Original Article

Information Sharing as a Determinant of Implementation of Nyumba Kumi Community Policing Initiative in Kericho County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Despite the establishment of the Nyumba Kumi initiative and concerted efforts by interested stakeholders to cushion crime in order to flatten the insecurity curve, crime and social disorder still stands out in Kenya, thus making it an area of interest to carry out further investigation in this area. With the growing urbanization and national development, there are signs of complexity and multiplicity of criminal offences and actions raising questions about whether the initiative is achieving its set objectives. It is a policing in which police and citizens take a central role in the affairs of security; one rationale for public involvement is the realization that police alone cannot either guarantee nor create safe communities. Therefore, the study sought to find out information sharing as a determinant of implementation of the Nyumba Kumi community policing initiative in Kericho County, Kenya. This study was guided by Broken Windows Theory. A descriptive research design was adopted; the study used both qualitative and quantitative data. A target population was 1,842 households in the four villages. A simple random technique was used to get information from the sample size of 328 household members distributed proportionally across the villages in Nyagacho in the case of probability sampling. Purposive sampling technique was used to get information from two administrative officers that are area Chief and Assistant Chief, four chairpersons of Nyumba Kumi clusters in the area. Descriptive statistics and measures of association were used to examine the relationship between independent and dependent variables. It was followed by analysis using inferential statistics such as regression analysis to examine the effects of independent variables on the Nyumba Kumi security initiative. Presentation of qualitative data was done in the form of themes, figures and tables. The findings revealed that information sharing improves security through the circulation of information. Nyumba Kumi initiative uses the door-to-door strategies as well as meetings set by chiefs and Assistant Chiefs. However, there are no sufficient financial resources as well as equipment that could be utilized in crime prevention among the Nyumba Kumi initiative. The study concluded that information sharing had a significant influence on the implementation of Nyumba Kumi policing. The study recommended that government should provide resources

as well as facilitate cohesion within the Nyumba Kumi through developing structures and sufficient policies to guide in the implementation of the Nyumba Kumi Community Policing initiative.

INTRODUCTION

There have been rapid developments in police-citizen relations over the last few decades in the world, garnering scholarly interest in studying and examining this phenomenon. Accelerated cooperation between the police and citizenry has led to Community Policing (CP), both as a practice and a security management policy tool. A large part of this development has been necessitated by the need to keep our cities safe, as well as the police's realization that without citizen cooperation, they can only achieve little in matters security. Though CBP has been taunted to as a new dispensation in policing, little data reflects the success of the strategy as far as reduction of crime is concerned (Thenga & Justice, 2018). Reports have failed to definitively describe the Nyumba Kumi initiative as a successful style of policing leaving a gap for research to be done on its gains as an all-time crime reduction method (Telep & Weisburd, 2012). Several researchers have concluded that CP is necessary for building trust mainly in metropolitan cities and low-income settlements where crime is ripe (Gill, Weisburd, Telep, Vitter & Bennett, 2014).

Security in developed and developing countries has become a challenge to governments and for instance, United States of America, studies indicate police-citizen relations has been mainly due to incidents of police shootings in minority neighbourhoods in questionable circumstances leading to massive public outrage, protests and even riots. Across Europe, studies have been necessitated to understand the dilemma facing the police between the extents to which they can be involved in finding solutions to community problems and if this is their core function in the first place. Repeatedly they have been drawn into playing leading roles in social community safety initiatives that form the primary roles of central politics. In Latin America, the study on CBP has been necessitated by the need to balance between serving political commitments of growing democratic practice and improving the credibility of the police. In Africa, the rise of new security challenges versus the desire of some African politicians to use the police to exert their rule over the people creates an interest among scholars to study CBP (Brogden & Nijhar, 2013).

Although several existing studies focus on examining policing strategies in the context of

urban areas, it is equally of importance to contribute to literature and research by examining the determinants of implementation of the Nyumba Kumi initiative as a security management tool. It would not only promote understanding of CP from a cost-benefit dimension but also widen comprehension into what factors shape the success or failure of CP.

Statement of the Problem

Over the past few decades, there is an increase in the crime index in Kenya and across the world. Most of the crime is due to political, social and economic issues some are contributed by globalization among many other external environmental issues. Due to this, crime is at a high level and without proper measures, it might become untenable. Kericho County, specifically Nyagacho has been affected by robbery with violence, mugging, and rape, among other forms of crime in the past five years that have reached media houses. Based on buzzard's situation, sometimes perpetrators are found while others are not. In some circumstances, the perpetrators are killed by the public through mob justice or special police forces. Despite the availability of the police force, the number of police in the entire County is one police to 1000 people making the police force unable to tame the crime alone. The Government project community policing was introduced to curb insecurity incidences, but it has not achieved its set objective of flattening the insecurity curve. In addition, the government introduced Nyumba Kumi Community Policing Initiative in an effort to pilot it with Community-Based Policing (CBC) (Otieno, 2019).

The rapid rise of insecurity in Kenya coupled with the challenge of new and upcoming security problems such as terrorism, the radicalization of the youth and the formation of vigilante groups such as Wakali Kwanza, Wakali Wao, 40 Brothers and the Mombasa Republican Council has jolted the government to institute new security measures. It has resulted in a paradigm shift on matters of security in the country, calling for enhanced protection of organizations, individuals and their property at large. In this regard, the government adopted CBP, commonly referred to as Nyumba Kumi in Kenya. In Nigeria, community policing was introduced in 2003 when some police officers

were sent to the United Kingdom courtesy of the British Department of International Development (DFID) to study how policing was practised in England. Consequently, in 2004, more officers were asked to train as Community Development Officers (CDP) in Enugu. These officers were asked to spread the message of community policing to other officers in other states (Dickson, 2007). Dickson has noted some challenges to the successful implementation of community policing. It includes internal resistance from police officers who benefited from traditional policing and who prefer to keep using it than the new idea, hence not impacting the crime scale.

As any good strategic security policy, CP in Kenya was intended to provide a framework for community members to assist the police and security agencies in protecting their life and property, mainly through sharing information relating to insecurity with the police, chiefs and other officers of the government. It was a break away from traditional policing which for a long time patronizes the society into believing that the police were the only experts who have the monopoly of knowledge and solutions to criminals' acts from detection to prosecution of criminal elements. Itis a break away from policing in which police moves in after the damage is done also known as traditional policing, which was based on incident occurrence to a policing that is a problem based and premise community as the central pillar (Bullock, Erol & Tilley, 2006).

On the contrary, the Nyumba Kumi initiative strengthens common citizens by listing them as part of the policing in the drive to ensure the community is safe. Tilley (2003) asserts that community policing stresses policing with and for the community rather than policing of the community. Security analysts contend that the Nyumba Kumi initiative can only be successful if the citizens are empowered on security matters as one way of enabling the citizens to identify criminal elements and situations threatening the security of society. Despite the fact that the introduction of the Nyumba Kumi initiative, the Kenya Police Crime Report 2018, reveals that most of the low-income habitants for example, Kibra are the most insecure estates in Kenya, as over 100 crimes were committed during the period. An issue such as robbery with violence

and house break-in, among others, has become the order of the day. Increased cases of crime and criminal acts reported in both town centres and in rural settings where the Nyumba Kumi initiative has been operational for quite some time. Thus, it leaves many asking whether the initiative is achieving its set objectives, including community partnerships, problem-solving, and change management (Coquilhat, 2008).

In Kericho County, Nyumba Kumi has been implemented for close to ten years. More than 5 police stations and 10 police posts have been established over the period. However, crime rates have not gone down despite these measures. In the Nyagacho area of Ainamoi Sub-County, which forms the focus of this study, different insecurity challenges. They include mugging, commonly known as pickpocketing, snatching of mobile phones, house break-in and incidents of robbery with violence have been reported over time. Therefore, the study's objective is to find out determinants of implementation of the Nyumba Kumi initiative in Kericho County.

Theoretical Review

This paper was anchored on Broken Windows Theory

Broken Windows Theory

This theory is accredited to Wilson and Kelling and dates to 1982. It is a criminology discipline theory that rests on the foundation that the presence of crime signals, anti-social behaviour and general civil disorder over time degenerates into serious crimes and disorders. It is based on the assumption that disorder and crime are linked in development sequence. If a window in a building is broken and left unrepaired, so the argument goes, all the rest of the windows will soon be broken as well. The unrepaired window is a signal that no one cares and so breaking more windows will not result in an official sanction. This type of vandalism can occur anywhere once the sense of mutual regard and the obligations of civility are lowered by actions that seem to signal a lack of common concern.

Broken Windows theory since its introduction has become a key driver in community policing programs because it has been customized that untended behaviour breeds breakdown of community's do and don'ts, thus lowering collective efficacy. Wilson and Kelling argued that neighbourhoods where the property is abandoned, weeds grow, windows are broken and adults stop scolding rowdy children cause families to move out and unattached adults to move in. Fights occur, litter accumulates, people drink in the public ways, and panhandlers begin to approach pedestrians. Graffiti proliferates, suggesting that the area is uncontrollable, and the fear of crime increases. In response, people begin to use the streets less causing the area to become more vulnerable to criminal invasion. The withdrawals of the community lead to increased drug sales, prostitution and mugging.

According to this theory, when the police target minor crimes such as vandalism, public disturbance, they prevent the occurrence of more serious crimes such as robbery with violence and murder. In such a way, police block the visibility of crime signals that would otherwise lead to the growth of serious crimes. After its widespread use in the 1980s in the USA that saw police go to the extent of stopping and frisking people, the authors later wrote that the theory should not be treated as a 'zero tolerance' method to crime prevention but should be accompanied by careful training, guidance and supervision.

This paper in accordance with the theory put into consideration that the Nyumba Kumi initiative is equipped towards guaranteeing no tolerance to every avenue of disorder within the community that may attract criminal surge. None tolerance to crime is treated as a community's rallying force which is a major foundation of Nyumba Kumi security strategy and borrowed from Broken Windows Theory (Isanya, 2016) just like the theory advocates, Nyumba Kumi tends to focus more on curbing the small crimes in the community such as public drunkenness, idleness, theft, which if left unchecked, would see the perpetrators grow into major criminals by reporting any form of crime to the relevant authority. The focus of the Kenyan police has been in the past on major crimes such as robbery with violence, murder but with the Nyumba Kumi Initiative, the focus has shifted to the 'predecessors' to the course of the crimes.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

This paper reviewed the following literature on information sharing and Nyumba Kumi Community Policing.

Information Sharing

Nyumba Kumi policy spurs on residents of a given geographical area to mingle together freely but reporting any suspicious characters. The dwellers of a particular place, according to Rosenbaum *et al.* (2015), must keep vigil of each other, especially those new arrivals in their locality; they must know the intentions of everyone living amongst them by checking if their presence likely posed a security threat or be a conduit for the vice. Information pertaining to insecurity must be reported to the concerned authorities such as the police and the National Government Administrators for further actions. Using agreed and justified channels for addressing challenges brought by suspicious characters' police have been trusted as the major players in handling the criminals. Through the Nyumba Kumi initiative, citizens and police are taken as two co-joint twins in mattes of security after discovering that police alone cannot manage to police alone hence need to partner with the society (Rosenbaum et al., 2015).

Neighbourhood Watch is a major tool of ensuring locals band through focus group discussion. This policing strategy ensures that communally formed groups meet regularly in agreed destinations within the residential units to share information touching on local offences that have occurred, strategies that need to be put in place to bring the offenders into the book and prevent more from breaking are discussed. These meetings according, Rosenbaum (1987) as cited by Muchangi (2016) are organized by Crime Control Officers from the Police department within the jurisdiction. Participants in the Neighbourhood Watch also share attitudes and their feeling towards crimes committed locally and come up with a road map for addressing them.

Neighbourhood Town meeting is another method in place as one of the ways of sourcing and exchanging information between members of the public and the authorities. It is also known as community Baraza. It is famous for its ability to maintain and create continuous contacts between the police and the local residents of a place. Unequal to Neighbourhood Watch, in these meetings are held outdoors where anyone can access, further, plans for the meetings are well orchestrated and in public places like open fields, market place. The meeting provides a platform for sharing ideas and priorities that affect the community as far as security is concerned. Community meetings give police an opportunity to solicit public aid in the initiative in order to partake in the process of ensuring tranquillity in the neighbourhood. Furthermore, the members of the public get an opportunity to share all information they have with the police, as they are able to explain at length and give details of any suspicious behaviour, while the police divulge more on why an initiative is important and how it benefited the community (Lord& Friday, 2008).

According to Wazed and Akhtar (2015), the perception of citizens towards Nyumba Kumi is vital for it to achieve its set objectives; information shared and discussed at the Neighbourhood Watch, Community Meetings, and Door to Door adventures aims to pollster the confidence of citizens on the police in order to create a rapport between the two parties. With this lukewarm relationship in place, we can be sure that the citizens endorsed the idea of sharing information about criminal elements living amongst them. Citizens' perceptions regarding the Nyumba Kumi initiative created via social and physical experiences, interactions with law enforcers in their environment have changed (Ngigi, 2018). Groff et al. (2013) describe the perceptions of citizen's interaction between the public and foot patrol officers as a non-adversarial, non-combative, friendly approach; and car patrol officers as adversarial and non-suspicious. Bush and Dodson (2014) found out that policing in which citizens themselves take part in the process rather than policing for the citizens help in pulling the residents to the core of the initiative in that they have always felt insecure with the police handling all their unresolved issues, this attitude has cultivated mistrust between police and members of the public. Citizens do not want the government in their business; they want someone familiar with their issues handling their problems in order to for them to own the process and have more confidence in the Nyumba Kumi Community Policing initiative. These mixed signals between law enforcement and

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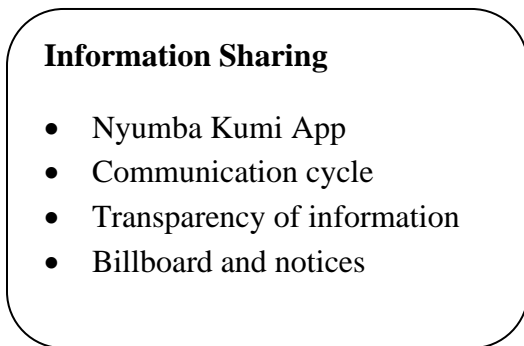
citizens categorize citizens into groups of those suspected to participate in criminal activity, those who record police activities to portray a lack of professionalism, and those who do not fit in either category and do not understand what officers do (Bush and Dodson, 2014). The expected position of the members of the public is voluntarily to enter into a social contract with the police in which they shared any information related to crime with law enforcers within their jurisdiction and partner with them through the Nyumba Kumi initiative (Kenya Police, 2014).
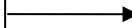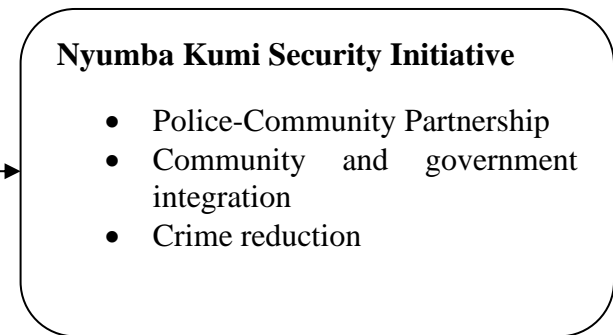
Conceptual Framework

Illustration of conceptual framework showing connections existing between the dependent and independent variables of the study,

Independent variable   **Dependent variable**

Information Sharing

- Nyumba Kumi App
- Communication cycle
- Transparency of information
- Billboard and notices

Nyumba Kumi Security Initiative

- Police-Community Partnership
- Community and government integration
- Crime reduction

Source: Researcher, (2021)

RESEARCH DESIGN

The descriptive research design was employed as it describes, explains and interprets conditions. It concerns with practices, structures different or relationship that exists, the opinion held and processes that are ongoing or trends that are evident. Descriptive research design uses both qualitative and quantitative data. To answer the questions of this study, the researcher was specifically guided by descriptive research design in investigating the determinants of effective implementation of the Nyumba Kumi Community Policing initiative Kericho County. Cooper, Schindler and Sun, (2006) argued that descriptive design is appropriate in studies that use both qualitative and quantitative data; thus, this study is placed well to adopt the design since this study uses both qualitative and quantitative data. The design is favourable in that it gathers information from the community's held opinion on the Nyumba Kumi Community Policing initiative. This assisted the researcher to access the descriptive nature existing in the study topic.

Target Population

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2013), these are groups of objects, human species having similar features, i.e., the totality of species numbers that conform to a set of features that define the elements that are targeted for inclusion in a study. The study was conducted in the Nyagacho area of Ainamoi Sub County. According to Kenya's Population and Housing Census 2019 census, the Nyagacho area has 1842 households. This was the target population, including Chiefs and the Assistant Chief, village elders from the four villages in Nyagacho and Chairpersons of Nyumba Kumi from the four clusters existing in the area from which a sample was selected (KCIDP, 2018). The four villages in Nyagacho are; Baraka Kwa Musa, Mjini, Baraka Kwa Wesley and Motobo.

Research Instruments

According to Mohajan (2018) research instruments are the tools used to collect data or information from the sample targeted for the study. The primary data collection instruments were mainly structured questionnaires and interview schedules. Structured

interviews were carried out by the researcher to the Chief, Assistant Chief, chairpersons of Nyumba Kumi and the four village elders from the four villages in Nyagacho, while questionnaires were administered proportionally to the households across the villages, this was because it covers a more significant sample within a shorter period, it also provides a set of questions well formulated that captures the topic under study.

Validity and Reliability

The paper assessed both the validity and reliability of the research instruments. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2013), validity is the point in which tools of research collects the information it is meant to and consequently measure what it is programmed for. It is the regulated accuracy and usefulness of the inferences drawn based on the data collected during the study. In other words, validity is the degree to which the results are representative of its variables. Content validity was considered to validate the research instruments. The content-related technique was used before and after the pilot study to measure if the data collected answers the research questions.

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), reliability is the ability of the research instruments to produce consistent results over time given the same variables. It is measured by the strength of the

tool provide the same results when deployed repeatedly. In this study, test and re-test method was used. To measure the instruments' reliability, a computation using SPSS was done to establish Cronbach's reliability coefficient. For this study, a correlation coefficient of 0.70 or higher was considered acceptable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings for Information sharing as a determinant of Implementation of Nyumba Kumi Community Policing

Respondents were asked to choose a possible way in which information sharing facilitate implementation of Nyumba Kumi Community Policing; the desired responses were 4-Strongly Agree,3-Agree,2-Disagree, and1-Strongly Disagree. Their responses were examined using descriptive statistics as well as content analysis. Mean and standard deviation was extracted from the distribution of information from questionnaires, while content analysis was obtained from the interview schedule.

Descriptive Statistics for Information Sharing

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Information Sharing

Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
Nyumba Kumi application has helped in sharing information in order to enhance security.	297	1.00	4.00	3.2189	.71842
Information circulates freely among all the Nyumba Kumi members and other stakeholders in order to curb insecurity	297	1.00	4.00	3.0976	.85458
Information shared by the members is transparent and authentic	297	1.00	4.00	2.5657	.95679
Information sharing has helped in the implementation of the Nyumba Kumi initiative.	297	1.00	4.00	3.0875	.87712

Table 1 revealed that the Nyumba Kumi application sufficiently assisted in sharing information for the enhancement of security, mean of 3.2189 (Agre e). The variation of opinion was low in the application of sharing of information (*SD* = 0.71842(Strongly Disagree).

Information was found to adequately circulate freely among all the Nyumba Kumi members and other stakeholders so as to curb and minimize insecurity, mean of 3.0976 (Agree). Low variation in opinion indicated that information freely circulated across the study area (*SD* = 0.85458 (Strongly Disagree).

Findings also indicated that the information shared by the members was slightly transparent and authentic mean of 2.5657(Disagree). A standard deviation is 0.95679(Strongly Disagree) indicated low variation in opinion on transparency and authenticity of the information shared.

Information sharing has satisfactorily assisted in the implementation of the Nyumba Kumi initiative, mean of 3.0875(Agree). A variation of 0.87712(Strongly Disagree) revealed a similar opinion in information sharing ($SD = 0.87712$). All the respondents were aware of the Nyumba Kumi Community Policing initiative. They recognized Nyumba Kumi as a security management tool in incorporating the community in order to improve security within the Nyagacho.

The response to the interview question "what is the mode of operation?" revealed that weekly meetings assisted in information sharing. According to respondent 4:

> "Weekly meetings are organized by village elders each representing a household together with the chairperson of Nyumba Kumi organizes regular meetings to check on security situation and priorities in the area."

Similarly, the response was also received from other interview respondents.

In response to "Has your level of trust for the police/community improved since the inception of Nyumba Kumi Community Policing initiative? Kindly explain your answer with regard to information sharing" 80% of the respondents revealed that relationship between police and community had improved significantly. This was associated with improvement in information sharing as a means of crime prevention within the community. Further, this was prompted by the fact that police are discouraged from wearing police uniforms during the estate, round table meetings and Barazas as away doing away with fear for the Police appearance in uniforms. Therefore, information sharing has improved the implementation of the Nyumba Kumi initiative.

Wazed and Akhtar (2015) concur with the current findings that the community share information with the policies regarding suspicious characters and any security situation in an effort to flatten the insecurity curve. However, the relationship between the community and police was lukewarm. This was similar to Bush and Dodson (2014) results where the Nyumba Kumi policing did not only act as a means of sharing information but also enables the community members to solve issues affecting the society without government interference. These strategies secure as well as ensure underlying social problems within the community, which breed social disorder which, if left unchecked, will affect the community negatively.

CONCLUSION

According to the results, information sharing has largely helped in the management of security in the Nyagacho area. Information always circulates freely among all the members of the Nyumba Kumi initiative. However, there was a lack of transparency and authenticity. Information sharing assisted in the implementation of the Nyumba Kumi initiative. Information sharing had significance in the implementation of Nyumba Kumi. The response from the interview indicated that information sharing played an important role in enhancing security. Therefore, information sharing aid significantly in the implementation of Nyumba Kumi, which has resulted in continuous improvement of the long-time frosty relationship between local residents and the security personnel by instilling confidence.

Recommendation

The study recommended to Nyumba Kumi members and National Government Administrative Officers, through information sharing to encourage members to uphold transparency, all must work to see to it that authenticity of information is achieved in order to instil confidence in the community of Nyagacho. However, based on the group diversity, it is hard to ensure transparency in that some of the members had relatives who indulged in practices such as illicit brews and tipped them in advance whenever raids are to be carried out rendering the process null and void, but with high sensitivity and constant meeting on the importance of transparency, taking of secrecy oath and protecting the authenticity of information much will be achieved from the initiative.

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