation. Finally, the study indicates that with adequate government support, public awareness, and continued collaboration, community policing has strong prospects as a sustainable strategy for promoting internal security in Esan North-East.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

The findings of the study reveal that community policing in Esan North-East is largely based on cooperation between the police and community members, which has helped to improve trust and information sharing. The results also show that community policing has contributed to crime reduction and improved internal security through quicker responses to crime and increased sense of safety among residents. This supports the argument that community policing enhances internal security through collaboration and community participation (Nsiegebe & Ibezim, 2025).

However, the study indicates that challenges such as inadequate funding, poor cooperation, lack of proper training, political interference, and lack of trust hinder the effective implementation of community policing. The findings further reveal that youths and local security actors play important roles in sustaining community policing, while adequate government support and public participation are necessary for its long-term success.

#### **5.2 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The findings of this study imply that community participation is essential for effective security management at the grassroots level. The study suggests that cooperation between the police and community members enhances trust, improves information sharing, and contributes to crime prevention. This supports the view that internal security can be strengthened when communities are actively involved in policing activities (Nsiegebe & Ibezim, 2025).

The study also implies that without adequate funding, proper training of personnel, and minimal political interference, the effectiveness of community policing may be limited. Furthermore, the involvement of youths and local security actors has important implications for intelligence gathering and sustaining security initiatives within the community.

### **5.3 CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that community policing is an effective and relevant strategy for promoting internal security in Esan North-East Local Government Area of Edo State. The findings of the study show that cooperation between the police and community members has improved trust, enhanced information sharing, and contributed to crime reduction and improved sense of safety among residents. This indicates that when communities are actively involved in security matters, policing becomes more responsive and effective at the grassroots level.

However, the study also reveals that the full potential of community policing is constrained by challenges such as inadequate funding, lack of proper training of personnel, political interference, poor cooperation, and lack of trust between the police and the public. These challenges limit the effectiveness and sustainability of community policing initiatives. Despite these limitations, the study affirms that community policing remains a viable and sustainable approach to addressing security challenges in Nigeria, particularly when supported by effective policies, adequate resources, and strong community participation.

### **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made to enhance the effectiveness of community policing in Esan North-East Local Government Area:

1. The government should provide adequate funding and logistical support to strengthen community policing activities. This will enable the police and community security actors to acquire necessary equipment, improve communication systems, and carry out security operations more effectively.
2. Regular training and retraining programmes should be organized for police officers and community policing personnel in order to improve their skills, professionalism, and ability to handle security challenges within the community.

3. There should be continuous sensitization and public awareness programmes to encourage community members to cooperate with the police and actively participate in community policing initiatives. This will help to build trust and improve information sharing between the police and the public.

4. Political interference in community policing operations should be minimized to ensure neutrality, accountability, and professionalism in the implementation of community policing policies.

5. Youths and local security actors should be properly integrated, supported, and monitored in community policing activities, as their involvement enhances intelligence gathering, community surveillance, and crime prevention.

## **5.5 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE**

This study contributes to existing knowledge by providing empirical evidence on the role of community policing in enhancing internal security at the local government level in Nigeria, with specific reference to Esan North-East Local Government Area of Edo State. The study adds to the literature by highlighting the practical challenges facing community policing, as well as the roles of youths and local security actors in sustaining security initiatives. It also contributes by showing that effective collaboration between the police and community members is essential for crime reduction and sustainable internal security.

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**APPENDIX**

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**

**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE**

**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY**

**QUESTIONNAIRE ON**

**COMMUNITY POLICING AND INTERNAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA: AN ANALYSIS  
OF CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS IN ESAN NORTH EAST LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT AREA IN EDO.**

Dear Respondent,

**Request to fill Questionnaire**

I am an undergraduate student of the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Science, University of Benin, Benin City in Edo State. I am presently carrying out a research study titled **“Community Policing And Internal Security In Nigeria: An Analysis Of Challenges And Prospects In Esan North East Local Government Area In Edo”** Kindly help to complete the questionnaire as your frank response will help this research . It is purely for academic purpose and the information you provide will be treated as confidential and will be used only for the purpose of this research.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Yours,faithfully

**Osayande Godstime**

Please, kindly respond to the items below by ticking (  ) that which you agree with.

**SECTION A:Demographic characteristic of participants**

| Gender: [  ] Male [  ] Female |

Age: [  ] 18–25 [  ] 26–35 [  ] 36–45 [  ] 46+ |

Education: [  ] SSCE [  ] OND/NCE [  ] BSc/HND [  ] MSc/PhD |

**SECTION B:**

**KEYS**

SA= Strongly Agree

A= Agree

D= Disagree

SD= Strongly Disagree

S/N	Nature And Practice Of Community Policing In Esan North- East	SA	A	D	SD
1	Community policing in Esan North-East involves active collaboration between the police and community members.				
2	2. Local residents are encouraged to report crimes and suspicious activities to the police.				
3	The police regularly hold meetings with community leaders to discuss security issues.				

4	Community policing has improved the level of trust between the police and the people.				
5	The practice of community policing has led to a reduction in crime in Esan North-East.				
<b>2</b>	<b>Effect of Community Policing on Crime Reduction and Internal Security</b>				
1	Community policing has significantly reduced the rate of crime in Esan North-East.				
2	The presence of community policing has improved the overall sense of security among residents.				
3	Collaboration between community members and police has led to quicker responses to crime incidents.				
4	Community policing has helped to identify and address local security threats more effectively.				
5	Since the introduction of community policing, cases of theft, robbery, and violence have decreased in the area.				

<b>3</b>	<b>Challenges Facing the Implementation of Community Policing in Esan North-East</b>				
1	Lack of adequate funding hinders the effective implementation of community policing in Esan North-East.				
2	Poor cooperation between the police and community members limits the success of community policing.				
3	Inadequate training of community policing officers affects their ability to handle security issues.				
4	Political interference disrupts the smooth functioning of community policing initiatives.				
5	Lack of trust between the police and residents poses a major challenge to community policing in the area.				
<b>4</b>	<b>Roles of Youth and Local Security Actors in Sustaining Community Policing Initiatives.</b>				
1	Youths in Esan North-East actively participate in community policing activities.				
2	Local vigilante groups and security actors collaborate effectively with the police to maintain peace.				
3	Youth involvement in community policing has helped in gathering intelligence about criminal activities.				

4	The partnership between youth, community leaders, and police officers strengthens internal security.				
5	Local security actors play a vital role in sustaining the achievements of community policing initiatives.				
<b>5</b>	<b>Prospects of Community Policing as a Sustainable Strategy for Promoting Internal Security in Esan North-East</b>				
1	Community policing has the potential to provide long-term solutions to security challenges in Esan North-East.				
2	The continued collaboration between the police and community members will strengthen internal security.				
3	With proper government support, community policing can become a sustainable model for local security management.				
4	Increased public awareness and participation will enhance the future success of community policing.				
5	Community policing can serve as a reliable framework for preventing and addressing emerging security threats.				