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Community Trust and the Dynamics of Nigeria Police Emergency Response.

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Abstract

Community trust is one major ingredient of successful policing particularly during emergencies when they are very much required by the citizens. In Nigeria, however, there is low trust towards the police due to colonial laxity, corruption, abuse of human rights and systemic impunity. Research addresses the issue of community trust and its impact on police emergency response. It was based on the use of pertinent literature and case studies. The theoretical framework adopted was the social capital theory that considers the importance of trust, obligations and mutual norms in order to arrange concerted activities to achieve mutual objectives. Findings show that absence of trust has been fatal in Nigeria due to decades of ineffective police-community relations based on historical inclinations of colonial policing practices compounded by institutional malpractice and reinforced by daily experiences of extortion. To achieve the rebuilding of trust, the enforcement of honest reforms should be done based on transparency and accountability and actively participating in community services to boost the legitimacy and efficacies of the police emergency response services in Nigeria.

Keywords: Community trust; Nigeria Police; emergency response and legitimacy

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1.1 Background to the study

Emergencies, violent crimes, armed robbery attacks, communal clashes, natural disasters, road accidents and terrorism incidents will all need swift, coordinated and efficient response by the police in order to save lives and properties. Cooperation within the community is an incredible resource in this instance because police officers cannot always predict, trace, and maintain the crisis unless the citizens actively assist them. The reservoir of this collaboration is trust since it defines whether the citizens will willingly provide the information at the appropriate time, act based on the instructions, or participate with the police in collective safety (Tyler, 2006; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). Trust that the police has in the community is a potent force in the capability of the police to effectively respond.

When there is trust among people in a community with good police-community relationship, it assists in reporting crime in time, complying with the measures and do not co-ordinate with the emergency response services easily. Indicatively, when the residents believe that the police are not attempting to apply force and or to gain personal benefits, but that they are actually concerned about how they are safe, they will evacuate the area immediately in case of a disaster. On the other hand, the lack of relationships between the police and citizens that normally occur due to corruption or excessive use of force and discrimination breed reluctance, opposition, and even hostility (Tankebe, 2010). Not only is this distrust devastating to emergency response, but it can accelerate the crisis to cause even more casualties and damage. Nigerian situation underscores how serious this problem is. A deterioration of trust in the law enforcement agencies has resulted due to colonial policing traditions, persistence of brutality, extortion and poor accountability on the part of the police (Alemika, 2010). The 2020 protest, named EndSARS, revealed the overall amount of dissatisfaction with the Nigerian Police, with citizens expressing dissatisfaction with how the system has been abused and with the lack of professionalism. The implications of this mistrust on emergency response are significant since citizens may be reluctant to share intelligence about potential terrorist attacks in the Northeast, might ignore evacuation orders in coastal states during a flood or may be unwilling to cooperate with the police during communal confrontations (Aborisade, 2021).

The objective of this research paper is therefore to investigate the connection between community trust and police emergency response in Nigeria, and the target is to learn the role of trust during crisis to establish its influence on response. It will identify what undermines trust, examine the factors that facilitate better police-communities relationships, and provide recommendations on how to enhance trust and emergency responsiveness. The study hopes that with the contextualizing of the discussion within the reality of the Nigerian socio-political context, this will serve to comprehend how the police institutions can be brought back to the realm of legitimacy, more co-operative, and ultimately effective in protecting citizens during crisis situations.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The extent to which the police trust people is what determines their effectiveness in response to any kind of emergencies. That is not the case in Nigeria, where the relations between citizens and the police have been marked by an incredible level of distrust, which takes its roots in corruption, brutality, partiality in executing the law, and the absence of accountability (Akinlabi, 2021; Aborisade, 2021). The impacts of such mistrust in the emergency response

are dire since individuals are likely to be reluctant to share intelligence, obey directions or cooperate with the police officers during the crisis.

Several recent incidents are examples of this. The 2020 protest of police misconduct labeled the EndSARS protests, which highlighted the mass resentment of police misconduct, in particular, among the young generation, as well as exemplified how low trust in police power serves as the catalyst to inform resistance to police power (Amnesty International, 2020). Lack of citizen confidence in police professionalism during an emergency, such as the Anambra flood disaster in 2018 or a violent conflict in Plateau and Benue States, has been linked to slow evacuations, insufficient intelligence sharing, and direct confrontation with law enforcement agencies in some cases (Nnoli, 2020; Olonisakin & Adebayo, 2022).

On top of this, there are systemic issues, such as the corruption and extortion in the roadblocks, which seclude citizens further reinforcing the perception that police is not serving his people but his own selfish interest (Transparency International, 2019; CLEEN Foundation, 2021). These practices do not only hurt trust, but also reduce the extent of police legitimacy, which restricts the reaction to emergency interventions. The fact that these issues do not disappear displays that not only is the police crisis in Nigeria an institutional issue, but also a relational one since the social contract between the state and the citizens is hindered by the lack of trust.

The current situation of the rising emergency rate, including terrorist attacks in the Northeast, banditry and kidnappings in the Northwest, and natural disasters and road accidents in the country warrants an efficient and joint police-citizen relationship. Nevertheless, police response to emergencies will be partial and slow, contested until there is trust again. Thus, the primary question that the research will address is the loss of trust in the police in Nigeria and its impact on the effectiveness of emergency response in order to find out what approach will assist in regaining the credibility and creating collaboration with the community during the crisis.

The aim of the research, hence, is to learn the relationship between the community trust and police emergency response in Nigeria and the research is interested to learn the position of the trust in the situation involving crisis to find out how the trust affects the response. It will determine which factors hurt trust, comment on which factors build stronger police community relations, and offer guidelines on how to build trust and emergency responsiveness. It is hoped that the study is based on the premise that by framing the discussion within the context of the Nigerian socio-political realities, the study shall help to understand how police institutions can be restored to legitimacy, better cooperation, and eventually make them more efficient in safeguarding the citizens in case of a crisis.

1.3 Research Objectives:
The research investigates the concept of community trust and the Nigerian police emergency response. The precise aims include:

1. Ascertain the level of trust between the community members and the Nigerian Police Force.

2. Study the importance of community trust in enhancing police emergency response.

3. Determine and analyze variables that deter mistrust between community and police.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How much do the people of Nigeria trust the Nigerian Police Force?

2. Why do we need community trust in effective police emergency response?

3. What are the challenges to establishing confidence between the community and the Police?

1.5 Significance of Study

Studies the role of community trust and the Nigerian police emergency response, and elaborates on the police-community relations disconnect. It illuminates the factors that discourage trust such as corruption and use of excessive force and gives recommendations to policy measures and community-based policing. The outcomes will become valuable to scholars, policy makers, and enforcers of the law, which means that the community will be stronger, less suspicious, and safer.

2.1 Conceptual clarification

Community Trust

Trust by the citizens in the institutions of the state, particularly the law enforcement bodies, to act in a just, transparent and in the broader interest of the community, can be defined as community trust. It is a multidimensional theory that encompasses perceptions of police legitimacy, procedural justice, integrity and responsiveness (Tyler, 2006; Sunshine &Tyler, 2003). Trust is an emotional and mental state that shapes citizen perception about police behaviors and determines whether or not to cooperate or resist. According to Tankebe (2010), trust is created when members of a community feel that they get good treatment, accountability and delivery of high quality services by the police. When the process of decision-making is perceived to be honest, officers treat people with dignity and rules are applied in an equal manner, without favour, citizens are likely to feel police power was legitimate (Jackson & Bradford, 2010). The legitimacy, in turn, fosters compliance and cooperation spirit in the law enforcement activity. With a high level of trust, communities will tend to view police officers as allies in the journey of safety rather than oppressors. This credibility leads to active participation, in a crisis, citizens exchange information, report offences and obey instructions (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Nix et al., 2015). Conversely, when there is low trust, potentially due to corruption, power abuse, a violation of human rights and/or perceived bias, citizens can disengage, resist, or even become hostile of police interventions (Levi & Stoker, 2000; Bradford et al., 2019).

The cynicism within the police has been directly associated with the historical origin of colonial policing in which service ranks second to control and to militarization of domestic security in military governance (Alemika, 2010). The more recent events, such as the EndSARS protests in 2020, talked of the unhealthy dissatisfaction with systemic police brutality, corruption and non-accountability (Amnesty International, 2020). The result of these experiences has been the creation of a culture of mistrust where citizens do not trust the intentions and integrity of police officers. This mistrust negatively affects cooperation, and communities and police are vulnerable to crises.

Community trust is thus not a constant phenomenon; it changes within the context of police behavior, institutional reactions, and the broader socio-political context. To regain trust is a deliberate effort to be accountable, transparent and engage the community (Mazerolle et. al., 2013).

Police Emergency Response

Police emergency response refers to the fast, effective, and coordinated actions by the police to secure lives, property and social order during a crisis, which may be in the form of violent crimes, natural disasters, terrorism, road accidents and communal conflicts (Henderson &Bromley, 2012). The primary purpose of emergency response is to reduce the harm, order, and ensure citizens. Having preparedness, timeliness, inter-agency cooperation, and operating under pressure is hence very important in the response of emergency (Perry & Lindell, 2003).

In democratic societies, emergency response extends beyond technical competence to include accountability, responsiveness to human rights and proportionality. In times of emergency, the police legitimacy is evaluated not only based on the outcome (e.g., the number of saved lives), but also the fairness and humanness of the procedure (Tyler & Huo, 2002). A response that values the life of the population and does not obstruct the rights of the individuals makes people trust and cooperate in the long-term, and a response that is described by the application of extreme force or bias diminishes trust. Nigerian experience can justify the importance of this dynamic. Inadequate preparedness, response, or coordination between the police and other emergency management institutions have eroded the trust of many people in numerous cases of violent crimes, community conflicts, and natural disasters (CLEEN Foundation, 2021). Using the example of the Northeast attacks by insurgents, the citizens have been unwilling to give any intelligence information during the attacks because they worry that the information will be used against them or they do not trust the privacy of the police (International Crisis Group, 2016). Similarly, when the southern states are in flood, residents have not been swift to accept the evacuation order in which the police are questioned on credibility.

At the same time, in some cases, professionalism and efficiency in responding to emergencies have increased trust among the population. Police-community relations has been viewed as an opportunity as an example since coordinated rescue between the police and National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) during natural disasters are viewed as positive.

2.2 Empirical Review.

Tyler (2006) examined why individuals comply with the law and cooperate with the police since it was noted that declining public trust was rendering policing ineffective. The results showed that it is perception of police legitimacy and procedural fairness rather than fear of punishment that significantly affects whether people would adhere to the law. Belief was therefore critical to collaboration particularly during emergencies. Tyler(2006) advised that the policing styles must be geared towards fair treatment, candor, and impartiality since they foster long-term legitimacy and boost compliance during crises.

In a review of the practice of proactive policing in the U.S., National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2018) discovered that communities with trust to the police improved the circulation of information and adherence, and thereby led to faster and more efficient responses to emergency situations. However, discriminatory policing destroys the

trust and safety. The report recommended that law enforcement agencies should incorporate community participation and procedural justice into emergency response frameworks, and should evaluate policing activities to identify its inadvertent impact on legitimacy.

In a study conducted by Arisukwu, Igbolekwu, and Nwachukwu (2020), governmental efforts have failed to remove insecurity at the rural level and this casts doubts on whether there is a mutual suspicion between rural communities and security agencies in Nigeria. The authors found that mistrust between the police and rural dwellers hindered information-sharing and group response to insecurity. Many of the respondents have indicated that they developed the distrust due to poor communication, corruption and low police presence in the rural towns. They proposed to strengthen the community policing regimes in rural Nigeria, establish trust through frequent interactions, and enhance logistics to improve visibility and credibility of police service.

The research conducted by Abdi, Hassan and Yusuf (2024) focused on the correlation between the police performance and the trust of the people in the security institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa, as the trust of the people in the security institutions is also very low. It has been demonstrated in the analysis that the best predictors of low trust of the police were the perceptions of inefficiency, misconduct and corruption. The communities that felt that officers were not effective were less cooperative during emergency periods. Researchers recommended that investment in training, equipment and accountability mechanisms should be made which can optimize the position of police thereby boosting the people trust and results of emergency response.

The hypothesis in the research study by Dobson, Blake and Chu (2025) was that the police communication strategies would lead to a higher trust level and lesser hostility between the community and the police (through field tests).They found that the community members who received police officers to explain what they were doing (transparency statements) reported higher levels of trust and lower levels of feelings of being threatened by them. This observation meant that cooperative development depends directly on use of communication in emergency response, which the authors recommended should be entrenched in statements of transparency in policing, especially during emergencies and crisis.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

Social Capital

The social capital theory was popularized by Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman and Robert Putnam who were working on complementary views. Bourdieu (1986) concentrated on social capital as the benefits that the individuals gain out of the social networks and resources in them. Coleman (1988) further narrowed the concept since he stated the significance of trust, obligations and mutual norms to mobilize coordinated activities that serve common ends. Putnam (2000) also went a step further to apply social capital theory to community and political life assuming that, societies with high social capital enjoy higher levels of trust, cooperation and turn out. Collectively, these works may illustrate the possibility of trust and social network as intangible resources that can strengthen social order and organizational performance and in particular in policing and emergency management.

It assumes that interpersonal and institutional relations are useful resources and that it is possible to cooperate and organize (Coleman, 1988). The theory presumes that communities

rely on mutual norms and expectations of reciprocity to sustain cooperation and social cohesion. Social networks are envisioned to be a source of information, resources, and influence, which are essential when responding to emergencies. It assumes that the problem of legitimacy of power structures (including the police) plays a crucial role in the mechanism of establishing sustainable trust and mobilizing communities. High trust communities are likely to be more willing to participate in collective action during crisis as the community's feel that their action will be reciprocated (Putnam, 2000).

When it comes to the contemporary research of police emergency response, the social capital theory may provide an excellent framework to consider the importance of community trust. In Nigeria, emergency incidences such as terrorism in Northeast, kidnapping in Northwest, and floods in Niger Delta points to a very large difference in the belief as well as the trust between the communities and the law enforcers. Where social capital is low, citizens tend not to share the necessary intelligence, ignore evacuation requests, or obey the police activities due to suspicion and due to the history of corruption or violence. Conversely, trust can be established in those areas, in which community policing and transparency is practiced, where human rights are respected, and where the emergency response is more fruitful, where citizens are prepared to cooperate, share information, contribute to the rescue operation and reinforce the police legitimacy. The theory, in the context of the present study, would suggest that the rebuilding of social capital is not just an option, but an essential part of an effective approach to the emergency management.

3.0 Research Method.

The research design was qualitative, which enabled a comprehensive comprehension of the complex association between community trust and police emergency responses. Thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2019), will be utilized in the study as it implies familiarizing oneself with data by repeatedly reading extracts and visualizing the themes within the framework of the study objectives and theoretical basis.

4.1 The State of Community Trust in Nigeria Police.

There is a critical lack of community trust in the Nigeria Police Force, and the lack of such trust is considered one of the most persevering issues of law enforcement in the nation. Trust, in this case, is the goodwill of the citizens to trust the police that they will behave justly, professionally, and in the best interest of the people (Tyler & Jackson, 2014). The history of corruption, abuse, and institutional laxity has vitiated such trust over decades in Nigeria, even with many communities being hesitant or openly hostile to the police (Alemika, 2021; Onuigbo et al., 2023).

The history of distrust dates back to the colonial time, when the police were structured more as a tool of colonial domination than as a community guard. This tradition of force over service has continued into the postcolonial era. Researchers emphasize that the Nigerian police have frequently been viewed as representatives of the state and elites instead of guardians of the average citizen, unlike in other countries where police legitimacy developed based on community-focused service provision (Ordu& Nnam, 2017; Okeke-Uzodike & Suberu, 2020). This organizational culture formed a policing ethos based on coercion, surveillance, and repression that persists as influential on citizen attitudes towards police to this day.

The 2020 EndSARS demonstrations became the turning point of the mistrust in the population. Citizen anger culminated around the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), which had gained popularity due to its extrajudicial killings, torture, and extortion (Amnesty International, 2021). The demonstrations, which reached a national scope and captured international interest, highlighted the magnitude of the distrust and the dissatisfaction with policing. The systematic violations and the use of excessive force against peaceful demonstrators were recorded by Human Rights Watch (2021), which further undermined trust in the police. Despite the dissolution of SARS, suspicion of the actual reform has not disappeared, as numerous Nigerians assumed that the malpractice was transferred to other police departments (Ibeanu & Orji, 2022). This episode strengthened the view that reforms are cosmetic but not transformative.

The lack of trust does not only occur during extraordinary moments but rather in the day-to-day interactions between the police officers and the citizens. The most frequent experiences are solicitation of bribes at the checkpoints, arbitrary arrests, and slow response to distress calls (Nwachukwu et al., 2024). These experiences produce a daily undermining of trust that is recalibrated into larger trends of estrangement. According to Transparency International (2023), police are among the most corrupt institutions in Nigeria, and bribery and extortion are the most frequent types of interaction. As a result, citizens often do not contact the police in case of an emergency as they do not anticipate responding promptly and fairly (Agbiboa, 2023). This dynamic compromises the core role of the police in the provision of security and order.

The increased dependence on vigilante groups, local militias, and home security outfits is another significant aspect of the trust deficit. People in most states in Nigeria are more confident with local vigilantes, whom they see more responsive and accountable to the community (Idowu, 2022; Okereke, 2023). This dependency on non-state actors signifies a coping mechanism and denial of police legitimacy. Although petty crime is sometimes reduced by vigilante groups, their proliferation disintegrates security authority and makes it difficult to organize emergency responses (Hills, 2021). Further, the utilization of the vigilantes intensifies the danger of human rights violations and the cycles of informal violence, which continue to weaken the police

Community trust in Nigeria is in a precarious and skeptical state. Citizens want good and accountable policing, but the habit of abuse, neglect, and impunity influence their reluctance to use the police in case of emergency (Agbiboa, 2023; Alemika, 2021). The persistent belief that the police are policed by the political elite or by itself, and not by the people, will continue to breed a cycle of mistrust. The emergency response is compromised by default in such an environment, it can be assumed that citizens will defy orders, withhold important information, or seek the protection of parallel actors. The Nigeria Police will remain in the trust deficit unless it invests in actual reforms, enhances accountability, and adopts a community-focused approach to service delivery.

4.2 Why do we need community trust Imperative?

The component of effective police emergency response is community trust. The emergency cases, including terrorist attacks, natural disasters, civil war, pandemics, or violent crimes demand the instant measures, relevant intelligence, and the united endeavors to reduce the disruptions and to reestablish sanity. How well police officers are able to respond in such situations is not only a question of the extent of training, equipment and capacity of such

situations, but it is also deeply dependent on the level of trust that they are trusted with in the communities in which they are embedded. Lack of trust will imply that the most resourceful police force will fail to provide the desired results in case of an emergency (Aborisade, 2021).

Social capital that enhances legitimacy of police activity and voluntary compliance is the community trust. When citizens feel that the police is just, transparent, and acting in their best interests, they are more likely to provide the police with timely information, comply with any instructions during a crisis, and assist the police in their activities (Tyler & Jackson, 2014). The preparedness during a crisis when time may be of the essence to report suspicious behavior, to share intelligence, or cooperate during an evacuation crisis can spell out the difference between containment and escalation (Carter & Carter, 2021). As an example, in the Nigerian Northeast of a terrorism case, trust in the police and military forces of the citizen would be the most important step in terms of providing intelligence data about insurgent groups, attacks, and rescue operations (International Crisis Group, 2022).

On the other hand, the lack of trust spoils the effectiveness of emergency response. Societies in which the police are assumed to be corrupt, abusive, or even politically biased tend to be less cooperative and yielding to emergency instructions. It has been found that distrust in most cases leads to a situation where crimes are not reported promptly, evacuation orders are not followed, and even open aggression towards police actions (Murphy & Cherney, 2012; Aborisade, 2021). The protests in Nigeria under the brand name of EndSARS shed light on the lack of confidence in the police that undermined the legitimacy of the law enforcement activities, as well as undermined the management of the crisis during the protests and riots (Amnesty International, 2020). The consequences of such failures of trust are very tangible because communities can take police activities to mean coercion and not protection, which can only raise tensions instead of mitigating them.

Communication in the case of emergencies also requires trust. According to the scholars, crisis communication is deeply reliant on credibility and perceived legitimacy (Reynolds & Seeger, 2012). When citizens put their trust in the police, they will be more willing to accept and respond to emergency messages, i.e. evacuation messages in case of floods or curfew messages in case of communal violence, with no questions and no opposition. On the contrary, the correct and life-saving information can be overlooked in low-trust settings, where communities believe that the police is pursuing own interest or being politically influenced (Okafor & Anazodo, 2023). This emphasizes the fact that community trust is a good thing but a requirement in ensuring adherence to emergency directions.

The Nigerian scenario explains why trust is also important. The experience of historical colonial-style policing, security militarization and never ending corruption problems have undermined the legitimacy of the police (Alemika, 2010). However, when police are fair and professional in their activities, the level of trust will increase, and cooperation will be increased. As an example, police-disaster management agency-community leader's collaboration enhanced compliance and minimized casualties in joint flood evacuation operations in southern Nigeria (CLEEN Foundation, 2021). This shows that community trust level cannot be separated with effective emergency response.

Overall, community trust is not a peripheral aspect of police emergency response but a decisive factor in its effectiveness. Trust enables information sharing, promotes voluntary compliance, promotes crisis communication, and improves police legitimacy in times of

crisis. In Nigeria, where insecurity and emergencies are common phenomena, transparency, procedural justice, and accountability are critical in restoring trust in communities to improve the performance of emergency response of the police.

4.3 Factors that inhibit Community trust.

There are several problems identified that deter the establishment and upkeep of community confidence in the police during emergencies. These tend to be interrelated and they influence how the citizens perceive the competence, fairness, and integrity of the law enforcement responses to the crisis.

History of Police Misconduct and Brutality

One of the greatest barriers to community trust during an emergency is police misconduct, which can take the form of corruption, excessive force, or human rights violations. Societies that have seen law enforcement being compromised severally may find it hard to trust police officers even under those circumstances when they act in the best interest of the citizenry in case of an emergency. The dynamics of the Nigeria case are such that the events of the #EndSARS uprising revealed the underlying issues of extrajudicial killings and police brutality when questioned about the capacity of the police in crisis situations to assist in saving lives (Amnesty International, 2020). Similarly, cross-border studies show a correlation between the existence of discriminatory policing legacies and low police-community relationships (Tyler & Jackson, 2014).

Lack of Integrity perceptions and Corruption perceptions

Corruption also diminishes the trust with the enforcement of the law especially in situations where the emergency response is perceived to be a form of extortion or favoritism. As citizens realize that police is oriented to bribes and political gain, not to the safety of the population, fewer citizens are ready to cooperate and follow the orders in case of emergency. Research shows that police corruption can drastically reduce the willingness to collaborate with the police, even in situations of life-threatening events (Alemika, 2010; Aborisade, 2021).

Weakness in Communication and poor Transparency

Failure to communicate with the population, especially in cases of emergencies, by the police, is a failure in the trust. Lack of quick, straightforward and clear information incites rumors, panic and misinformation. Societies can translate the absence of communication or unpredictable communication as inability or hidden agenda. In crisis management studies, transparency in communication is the most significant factor leading to legitimacy and trust during stressful circumstances (Reynolds and Seeger, 2012; Carter & Carter, 2021).

Late and Under response Capacity

Communities usually regard the timeliness and efficiency of police response as among the determinants of trustworthiness. In the event of untimely, untidy and poorly equipped emergency response, the citizens may not trust the ability of police to save lives and property. Police in Nigeria have been noted to lack the logistical capacity to respond in real-time when armed banditry or terrorist attacks occurred, which has added to the deception of the population (International Crisis Group, 2022). Research conducted in various parts of the

world has shown that trust is ruined in situations where the communities believe that the authorities are unprepared or overwhelmed in case of some emergency (Perry & Lindell, 2003).

Political Intervention and Prejudice

Police politics tend to manifest themselves in times of emergencies. When the responses are seen to be partisan or political in nature the police are seen by the communities to be not serving the common good but rather serving the elite. In Nigeria, the lack of confidence in the fairness of the law enforcement has been undermined due to allegations of the biased deployment of security forces in election-related violence or inter-community violence (Okafor & Anazodo, 2023). Politicization challenges the authority and the seemingly fairness of emergency responses.

Socio-Cultural Seclusion between the Police and the Community

Mistrust can arise in any society where the police officers and the communities do not share culture, language, and values. Emergency interventions that fail to acknowledge the local practices or include the local leaders in the intervention decisions will most probably be rejected. Research has also depicted that culturally inappropriate interventions are likely to create resentment and mistrust among the people of the communities towards the police (Murphy and Cherney, 2012). In Nigeria, the communities tend to testify that they feel alienated once the police fail to communicate with the traditional ruler or the local networks during crisis situations.

The Tradition of Militarized Policing

When police institutions are highly militarized, emergency response is more biased towards coercion rather than community participation. This kind of trend is instilling fear rather than trust especially among civilians. In the past, the Nigerian police have been accused of the military type of operations which focus on the use of force instead of dialogue reducing the social trust of the emergency situations (Alemika, 2010; CLEEN Foundation, 2021).

Discourse of media and Social Fallacies

The reporting of the police emergency response by both traditional and social media influences the community trust. Negative coverage can include abuse or ineffectiveness, which is sometimes amplified on social media, and trust is easily shattered, although not everything will be true. An example is the information about police brutality in Nigeria that went viral during the COVID-19 lockdown and confirmed the negativities (Human Rights Watch, 2020).

The community trust within emergencies is identified through a wide range of factors, including previous experiences, corruption, failure of response, political interference, socio-cultural loss of touch, militarized policing, and media presentations. 5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations.

5.1 Conclusion

The problem of emergency response provided by police is linked to the confidence of a community. Trust is one of the forms of social capital that make the community willing to cooperate with the law enforcement in times of crisis. Increasing trust among communities also results in more community sharing of intelligence, compliance with evacuation requests, and coordination, enhancing the legitimacy and effectiveness of police actors. Communities may resist, disengage, or even obstruct the use of emergency response due to low-confidence which in turn may be brought about by corruption, excessive use of force, lack of accountability and poor communication and a long lasting crisis and more casualties are the result.

The absence of confidence in Nigeria has proved fatal as a result of years of poor interactions between police and community owing to the trends of colonial policing techniques and the abuse of institutions. They see the practical impacts of this decay in scenarios such as insurgency, banditry, communal conflicts and natural disasters where unity among citizens is paramount. A high level of legitimate resources and technical capacity is needed to ensure the efficient police response to the emergencies, but on the other hand, legitimacy and trust of the people is demanded.

A vital indicator of effective police emergence response is the community trust. The investment in trust building is a requirement just like the investment in equipment and logistics. When communities trust the police, they will be better prepared to cooperate and effective and legitimate emergency interventions will be accessed.

5.2 Recommendations.

1. Normalize the practice of exposing residents to decision-making and crisis-preparedness planning. The police will be seen as partners and not as enforcers and that will loosen social distance and bring about cooperation.

2. Training of police officers to act professionally and respectfully in terms of crisis communications, procedural justice, and human rights and to specialize in disaster management, counterterrorism, and conflict de-escalation should also be stressed.

3. Develop effective communication between the police and the community in time of crisis. Briefings, awareness campaigns, and technology (e.g., SMS alerts, social media) can increase trust during a crisis situation, as information provided promptly and correctly leads to a decrease in misinformation and builds trust in police intent.

4. Encourage co-drills, simulation exercises and community briefs where the police and the citizens practice in responding to the emergency that positively enhances preparedness, as well as goodwill, reliability and consequently trust.

5. Reform the system to demolish systemic corruption, underinvestment and politicization of the police. Unity reforms, emphasizing community involvement, will guarantee a permanent resolution of trust and emergency responsiveness.

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