

Contents Lists Available At sddubidsjplm.com

Journal of Planning and Land Management

Journal homepage: www.sddubidsjplm.com

DOI: 10.36005/jplm.v3i2.82

Exploring the scale and scope of community policing in North-Western Ghana

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 21 September 2023

Received in revised form: 16 May 2024

Accepted: 12 July 2024

Keywords:

Community policing, urban safety, crime control/prevention, co-production, Wa Municipal, Ghana

ABSTRACT

Global urban population growth appears to challenge governments' ability to ensure access to essential urban services, such as policing. This situation is impeding the achievement of SDG target 11.1. However, citizens' role in co-producing safe and secure neighbourhoods has been instrumental in augmenting limited governments' efforts in the provision of adequate security. Acknowledging the relevance of co-producing community policing (CP) outcomes in neighbourhood crime management, this study critically examines the awareness, knowledge, understanding, and effectiveness of community policing strategies in North-Western Ghana. In a mixed methods research design, the study revealed a low level of awareness of community policing strategies in North-Western Ghana, which constrains the efforts to initiate and benefit from the outcomes of co-producing community policing. Consequently, knowledge, understanding, and effectiveness of community policing strategies appear very limited and, therefore, draw back the desire for inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities as detailed in SDG 11. Restoring community watch committees and enkindling effective co-production of community policing outcomes are critical parts to the global crime management strategies.

1. Introduction

The continuous rise in global urban population is widely evidenced by the incessant increase in urban population from 5 percent at the beginning of 1800 to 29.4 percent in 1950, then 51.6 percent in 2010, and an estimated value of 65 percent by 2030 (World Bank, 2020; United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 2007). In Africa, the urban population is expected to increase from 294 million in 2000 to 742 million by 2030 (UNFPA, 2007). Even though the rising urban population is making cities competitive economic hubs, many African countries are challenged in governing their urban spaces.

In Ghana, the urban population rose from 32 percent in 1984 to 56.7 percent in 2021 and is expected to reach 65 percent by 2030 (World Bank, 2020; Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), 2021). This development is in sync with global urban population growth trends. The continuous rise in urban population has posed a challenge to the provision of essential urban services including policing the Ghanaian urban space (Bagson & Owusu, 2016; Oteng-Ababio & Arguello, 2014). The Ghana Police Service is mandated by the 1992 Constitution of Ghana (Article 200) to lead in the maintenance of internal security but has continuously fallen short of the expected minimum police-civilian population ratio of 1:500 (Tankebe, 2013). The shortfall in the police-

civilian population ratio appears to embolden inequality in access to police services in Ghana (Bagson, 2018). The Ghanaian government incorporated community policing in June 2002 to address human and logistics inadequacies within the Ghana Police Service. This initiative also aimed to reduce inequality in access to police services and improve neighbourhood safety in general (Ghana Police Service, 2017).

Community policing is a strategic collaboration between the police service and the civilian population of a particular location in an attempt to remedy the shortcomings of traditional policing and enhance the safety of life and property (Degu, 2014; Kasali, 2016). Notwithstanding the challenges associated with partnerships in crime management (Lersch, 2007), police collaborations with communities in many parts of Africa have contributed to some perceptions of the safety of life and property (Aropet, 2012; Wanjohi, 2014). However, studies on community awareness, knowledge, understanding, and value addition in co-producing community policing outcomes remain meagre in Ghana. This is despite the foregone implication that people's appreciation of the complexities of community policing is variedly rewarding (Sampson & Raudenbush, 2004).

Hence, combining the efforts of the formal law enforcement agencies, especially the police, and the community enables

collective action in co-producing neighbourhood safety. This foregrounds the nexus between the core principles of community policing and the tenets of the theory of co-production. It is, therefore, within the ambit of the theory of co-production that this study critically examined the levels of awareness, knowledge, understanding, and effectiveness of community policing strategies in North-Western Ghana.

2. Theory of co-production

The theory of co-production gained scholarly traction in the second half of the twentieth century and significantly gave meaning to the public service delivery reforms in the 1980s and 1990s. The global desire for governments to stimulate and sustain partnerships between service providers and users further broadened the influence of co-production in public service delivery. Prominent early contributors to the development of the theory of co-production include Elinor Ostrom, the Nobel Laureate in economics, and Amitai Etzioni, a distinguished sociologist.

Co-production involves a meaningful partnership between service providers and users, resulting in valuable outcomes for both parties and the general public (Ostrom, 1996; Vargo & Lusch, 2008). Similarly, the principal tenets of co-production are centred on collaborative governance between government agencies and citizens to enable good quality-of-life outcomes, democratic governance, and good governance in public service delivery (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2022). Partnerships in co-production process benefit from the knowledge, resources, and skills of the parties involved (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012), as well as appropriate mutual respect and shared responsibility (Alford, 2014; Ostrom, 1996). Hence, the expected collaboration of stakeholders in co-production is largely driven by fairness, accountability, transparency, equality, and issues of sustainability. This is in tandem with Bovaird and Loeffler's (2022) position that co-production is synonymous with the tenets of democratic and good governance across local, national, and international levels. In this backdrop, citizens are differently engaged in conceptualising and operationalising the tenets of co-production in public governance systems, even though the tenets remain fluid. The government-citizen interactions in co-production process include: co-commissioning, co-designing, co-delivering, and co-evaluating for the common good of public service delivery (Alford & Yates, 2016; Bovaird & Loeffler, 2022; Pestoff, 2012). These dimensions indicate the levels of citizen involvement at the various stages in the line of public service delivery, which also pushes forward some clarity in the discourse of the role of citizens in the co-production process (Voorberg et al., 2015).

Nevertheless, professionals expressing loss of control and status in co-production processes as a result of citizens' active participation and citizens demonstrating incompetence in the production process draw back the possibilities of incorporating co-production in public service delivery (Roberts et al., 2013; Talsma & Molenbroek, 2012). These doubts about the role of the citizen in adding value to public service delivery systems are attributable to limited institutional spaces in the tradition of public sector governance (Maiello et al., 2013). Also, some scholars raise

relevant questions as to how citizens' participation improves the quality of public service delivery and quality-of-life outcomes (Evans et al., 2012) and therefore gives reason to downplay the usefulness of co-production in public service delivery (Fuglsang, 2008). Furthermore, Khine et al. (2021) posited the overall challenges of practicalizing the concept of co-production.

On the other hand, co-production has contributed to preventing and/or controlling social challenges (Burns, 2013), enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the outcomes of government-citizen interactions (Clark et al., 2013), and reaching an overall desirable value addition in public service delivery (Rich, 1981). Despite the complexities associated with the conceptualization and operationalization of the theory of co-production, the theory has been applied across and within disciplines to enable collaborative governance and collective gains in addressing common problems, particularly in service delivery (Alford, 2014; Ostrom, 1996; Robert et al., 2021). The application of the theory of co-production is notable in different disciplines, including economics (Alford, 2014; Ostrom, 1996), sociology (Beresford, 2019), service management (Ramirez, 1999), and understanding the complex subjectivity in community policing (Alford & Yates, 2010; Braga & Weisburd, 2010; Peak & Glensor, 1999). The application of co-production in community policing has gained popularity, especially in its responsiveness to shared responsibility (Mastrofski et al., 2001); community engagement (Cordner & Biebel, 2005); collaborative problem-solving perspectives (Weisburd & Braga, 2006); trust and mutual respect (Skogan, 2006); transparency and accountability (Tyler, 2006). Succinctly, the application of the theory of co-production does not only improve public safety and well-being but also depicts the feasibility of collaborative governance of neighbourhoods by the police and the citizens.

The depth and breadth of the application of co-production in the field of community policing are instrumental since the level of citizen participation gives a close estimate of citizens' awareness, knowledge, understanding, and effectiveness of community policing. Nevertheless, scholars have paid attention to the influential factors and outcomes of co-production on community policing (Mastrofski et al., 2001), but limitedly assessed citizens' awareness, knowledge, understanding, and effectiveness of the tenets of co-production in the realm of community policing. In reaching this objective, specific research methods were employed.

3. Research location and methodology

3.1 Description of the research location

Wa Municipal, our research location, is the largest city in North-Western Ghana (Figure 1). The rapid growth of Wa township dates back to the 15th Century, cognizant of its role as the headquarters of Wala State. The city also served as a major trade and religious hub, sandwiched by the Sahelian countries and southern Ghana (Songsore, 1985). Wa was made the district capital of the then Upper Region in 1960 and the regional capital of the Upper West Region in 1983 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2002). In 2004, the city was upgraded to a

generally ensure public order, safety of life, and property. However, the limited logistics and human capacity of the service thwart the effective implementation of its mandates. As a strategy to augment the capacity of the police, partnering with the public in maintaining law and order appears to significantly contribute to improving the safety of life and property, and enhances the all-inclusive agenda of SDG 11. To ensure local community participation in crime prevention and control, the Government of Ghana introduced community policing in June 2002 (Ghana Police Service, 2017) with the overall vision of providing “safer communities through partnership with members of the community and all stakeholders, which is in line with the police administration’s Transformation Programme” (Ghana Police Service, 2017, pp. 2).

In our attempt to assess respondents’ awareness of community policing in their neighbourhood, an officer of the community policing unit was asked to explain how the police service engages communities when introducing community policing strategies to communities. According to the officer, the community policing units start by introducing some community policing practices to the general public and immediately initiate the process of recruiting a community watch committee. In addition, the police directly engage members of communities through community sensitization, giving educational talks in community-based schools, and community forums (Ghana Police Service, 2017). The complexities associated with the police-public engagements foreground the results and discussion section.

3.4 The study design

Using an exploratory sequential mixed method design, this study draws on the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research designs, as stipulated by Creswell (2014) and Teye (2012). Adopting an exploratory research design within the broad ambit of interpretative phenomenology proved valuable because it aimed at bringing to the fore the narrative of respondents’ relevant lived experiences (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). In this perspective, an exploratory study offers a rare opportunity for the research participants to unstitch their perceptions, which otherwise would not be shared (Smith & Osborn, 2009). Alternatively, interpretative phenomenology offers a firm opportunity for “exploring the world of actors as they see and live it” (Bolaji, 2021, pp. 3). Interpretative phenomenology also accommodates the varied meaning that participants ascribe to events of common interest (Åkerlind, 2005). Despite the great depth of insight the qualitative data offer, the study also sought a broader understanding of the scope and scale of community policing using statistical strategies. Hence, the interpretative phenomenological orientation was complimented by descriptive statistical analyses focusing on frequency, percentage, and arithmetic mean scores of respondents’ awareness, knowledge, understanding, and effectiveness of community policing outcomes. A comparison of the arithmetic means of all responses to a scale became the basis for estimating perceptions of levels of awareness, knowledge, understanding, and effectiveness of community policing in the study communities.

3.5 Data collection and analytical strategies

To enable flexibility in sequencing the primary data collection process, an unstructured interview guide was used to elicit narratives of the key informants’ consciousness and appreciation of the effectiveness of community policing strategies. Subsequently, three gendered focus group discussions (FGD) were conducted in each of the four communities. A minimum of five and a maximum of seven discussants formed a group. All interviews and discussions were audio recorded after obtaining verbal consent from each participant. Each participant was assured of high sense of confidentiality and anonymity in the conduct of this research. Participants were also given the opportunity to opt out of the interview at any point in time.

The interviews were conducted in any of the following languages: English, Wali, or Dagaare, in favour of the respondent. All the audio recordings were transcribed into English language to commence critical discourse analysis. Major and supporting themes were developed to demonstrate respondents’ awareness, understanding, knowledge, and effectiveness of police and civilian collaboration in combating neighbourhood crime. The themes developed form a critical part of the set of questions in the questionnaire.

Furthermore, 386 questionnaires were administered to household heads or responsible adults of each selected household in the study communities. The rate of response was 100 percent partly because of the strong desire for the safety of life and property in the neighbourhood among the respondents. The answered questionnaires were cleaned, coded, and subjected to descriptive analysis using SPSS version 26. According to Roth et al. (2004), the community policing outcome is a proxy measure of people’s appreciation of community policing strategies. Hence, since citizens are co-producers of community policing, respondents were asked to state the extent to which they agree or disagree with statements pertaining to community policing outcomes. These include respondents’ perception of neighbourhood safety, respondents’ trust and confidence in the police, and respondents’ familiarity or cordiality with the police, among others.

Specifically, four-point Likert scale type questions with options from Strongly Agree (SA), to Strongly Disagree (SD), without a neutral option, were used to estimate respondents’ assessment of community policing outcomes. The exclusion of the neutral or undecided option is in sync with Steinmetz’s (2019) argument that undecidedness is not a psychological midpoint between the agreements and disagreement tendencies but an equivalent to no response and should be treated as such. Subsequently, Garland (1991) disputed the idea of assigning three points to the neutral or undecided option in Likert type questions but proposed an allocation of zero points to avoid the tendency of data skewing to the centre. Recognising the scholarly positions of Steinmetz (2019) and Garland (1991), this study adopted a four-point Likert scale and further transformed responses given on the scale into an interval level of measurement, as demonstrated by Joshi et al. (2015) and Pallant (2020). A composite score of the interval-level data generated enabled the computation of the arithmetic mean per response to each item in the four-point Likert scale as well as the arithmetic

mean of all responses. Hence, the arithmetic mean of the scale is, therefore, a ratio of the sum of the points allocated to the four-point scale (Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1) to the number of points on the scale (4). That is $4+3+2+1$ divided by 4. The hypothetical arithmetic mean of the scale is therefore, 2.5. This makes 2.5 the reference point as to whether respondents

agree to the statements or disagree in a value interval of more than or equal to 2.5 and less than 2.5, respectively.

3.6 Target population, sampling techniques and sample size determination

Using Slovin's sample size determination formula (Stephanie, 2003), 386 members of the community were sampled from whom the quantitative data was collected (See Table 2).

Table 2: Study communities, population size and sample size

Community	Population*	Sample size
Bamahu	4068	142
Mangu	4086	142
Dondoli	2168	76
Kumbiehe	740	26
Total	11062	386

*GSS 2018 population projection

Source: Field data, 2019

In conducting the sample survey, multistage sampling was done in order to reach the target respondents. In the first stage of sampling, the researchers purposively selected two high-crime communities (Bamahu and Mangu) and two low-crime communities (Kumbiehe and Dondoli) from a list provided by the municipal police command. The second stage of selection involved systematic sampling of houses after a regular count of three houses (the sampling fraction of three was obtained by dividing the total number of houses by the predetermined sample size). The next level was the random selection of one household head if the house selected had two or more household heads.

Furthermore, key informants such as chiefs, opinion leaders (community or religious or traditional), assembly member (local area government representative), municipal police commanders, and the youth leaders were purposefully sampled. These are individuals knowledgeable about their neighbourhood's security management situations.

4. Results and discussion

4.1 Gauging residents' awareness of community policing

Understanding the intricacies of co-producing public service requires awareness of the common purposes for which the desire for a meaningful interaction between the provider and end user of the service is deemed necessary (Khine et al., 2021). It is for this basic enabler (awareness) that the theory of co-production remains important in the realm of community policing. Hence, this study assesses public awareness of community policing not only as a preliminary pointer to the kinds of relationships between the relevant actors but also to further understand the significance and effectiveness of enabling co-productive strategies in community policing.

In assessing citizens' awareness of community policing in Wa Municipal, the respondents were asked to demonstrate their understanding of community policing, and some observed community-level engagements with the police. In this study, narratives from an all-male Focus Group Discussion (FGD) in Bamahu concluded that community policing involves all

efforts centred on keeping neighbourhoods safe and secure through partnerships among citizens and/or in collaboration with the police. This is in sync with Lum & Nagin's (2017) opinion that community policing largely entails community cooperation with law enforcement agencies in fighting neighbourhood crimes. Even though the majority (73%) of our respondents had some understanding of what community policing means, a small proportion (31%) of the respondents demonstrated awareness of the community policing programme as an initiative to provide neighbourhood security. This means that respondents' understanding of community policing is largely related to citizens' efforts to police their neighbourhoods.

Accordingly, a third of the respondents got aware of community policing in the municipality through the radio; hence, the larger proportion (69%) has no exposure to community policing either in their communities or outside. Despite the instrumental role of radio in creating awareness, the study further gauges respondents' awareness of community policing using their mindfulness of the Government of Ghana's programme on community policing assistants as a means to improve community safety and security. Subsequently, the respondents demonstrated very limited awareness of the community policing assistants' programme and the recruitment process. For instance, in a FGD in Mangu, the discussants demonstrated ignorance of the community policing recruitment process. This is contrary to the basic requirement that opinion leaders (community or religious or traditional leaders) should be involved in selecting youth for recruitment into community policing (Sowatey & Atuguba, 2014).

It is, therefore, suggestive that including opinion leaders in the recruitment process of community police assistants depicts elements of inducing co-production in the process, but its significance is yet to be realised in our research location. For instance, an opinion leader in Dondoli confirmed that some youths have been recruited as community policing assistants, but as elders, "we have no idea how these young men and women were selected." Disregarding the contributions of community leaders in the recruitment of community policing assistants is a disincentive to building

confidence and trust in the expected collaborative efforts between the state (the police) and civil society. This outcome illustrated the limited engagement of relevant stakeholders and, therefore, draws back the benefit of co-producing security at the community level.

Another community-level engagement with the police, as an initiation to community policing that creates awareness of community policing in communities, is the lead role the police play in the formation and continuous monitoring of community watch committees. Even though some communities (Bamahu and Dondoli) showed awareness of community watch committees in their communities in the past, they were quick to add that these watch committees were purely communities' self-initiatives and operated without support from the Ghana Police Service. As indicated in an interview with the assemblyman of the Dondoli electoral area, he disputed the presence of community policing in his jurisdiction but emphasised confidence in the communities' intentions to restore the community watch committees that had protected the communities against crime in the past but that the community could not sustain the committee partly because of the non-maintenance of members of the committees even though membership is voluntary. Members of community watch committees' desire for payment is not characteristic of co-production, which affects issues of sustainability (Khine et al., 2021). Similarly, focus group discussants in Mangu added that a community watch committee had existed in their community in the past, but it was the initiative of the Assemblyman, not the Ghana Police Service, as required in the mandate of community policing practice. In the same vein, the assemblyman for the Kumbiehe electoral area indicated that:

We had a watchdog committee in our community here, but lots of challenges led to its collapse. Such challenges include: assaults, no compensation to the committee members, and abuses, among others. Secondly, the committee continuously discriminates against handling suspects in the community. In some instances, some "big men" come pleading with the committee to release suspects without engaging in due process (KII, Assemblyman Kumbiehe electoral area, 2019).

It is evidence that some form of community policing existed in some communities before the establishment of community policing in June 2002, but such community policing was irrespective of the tenets of co-production because not all relevant stakeholders were engaged. This is in support of Brenya and Warden (2014), who indicated that some communities formed community watch committees because of public distrust of the police and limited collaborations between the police and the citizens. This further reinforces distancing the applicability of the elements of co-production in community policing in the Wa municipality. According to Baker (2004), public mistrust of state-led policing and the obvious capacity challenges of state led policing engineered various informal groups identifying themselves as police and performing community-level policing. Even though the wide

spread reliance of the informal policing system could be undermining state formal policing (Baker, 2004), these pre-existing community watch committees have the potential to be the means to building trust and confidence in the state formal policing system. It is also suggestive that leveraging on ready collaborators to initiate and sustain the co-production of community policing is possible since there is a relatively good law enforcement agency and a strong end-user side. Hence, the Ghana Police Service has the opportunity to reform communities' self-initiated watch committees to avert the potential of community watch committees engaging in unacceptable behaviours such as lynching and abuse of suspected criminals, which appear to be the norm within the Ghanaian urban space (Ghana News Agency, 2021; Quayson, 2017).

Other strategies through which the community policing concept could reach members of the community include community sensitization, educational talks in community-based schools, and community fora (Ghana Police Service, 2017). These strategies appear strange to the majority (96%) of our respondents because they have never encountered the police service in any of these strategies as attempts to introduce or maintain community policing in their neighbourhoods. Despite the limited awareness level on the part of the respondents with respect to the initial practices of community policing strategies, the study proceeded to assess respondents' knowledge and understanding of community policing strategies that could be observed within or outside their communities.

4.2 Residents' knowledge and understanding of community policing strategies in Wa

Community policing strategies are critical pointers to differentiating it from traditional policing styles. Community policing is a close associate of democratic policing in which the civilian population is an active participant in crime prevention and control. This study, therefore, assessed respondents' knowledge and understanding of some common community policing strategies as observed within or outside the research locations and as initiated by the community or the government. Respondents' knowledge of community policing strategies significantly contributes to effective and efficient co-production of community policing (Jagannathan et al., 2020; Khine et al., 2021; Mach et al., 2020). Specifically, Mach et al. (2020) indicate that relevant knowledge supports co-generating mutually beneficial co-produced outcomes, while Jagannathan et al. (2020) posit that an enhanced understanding of the strategies binding co-production of public service delivery eases the extraction of expertise to foster desirable outcomes of the co-production process. Furthermore, Khine et al. (2021) bring to the fore that knowledge and understanding of the elements of co-productive processes narrow misunderstandings and also enhance trust and confidence among stakeholders. Table 3 presents basic statistics on respondents' estimations of community policing strategies for managing crime in the research locations.

Table 3: Respondents' knowledge and understanding of community policing strategies

Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following community policing strategies in your community	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean (\bar{X})
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Foot Patrol Strategy	26	6.74	62	16.06	163	42.23	135	34.97	1.95
Bicycle Patrol Strategy	43	11.14	68	17.62	133	34.46	142	36.79	2.03
Motorbike Patrol Strategy	71	18.39	86	22.27	120	31.09	109	28.24	2.31
Vehicle Patrol Strategy	139	36.01	152	39.39	56	14.51	39	10.10	3.01
Door to Door Visit Strategy	17	4.40	24	6.22	167	43.26	178	46.11	1.69
Visibility Strategy (by decentralizing police post to communities)	58	15.02	94	24.35	144	37.31	90	23.32	2.31
Community Forum Strategy	13	3.37	39	10.10	165	42.75	169	43.78	1.73
Community Empowerment Strategy	43	11.13	54	13.99	127	32.90	162	41.97	1.94
Awareness Through Media Strategy	81	20.98	86	22.28	112	29.02	107	27.72	2.37
Provision of Distress Call Numbers	88	22.80	124	32.12	101	26.17	73	18.91	2.59

$n=386$; F = frequencies

Source: Field data, 2019

Unlike the other community policing strategies (see Table 3), police patrol of communities using automobiles ($\bar{X} = 3.02$) and public knowledge of police emergency numbers ($\bar{X} = 2.59$) attained a significant composite mean value of more than 2.5. This result shows that police patrol by automobile and public knowledge of police emergency numbers are the common community policing strategies in the research locations, even though challenges associated with these strategies are not uncommon in the Ghanaian urban space (Appiahene-Gyamfi, 2003). Specifically, Appiahene-Gyamfi (2003) espoused the near absence of spatial planning within Accra, the national capital of Ghana, which challenges effective police patrol within the cityscape. Nevertheless, Dewinter et al. (2020) lucidly pointed out the urgent need for further exploration of police patrol, partly because of the incessant difficulties akin to police patrolling events. The limited implementation of community policing strategies, particularly patrolling the cityscape, was backed by the lamentation given by a former community police desk officer in Wa Municipal:

Initially, community policing was very vibrant in the municipality. Police officers used to visit and have stakeholder engagements on neighbourhood crime prevention and control strategies. Hence, citizens played a key role as informants, in crime management, but the situation is different today (KII, 2019).

Furthermore, interaction with the police commander revealed that police visibility is becoming more common, but the interaction does not involve direct interaction between the police and the residents. This is contrary to the basic tenets of traditional police visibility, which goes beyond police presence to direct interaction with residents as a means of enhancing relationships and cooperation in neighbourhood crime management (Borovec et al., 2019).

Contrarily, in an interview with the Assemblyman of Dondoli regarding CP strategies in his community, his opinion was differently expressed as:

The police claim of improving their visibility in communities is problematic. If that were the case, why are the people of Dondoli planning, on their own, to start a community watch committee? Admittedly, we periodically see the police vehicle moving on the main road, but that is not adequate visibility since insecurity is within the community and not just on main roads (Assemblyman-Dondoli, 2019).

Contrary views from the residents and the police are suggestive of non-collaboration, which is not characteristic of the process of co-producing the desired outcomes of community policing in the municipality. As the police claim to do some patrol and, therefore, appear considerably visible in the communities, community members disagree. This is a huge barrier to effective and efficient co-production. According to Braga et al. (2019), the effectiveness of the purpose of reducing crime through police visibility can be obtained if police patrol is targeted at high-crime locations, which requires active collaboration with the residents. This will ignite residents' willingness to collaborate with the police (Khine et al., 2021) since crime hotspots are common knowledge among the indigenes, even though Yesberg et al. (2023) opine that a community wide police patrol will enhance confidence in residents and bolster effective community policing. In the absence of targeted police patrol and limited community-wide police patrol, we estimated the usefulness of community policing in Wa Municipal since co-production process is fluid (Khine et al., 2021).

4.3 Assessing the efficiency of community policing efforts in Wa Municipal

Incorporating the tenets of community policing into traditional policing orders has been fundamental to global

policing trajectories (Diphooorn & van Stapele, 2021), but the debate on the effectiveness of community policing in developing countries has continued unabated (Baker, 2008). In estimating the effectiveness of community policing in Wa Municipal, residents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following outcomes of effective community policing (see Table 4). Respondents were asked to estimate their perception of neighbourhood safety following the implementation of community policing

strategies within the municipality. A composite variable for each of the statements was computed, and the arithmetic mean was determined. This means that a commonly agreed-upon outcome should have a mean value equal to or greater than the arithmetic mean (2.5) of the composite variable.

Table 4. Effectiveness of community policing outcomes

Indicate your position with respect to each of the following statements:	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean (\bar{X})
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
I feel very safe walking alone in my neighbourhood during daylight hours	101	26.17	129	33.42	92	23.83	64	16.58	2.69
I feel highly secured when walking alone in my neighbourhood during dark hours	34	8.81	47	12.18	146	37.82	159	41.19	1.89
I have confidence in the police	24	6.22	36	9.33	176	45.60	150	38.86	1.83
The police are very friendly	28	7.54	52	13.47	167	43.26	139	36.01	1.92
Some trust now exists between the police and the community members	47	12.18	65	16.84	165	42.75	109	28.24	2.13
Level of crime has reduced	90	23.32	101	26.17	127	32.90	68	17.62	2.55

$n=386$.

Source: Fieldwork, 2019

Respondents agreed that following the implementation of some community policing strategies, residents feel safe ($\bar{X} = 2.69$) even if they are alone in the daylight hours and also have a high sense ($\bar{X} = 2.55$) of crime reduction in the community (see Table 4). Even though community policing is partially implemented in the Wa Municipality either by the Ghana Police Service or through community self-initiatives, only a third of community policing outcomes attained mean value greater than the composite mean value of 2.5. On the other hand, 67 percent of the expected outcomes of community policing failed to attain the composite mean value of 2.5. This result only partially portrays the difficulty associated with the practicality of co-producing community policing in the municipality. Nevertheless, communities' initiatives on self-policing their neighbourhoods have been found to be effective and could serve as a suitable conduit for law enforcement agencies to establish partnerships with the citizens to co-produce safe and secure neighbourhoods. The limited effectiveness of policing neighbourhoods in the municipality is attributable to a high sense of suspicion between the police and the public. A police officer reiterated that:

Generally, public confidence in the police to secure their neighbourhood is considerably low, coupled with inadequate human and material resources for the police to operate effectively. These deficiencies serve as reducing agents for the police to effectively secure neighbourhoods (KII, 2019).

In a similar direction, men discussants in Dondoli summarily concluded that:

We stand a high risk of being victims if one shares sensitive intelligence with the police because there are instances where the information shared finally becomes public knowledge, and that is very discouraging (FGD-Dondoli, 2019).

To further elucidate the poor co-production efforts between law enforcement agencies and the citizens, an all-women focus FGD at Kumbiehe revealed their experiences as victims of neighbourhood crimes. These developments fragment the close interactive tendencies associated with the theory of co-production in the quest for a safe and secure neighbourhood. Hence, limited efforts on the part of the police service in neighbourhood crime prevention and control confine co-productive tendencies in creating safe neighbourhoods, but the successes are yet to be obtained. Security within neighbourhoods becomes problematic as the supportive role of community policing strategies fails to leverage the formal policing systems, especially in neighbourhoods.

5. Conclusion and policy implications

In establishing the scale and scope of community policing in the Wa Municipality, the study explored the awareness, knowledge, understanding, and effectiveness of community

policing using sequential mixed methods. This is to enable researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to appreciate the need to co-produce community policing outcomes as a means to augment the shortfall in the logistics and human resource capacity of the police service. The study revealed that some minimally self-initiated community policing strategies are practiced in some communities. Such self-initiatives in community policing include the formation of community watch committees and the naturally occurring watchful eyes on the street to safe guard life and property. This is contrary to the ideal situation where implementing community policing strategies is characterised by the police service, leading the process to enable decorum in the operations of community watch committees. The study also revealed that communities' awareness, knowledge, and understanding of community policing and community policing strategies is very minimal but have the potential to support meaningful co-production of neighbourhood safety. Hence, the limited scale and scope of community policing in the municipality explains the near absence of cordiality in the intersection between relevant stakeholders in the co-production of community policing. While urbanisation and globalisation are facilitating the incessant insecurity, community-led watch committees, police vehicle patrol, and the publication of distress call numbers appear to contribute to some perceptions of safety within the communities. Put differently, although community policing is practiced in some parts of the research locations, residents are yet to feel the impact of effective and efficient co-production of community policing in their neighbourhoods. Issues of trust, confidence, and seeing the police as partners to enable crime reporting and other problem solving are still deficient in the area. Nevertheless, it is, therefore, certain that the community-led watch committees have the potential to serve as a conduit for introducing and sustaining community policing strategies in a co-productive perspective.

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