

Operationalization of Community Policing and its Influence on Social Cohesion in Kiambu, County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Community policing can enhance both the social cohesion in multi-ethnic settings and at the same time address crime and insecurity when successfully implemented and effectively operationalized. This study assessed the influence of operationalization of community policing and its influence on social cohesion in Kiambu, County, Kenya. This study was anchored on two theoretical frameworks. Social Capital Theory emphasized how well trained and well-resourced Community Policing Committees can build relationships of trust and cooperation between police officers and community members. Resource Dependence Theory demonstrated how limited funding severely restrict operationalization of community policing therefore having negative implications on social cohesion. This study took the form of an exploratory research design which was purely qualitative. Both secondary and primary sources of data collection were employed by this study. The target population included Assistant Chiefs, Committee Members, Chairpersons of Community Policing Committees and Local Residents in the 12 sub-counties and 257 sub-locations of Kiambu County. Simple random sampling was employed to identify 332 informants for field interviews. The instruments of data collection comprised interview guides and focus group discussions developed in line with the research objective. The researcher analyzed the qualitative data by transcribing the data to produce a textual data set of which recurring themes and patterns and codes related to funding of community policing (CP) capacity building initiatives were generated. The study established that community policing in Kiambu County has the capability of enhancing social cohesiveness, reducing criminality and increasing community and law enforcement partnership/communication through shared responsibility. Through active participation of the community, social bonding was enhanced; communication was improved and the underlying causes of insecurity were addressed through this model, further validating community policing as an applicable, preventative method for reducing crime compared to traditionally reactive policing models. The research recommended government implementation and strengthening of community policing models. Community policing, when it is effectively implemented can create a safer society for all citizens, improve trust between citizens and their respective law enforcement agencies, and help to increase social harmony within communities.

Keywords: Community Policing, Social Cohesion, Capacity Building, Community Participation, Police-Community Partnerships

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Social cohesion is a major factor in achieving peaceful coexistence, effective government and long-term development, especially in areas that are culturally and ethnically diverse (Schiefer & van der Noll, 2017; Putnam, 2006; Sun et al., 2012; Chan et al., 2020). Social cohesion is defined as the level of trust, solidarity, commonality of values and cooperation present among individuals, communities and institutions (Chan et al., 2020; Sun et al., 2012). When there is high social cohesion among residents, people are able to feel safe, have their contributions recognized by others, be willing to collaborate with one another, and collaborate across ethnic, racial, cultural and economic boundaries. Conversely, when there is low social cohesion, people become wary of each other, exhibit discriminatory behaviors toward one another, do not feel secure or are less likely to collaborate with one another, and experience higher levels of conflict (Putnam, 2006; Sun et al., 2012).

Scholars observe that as long as communities have diverse populations, local governments and the local community will have to put forth policies and programs to promote social cohesion and avoid social

fragmentation (Schiefer & van der Noll, 2017; Putnam, 2006). There is also consensus that one of the most important governance approaches for creating both social cohesion and addressing issues of crime and/or insecurity is through community policing (CP) strategies. Community policing is an example of a pro-active, community-oriented policing strategy that involves engaging citizens within the community, establishing partnerships between law enforcement agencies and citizens and sharing responsibility for maintaining public safety (Skogan & Frydl, 2019; Bayley, 2017). The most important way CP differs from previous types of policing is that CP's focus is on developing trust between the police and citizens through collaborative working relationships, dialogue and joint problem solving as opposed to the police being the sole provider of security (Bayley, 2017).

Research conducted in Europe, Asia and Latin America suggests that, as long as CP is effectively implemented, there will be less fear of crime, higher levels of trust in the police and greater community cohesion (Braga et al., 2019; Caneppele, 2019; Belknap et al., 2017).

In addition to establishing CP programs, research indicates that CP implementation is a significant factor in determining whether or not CP is effective. The three most important elements that determine whether or not CP is implemented effectively are: community involvement in decision-making regarding safety, the level of cooperation between the police and the community, and the resources available for funding the training, communication and community outreach/engagement activities (Chappell et al., 2017; Muiruri & Mwangi, 2021). Where these factors are absent or inconsistent in their implementation, CP programs are unlikely to be successful in enhancing levels of trust and social cohesion (Nalla & Mamayek, 2020; Haziri, 2018).

The reforms were also intended to democratize the role of the police in providing security for the population. CP has been implemented by many African governments in their efforts to improve relationships between the police and the populations they serve. In Kenya for instance, CP was institutionalized through the National Police Service Act of 2011, the *Nyumba Kumi* Initiative of 2013 and the Inspector General's Community Policing Guidelines of 2016 (National Police Service, 2016a; 2016b) that involve citizen participation in security decision-making and collaboration between police and communities to address crime and insecurity. Further, some international donor agencies and civil society organizations have supported CP initiatives in Kenya with funding from CP-related projects such as training and awareness raising activities (Ruteere & Pommerolle, 2010).

Despite all of this, there are wide disparities in the results of CP initiatives in Kenya based upon where they are located. An example is Kiambu County, an ethnically diverse county that is undergoing rapid urbanization. In Kiambu County CP has failed to meet expectations. Only approximately 33.3 percent of sub-counties have functioning CP structures (NCIC, 2014). Social cohesion indicators in Kiambu County show lower levels of social cohesion. Approximately less than 50 percent of the surveyed population indicated that they had experienced peaceful coexistence and tolerance toward diversity and that they had faith in the relationship between the different communities. The previous statistics raise very serious doubts about whether or not CP is being effectively implemented in Kiambu County to establish a cohesive social environment.

Studies in Kenya have identified challenges limiting the success of CP. Challenges include low levels of community participation, the poor relationship between the police and the communities, insufficient resources and a lack of training for CP projects (Muthondeki et al., 2022; Kimari & Mwangi, 2020). The problems mentioned above are likely to cause a greater loss of trust, lower levels of collective action and lower shared experience of community in ethnically diverse areas like Kiambu County (Kimari & Mwangi, 2020). There exist a significant knowledge in research on the impact of operational aspects of CP at the county level on social cohesion in Kiambu County. This study investigated the relationship between the implementation of CP (using community participation, police-community relationships and resources) and social cohesion in Kiambu County. Through an investigation of the operational components of CP, this research will help to address the current gaps in the literature and help to inform policy makers, CP practitioners and potential CP reformers in Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

There exist considerable evidence demonstrating that the increased ethnic diversity of an area leads to less social cohesion amongst residents (Putnam, 2006). The reduction in social cohesion is due to a combination of fear, distrust and feelings of insecurity felt by individuals who are part of different ethnic communities (Putnam, 2006).

Therefore, Community Policing (CP), which is a collaborative policing approach to foster and enhance relationships and cooperative effort and to develop a shared sense of responsibility for public safety in diverse communities, has seen a significant increase in popularity around the world (Skogan, 2006; Braga et al., 2019). An important component of CP is the effective implementation of CP through meaningful community involvement, the development of strong community-police relationships and sufficient resource availability to sustain ongoing community-based engagement and problem solving efforts (Jones, 2015).

Research has demonstrated that CP can positively affect social cohesion by promoting shared norms, enhancing inter-group relations and reducing conflict (Chappell et al., 2017; Gill et al., 2014). Conversely, limited community participation, weak partnerships and insufficient or ineffectively managed resources may hinder the success of CP and potentially increase pre-existing divisions (Bayley, 2017; Jones, 2015). In Kenya, the principles underlying CP were formalized through the establishment of CP programs such as *Nyumba Kumi*. Nevertheless, studies indicate that CP was implemented unevenly and had limited outcomes, particularly in ethnically diverse counties (NCIC, 2014).

Kiambu County is ethnically diverse and exposed to a number of security risks. However, CP structures in the county are weak with only a small proportion of sub-counties reporting that they have fully functioning CP systems (NCIC, 2014). Trust, tolerance and confidence in inter-community relations in Kiambu County are also relatively low. These low levels of social cohesion raise questions about how CP is being operationalized. Although CP is a priority in national policy, little county-level empirical research has investigated the extent to which the operationalization of CP (in terms of community participation, police–community partnerships and resource allocation) affects social cohesion. This study identified a critical need to investigate systematically the extent to which CP is affecting social cohesion in Kiambu County and to provide evidence to support informed policymaking and practice.

Specific Objective of the Study

To assess the extent to which the operationalization of community policing affects social cohesion in Kiambu County.

Significance of the Study

Academically, this study fills the gap in the lack of empirically based county level research exploring how the operationalization of community policing affects social cohesion within Kenya. While previous literature demonstrates a theoretical relationship between community policing, trust, and cooperation, most literature has been conceptual or nationally aggregated with very little insight provided into local realities. Therefore, through its focus on Kiambu County, this research is providing contextualized evidence of how community involvement, police-community partnerships, and resource allocations can affect social cohesion in a culturally diverse setting.

The findings from this research will also inform the development of policies and practices related to community policing. The finding generated from this research will help policymakers identify ways to enhance the effectiveness of community policing models such as *Nyumba Kumi*. More specifically, by identifying the operational gaps and how they affect social cohesion, this research provides a basis for policymakers at both the county and national levels to better understand how best to direct limited resources toward those initiatives and strategies that are likely to maximize community engagement, enhance police-neighborhood relationships and provide more effective and sustainable governance. The data generated from this study provides an evidence base for the creation of targeted programs, for increased police accountability and for ensuring that community policing efforts lead to improved security governance and enhanced trust and peaceful co-existence among citizens of Kiambu County and other regions with similar security challenges.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Participation by community members is generally accepted to be one of the fundamental pillars of community policing, and also one of the primary mechanisms used to develop social cohesion. Participation requires that the community member actively participate in the identification of problems affecting security, co-create solutions to those problems, monitor the effectiveness of the policing activities and provide feedback to police. According

to Connors and Webster (2014), the hierarchical structure traditionally used by police organizations are more suitable to controlling administrative functions, rather than the collaborative decision making and creative problem solving inherent in participatory policing. Therefore, unless intentional organization change occurs, police organizations find it difficult to institutionalize meaningful community participation.

Studies have shown that structures used to facilitate community participation in policing, such as community policing committees, neighborhood forums and joint problem-solving programs, build mutual understanding and trust between the police and various communities. Cordner (2014) indicates that successful operational implementation of community policing requires involvement of stakeholders throughout the entire process. The authors suggests that participation in policing should go beyond being just a tokenistic form of consultation and that communities should be given the opportunity to set agendas, make decisions about policing and evaluate whether or not policing initiatives are successful. In a society with many ethnic groups, it is especially important to include all members of society in decision-making processes about policing, as the perception of exclusion from decision-making can contribute to increased social fragmentation.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, research on community-based policing has found that community involvement in policing creates social cohesion by fostering a sense of community-wide responsibility for public safety. For example, Jonyo and Buchere (2011), note that an increasing number of government officials and community leaders understand their role in working together to prevent crime. Understanding their role in preventing crime encourages a greater willingness among citizens to intervene if violence or lawlessness occurs. When communities share a commitment to maintaining peace, they reinforce the social norms that support peaceful coexistence. Nevertheless, participation in policing is typically uneven, and may be limited due to elite capture, ethnic favoritism, or gender exclusion, thus reducing its ability to create social cohesion.

Mutahi and Kimari (2020) noted that participatory security programs in Kenya can build trust when the program is inclusive and transparent, but can also exacerbate divisions when the participants are primarily political elites or people who share ethnicity. In addition, Kura (2021) observed that community participation in social cohesion will only occur when police agencies develop safe spaces for marginalized groups to participate in community policing programs without fear of retaliation.

Although there has been a large increase in studies regarding the relationship between community participation and social cohesion; however, the lack of systematic assessments of the relationship between community participation and social cohesion exists in the existing research. Many of the current studies evaluate community participation using descriptive terms, which do not measure the degree to which community participation occurs, nor do they link community participation to measurable indicators of social cohesion, including trust, inter-ethnic cooperation, or collective efficacy. Specifically, in Kiambu County, where rapid urbanization and ethnic diversity exist, there is a lack of research examining the impact of community participation on social cohesion in the context of rapidly changing community structures and institutions.

Community participation is only one component of successful community policing; police-community partnerships that establish long-term collaborative relationships between law enforcement and community actors are equally important. These types of partnerships promote the prevention of crime, resolution of conflicts, and mitigation of underlying social disorders through joint efforts of the police and community actors. Langworthy (2014) found that working closely with community actors and building long-lasting relationships between police and community actors contributed to lower rates of violence and higher levels of social cohesion in Colombia. However, in order for these types of collaborative relationships to be developed and maintained successfully, there must be a deep understanding of both social change processes and the diversity of values held by the various societal groups involved.

Olusegun (2015) observed that community policing differs from traditional policing in that community policing changes the focus of policing from primarily controlling crime to including the maintenance of social order and promotion of community well-being. In community policing, the police and community actors work together to identify and develop solutions to problems that exist in the community, such as neglect, disorder, and interpersonal conflicts. Many of these problems are not crimes, but they can greatly negatively impact social cohesion.

In Kenya, finding of the study conducted by the Project Group (2011), who were assessing community-based law enforcement in Kikuyu, Kiambu County. The study found that the development of community-policing partnerships gave police managers the authority to direct the actions of community committee members and provide them with the resources to independently address their own community issues. The study also found that when community committee members had clearly defined roles and responsibilities, it resulted in increased trust and harmonious relationships between the elders and committee members and all the other stakeholders. Building trust is critical to developing social cohesion, particularly in ethnically diverse communities.

The role of funding within the implementation of community policing is a necessary yet underutilized factor. For community policing to occur, funding, along with physical assistance, is needed to allow for community involvement, fund and support partnerships, train personnel, and fund community based problem-solving activities. Cordner (2014) states that when implementing a community policing model, agencies must invest time in training, strategic planning, and changing their performance evaluation systems to effectively implement community policing throughout their organization.

Community policing entails decentralizing authority and decision-making, and requires both law enforcement officials and community members to develop new skill sets and flexible management techniques. Without adequate resources to support community involvement, the decentralization process will fail to achieve its intended goals. Training programs for community policing should contain courses in peace-building, conflict mediation, and cross-cultural communication to facilitate cross-cultural interactions in multi-ethnic communities where miscommunications can lead to larger scale conflicts. In Kenya, The Project Group (2011) found that the presence of resources for community policing committees in Kiambu County allowed community policing committees to proactively address community issues instead of waiting until the issues arose.

Studies also support the findings of The Project Group. Muiruri and Mwangi (2021) state that inconsistent funding of community policing initiatives in Kenyan counties creates unsustainable community policing efforts and limits the success of community policing at developing and maintaining trust and cohesion in the community. Chappell et al., (2017) also found that resource constraints affect the ability of community policing programs to engage with the community in meaningful ways and to create and sustain long-term partnerships with the community. The lack of funding for community policing in Kenya has been shown to limit the effectiveness of community policing by limiting the ability of community policing programs to engage in community-based problem solving and by reducing the capacity of community policing programs to promote and enhance social cohesion in ethnically diverse areas. However, there is no evidence that the absence of funding completely eliminates the impact of community policing on promoting social cohesion in ethnically diverse areas.

Social cohesion is influenced by the quality of relationships and trust between individuals and organizations. The lack of funding for community policing in Kenya does contribute to a reduction in social cohesion in ethnically diverse areas; however, the extent to which funding influences social cohesion remains unclear. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies investigate the relationship between funding and social cohesion to determine the extent to which funding contributes to social cohesion in ethnically diverse communities.

Ultimately, while funding is an important component of community policing, funding alone cannot ensure that community policing is successful in all areas. To increase social cohesion in ethnically diverse areas, community policing must involve the use of culturally sensitive strategies to build and maintain relationships with community members and to create and sustain trust among community members.

Although resource funding has been recognized as a key factor in the success of community policing, the current body of literature infrequently investigates how resource funding influences the development of social cohesion through participation and partnerships. Many studies have examined funding as an operational issue rather than as a variable that influences social interactions. There also is little empirical research examining whether counties that allocate more resources to community policing efforts will have greater social cohesion, especially in areas that have high ethnic diversity such as Kiambu County.

A number of gaps remain in the existing literature on community policing that are relevant to this study. A primary gap is that many studies examine the concept and general benefits of community policing without

operationalizing its components or measuring the impacts of its components on social cohesion. Second, there is a paucity of county-level empirical research in Kenya that examines how **community participation, police–community partnerships, and resource allocation** jointly affect social cohesion. Third, few studies explicitly address the dynamics of community policing in **multi-ethnic communities**, where cohesion is both most fragile and most critical. Additionally, while earlier studies provide valuable insights into community policing in Kiambu County, they do not empirically link operationalization to social cohesion outcomes. More recent Kenyan studies tend to be descriptive or policy-oriented, leaving a gap in analytical research that integrates organizational, social, and resource dimensions.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Social Capital Theory (SCT)

Social Capital Theory was developed by Putnam (2000). SCT argues that when people have access to each other through social networks; adhere to similar norms; and have faith in one another, they will be able to work together to address common problems and provide assistance to one another. These three elements namely social networks, social norms, and trust contribute to an individual's social capital. For example, there are many ways to categorize social capital. Bonding social capital occurs between individuals within a group; bridging social capital exists between groups; and linking social capital occurs between a community and institutions. While high levels of social capital increase the amount of trust within a community, promote a sense of shared responsibility for addressing problems that affect everyone in the community, and create the opportunity for collective problem solving all of these characteristics contribute to increased social cohesion in a community that has diversity. On the other hand, low levels of social capital result in mistrust; less willingness to collaborate among community members; and decreased community participation.

Within the context of operationalization of community policing and social cohesion in Kiambu County, Social Capital Theory also serves as a model for understanding how well trained and well-resourced Community Policing Committees (CPCs) can build relationships of trust and cooperation between police officers and community members. The level of bridging social capital is directly related to the amount of adequate training and resources received by a Committee for Community Policing. Increased bridging social capital allows committee members to act as mediators between groups of community members who may have conflicting interests or views.

Additionally, increased bridging social capital enables committee members to facilitate dialogue between ethnic groups and to encourage community-based safety initiatives. Increased linking social capital enables committee members to facilitate communication between law enforcement agencies and community members. Therefore, by creating additional connections in social networks and encouraging community members to adopt collaborative norms — funding for training and development creates a greater degree of social cohesion and supports the principles of Social Capital Theory related to the importance of trust and reciprocity as catalysts for collective action.

Resource Dependence Theory (RDT)

Resource dependence theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) suggests that organizations rely on outside resources in order to exist and accomplish goals. An organization's ability to acquire, allocate and manage critical resources such as funding, staff, and technology determines its level of success and strategic independence. Consequently, organizations have to create ways to get the resources they need in order to use those resources appropriately, and balance their internal capabilities with what is required from the outside as well.

Community policing, like all other organizational efforts, depends on sufficient resources to implement community policing strategies and programs. In Kiambu County, however, limited funding severely restrict operationalization of community policing therefore having negative implications on social cohesion. Committee (CPC) have implement active patrol programs, community outreach, and mediation programs. Through application of Resource Dependence Theory, the study will explore how the strategic distribution of government grants, public-private partnerships, and donor support can improve the capacity of CPCs and the operational

performance of CP initiatives. According to Resource Dependence Theory, the success of CP initiatives depends upon the availability of funds for training, infrastructure and operational support. Thus, the study examined the influence of operationalization of community policing on social cohesion.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study took the form of an exploratory research design which was purely qualitative. Both secondary and primary sources of data collection were employed by this study. The study was conducted in Kiambu County, located in the central part of Kenya. The target population included Assistant Chiefs, Committee Members, Chairpersons of Community Policing Committees and Local Residents in the 12 sub-counties and 257 sub-locations of Kiambu County. To prevent prejudice and partiality, a simple random selection method was used to select 332 informants as distributed in the table below.

Table 1.1 Sample Grid

Respondents	Sample Size
Chairpersons of Community Policing Committees	24
Members of Community Policing Committees	288
Assistant Chiefs	20
Total	332

The tools for collecting data included a survey instrument (interview guide) and a focus group discussion tool created in relation to the research question. Reliability and validity were maintained by creating tools which would allow an accurate measurement of each component, as the field questions clearly reflected the purpose of this study. Data was interpreted and analyzed qualitatively. Qualitative data was undertaken by recording the interviews and then transcribing them verbatim into a textual dataset to develop common themes and patterns (codes) regarding funding for capacity-building in community policing.

OPERATIONALIZATION OF COMMUNITY POLICING AND SOCIAL COHESION

Overview

The study employed two supplementary theoretical models to serve as the basis for the methodological approach to this research. The theory of Social Capital provides evidence that when the funding for the training and the other resources for the Community Policing Committee (CPC) is increased, then the bridging and linking social capital of the CPC will also be increased. The increased social capital will subsequently provide an increase in cooperative and trusting relationships between the community and the police department which ultimately results in an increase in participatory security.

Resource Dependence Theory suggests that Community Policing Committees are dependent upon external funding sources to be able to function as effective crime prevention organizations; adequate funding allows CPC's to acquire necessary personnel, equipment, and technology to conduct proactive patrol operations and resolve conflicts within the community. The two theoretical frameworks show how proper operationalization of community policing, measured through community participation, police-community partnerships and resource allocation positively influences social cohesion in Kiambu County.

Operationalizing Community Policing in Kiambu County

Historically, there has been a transition from the colonial era's use of authoritative methods of policing for law enforcement purposes, to community policing models in Kenya. The colonial government used the police as an instrument of control over the local population and frequently implemented oppressive practices to govern the local population (Ruteere & Mutahi, 2020). After independence, relations between the police and the public have continued to decline. Despite some early reforms, the police continued to be structured hierarchically and military-style, and did not consider the concerns of average citizens.

As a result, the police answered to the state, and not to the community. The poor relationship between the police

and the community led to a decrease in public confidence in the police. One member of a community policing committee in Kiambu stated that the police were first viewed as fearful agents of the state, and did not become involved in the issues of the community. However, once the community became more involved in policing activities, the issue improved.

In an attempt to repair the damaged relationship between the police and the public, the government of Kenya recognized the need for a cooperative method of policing, therefore, enacted reforms to strengthen the relationship between the police and the community. During the early 2000's, Kenya started to build on community policing, which focused on partnerships, inclusivity and accountability. The first major step toward this development came when the National Police Service Act was passed in 2011. This Act formally declared community policing a principle crime prevention and social cohesion policy, and established a statutory structure allowing the community to participate in policing and ensuring the police and community were working together to promote law and order (Republic of Kenya, 2011).

In addition to the National Police Service Act, two key elements of the community policing initiative in Kenya are the *Nyumba Kumi* committees and the Community Policing Committees (CPCs). Although the community policing model in Kenya has enhanced relationships between law enforcement and the communities they serve; increased citizen participation in the policing process; and created a sense of community and social cohesion, there remain many barriers to implementing this model effectively. One of the most common barriers to successful implementation of community policing in Kenya is lack of adequate resources and funding for both the local police station and the local CPC. According to one community leader in Kiambu County, lack of resources and the inability of CPC's to adequately carry out their responsibilities were the primary reasons that reduced the success of community policing, even though the model offers many positive outcomes.

Community Policing in Kenya is being challenged due to low levels of funding for community policing (implementation) and, most importantly, resource-poor rural communities are being disproportionately affected. In order to make community policing sustainable, the government will have to fund community policing adequately. As such, despite the many challenges that exist, community policing continues to be a key part of the National Security Strategy of Kenya. The shift in paradigm to recognize community involvement as an essential factor in effective crime prevention and policing is demonstrated by this continued commitment to community policing.

The sentiments also show a developing recognition by the Kenyan government for the importance of police-community relations in promoting peace and safety in Kenya. In addition to officially adopting community policing, Kenya is transitioning from an authoritarian policing style to a more collaborative, citizen-based policing style which will give more power to local communities through the implementation of programs like *Nyumba Kumi* and Community Policing Committees. While there are still many problems associated with urbanization and other factors, the continued growth of community policing efforts demonstrate a commitment by the Kenyan government to build partnerships, promote inclusion and accountability. Long term success and continuation of these programs can only be ensured if the Kenyan government continues to invest time and money into these programs and educates and encourages the public to participate and support them.

Operationalization Dynamics of Community Policing and Social Cohesion

Community policing is based on the concept of law enforcement agencies and communities working together to address security issues collectively. Community policing generates social cohesion in the community through greater trust, mutual understanding, shared values and interests.

Social cohesion refers to the quality and quantity of connections, trust and solidarity between individuals in the community. Trust, social networks and social capital are important factors in enabling collective action and peaceful coexistence (Woolcock, 2001). Skogan (2018), emphasized that the collaboration between the police and the community contributes to the legitimacy of law enforcement and creates social capital.

This corresponds to Woolcock's (2001) argument that trust and social networks represent the foundation of the successful interaction between communities and security systems. Furthermore, Skogan (2018) emphasized that the collaboration between the police and the community generates greater legitimacy of law enforcement and generates social capital.

Policy Frameworks Guiding Operationalization

Community policing policy frameworks that inform the implementation of community policing globally rely upon the principles of community involvement in security. When the community and security agencies collaborate to fight crime, many benefits follow including better prevention of crime and enhanced social cohesion. Social cohesion is defined as a social network of people who interact and collaborate toward a common objective. A community with low social cohesion typically includes members that do not have relationships or connections with each other; rather, each member relies exclusively on themselves to attain individual accomplishments. Social cohesion has proven to be a highly valuable asset to society because of the relationships that form between individuals and the collaboration that occurs when working toward a common goal. For instance, communities that are socially cohesive collaborate with each other to address issues, such as crime, that affect the entire community.

The initiation of community policing in Kiambu County represented a plan to enhance social unity and reduce crime. In essence, community policing involves both local citizenry and law enforcement working together to develop solutions to problems that affect the community at large. Community policing seeks to enable the community to become empowered in order to prevent crime and to foster a safe community environment. Through community policing, the community is provided with the ability to make decisions concerning those issues which pertain to the community. This study illustrated how community policing in Kiambu County dramatically increased social unity, and changed the nature of the relationship between residents and security agencies from being confrontational to collaborative.

Study findings indicated that a successful partnership between community and law enforcement agencies has increased social cohesion in Kiambu County. The majority of respondents reported improved feelings of safety resulting from increased collaboration with the police department, in addition to improved communication between themselves and the police in regards to community policing compared to previous times when there was no community policing. Initiatives such as the Community Policing Committee (CPC) and the Nyumba Kumi initiative allowed the community to be involved in keeping safe their own communities. Thus, community policing fostered social unity by allowing residents to provide solutions to crimes occurring in their communities, and by encouraging residents to feel a sense of ownership in contributing to keeping their communities safe. As a result, the partnership between the citizens of Kiambu County and the law enforcement agencies in the county increased trust in the security agencies, increased social capital, and reduced criminal activity.

While community policing has demonstrated a number of positive outcomes, it has yet to overcome numerous challenges. This study noted that CP in Kiambu County faces several challenges which include insufficient funding, inadequate training, and corruption within the organizations that have developed these programs. Although challenges are prevalent in community policing, the establishment of this type of program in Kiambu County demonstrates that, with sufficient financing, proper management, and a genuine willingness of both the communities and security agencies to build trust and a sense of ownership, community policing can contribute to the creation of safe, united and cooperative communities.

In general, the findings of this study suggest that community participation in policing can facilitate a transition from reactive policing approaches to preventive and participatory policing models. The effectiveness of community policing strategies will be dependent upon the availability of sufficient financial resources, effective training and management practices, and a genuine commitment by both communities and security agencies to foster trust and a sense of ownership. Without these essential components, the positive effects of community policing may be severely reduced. The research conducted here serves as evidence of the significant potential of the community policing model to produce safer and more cohesive communities when the conditions required to sustain the model exist.

CONCLUSION

This study has shown that community policing is a very successful way of improving social cohesion and reducing crime in communities by having police work with residents of a community to ensure public safety through cooperative effort. By working together in partnerships with their community, law enforcement

organizations are able to create a sense of shared responsibility for public safety and foster trusted relationships. When the people of Kiambu County cooperated with their community and the local security organizations, it brought about an increase in collaboration, mutual understanding of the different positions, and an overall willingness for the parties to work together to resolve local crime issues that affected them.

The study found that by being directly engaged in community crime prevention programs, the community members built stronger social bonds, improved their ability to communicate with each other, and provided evidence that community policing had achieved its purposes in Kiambu County. In turn, the collaborative community-based policing model used by the researchers helped address many of the underlying reasons for insecurity in the community; ultimately providing evidence that community policing can be used to build unity among diverse groups and reduce crime. Unlike traditional policing approaches which are focused on enforcing the law in a reactive manner, community policing provides a means to work collaboratively with the community and prevent crimes before they occur as well as address the myriad of problems arising at the local level. This enables public security entities to provide appropriate responses to the needs of their respective local communities, and enables them to empower these communities to take responsibility for ensuring their own security and wellbeing. This study demonstrated that community policing is a viable alternative to traditional policing models that have historically been unable to provide adequate service to the increasing number of diverse and rapidly changing communities throughout Africa and other parts of the world.

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