Effective Community Participation Mechanism in Security Control in Mount Elgon Constituency, Bungoma County

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ABSTRACT

Community participation seems to be more prominent as an alternative strategy in combating insecurity in Mt Elgon. The objective of the study was to find out how effective community participation mechanisms is in security control in Mt Elgon constituency. This study was informed by complexity theory and Stakeholder theory to offer insights on social relations and behavior relevant for peace building. Methodologically, the study adopted both the qualitative and quantitative methods, drawn from the primary and secondary sources. This study primarily targeted community policing committee chairpersons (4), national government administrative officers (17), religious leaders (2) and the Kenya police (4). By use of Yamane formula, 127 respondents were selected to take part in the study. A non-probability sampling technique that adopts a purposive sampling method was used in selecting respondents. Besides, descriptive statistical methods were used in processing and analyzing data. Primary data was obtained using questionnaires and interview guides. A pilot study was carried out to test the validity and reliability of data. The study found out that neighborhood watch, community intelligence gathering, community meetings, community hotlines and community policing are some of the most effective community participation mechanisms effective in security control in Mt Elgon constituency, Bungoma County. Further, the results indicated that indigenous and restorative practices significantly contribute to security control in Mt Elgon region. Nevertheless, there are specific areas like re-integration and compensation that needed improvements. Besides, the relationship between the police and community in Mt Elgon region was poor, thus the need to create trust and hold community meetings to improve the relationship. This study recommends that the NPS should Having units specifically trained on dealing with the community participation. The NPS should also educate and create awareness to the local communities and other stakeholders on the importance of contributing to national security.

Key Words: *Community Participation Mechanism, Security Control*

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1.0 Introduction
1.1 Background of the Study

Before the introduction of the penal system and western civilization, the African societies had their own of cleansing, reformation, and social control. There were various channels of crime control which included chiefs, village elders, and the council of elders. Their functions were to interpret

behavior and the subsisting community's code of conduct, and were passed down from one generation to another. Rukus, Warner & Zhang (2018) acknowledges that African traditional societies had no written rules or laws, but they had well established institutions that were used to control crime and maintain social order. Just like the modern agencies of law enforcements, these traditional institutions served to address crime issues, correct and provide justice.

In the United States where public participation strategy first started, community policing is accepted as a practice and philosophy designed to combat crime. Increased contact levels between individuals, residents, police, and existing community organizations are meaningful in crime control. Mwaeke (2019) promoted the idea of the public and police collaboration in community policing. Police officers and community members should collaborate to fight insecurity. Therefore, it suggests that police alone as the official agency cannot be enough in the provision of security for the community. Consequently, the contribution of informal social control mechanisms based on indigenous practices is significant in implementing the formal community policing mechanisms (Setokoe, Ramukumba & Ferreira, 2019). In Great Britain the different police levels have shifted their focus shift to traditional policing strategy. This new policing strategy incorporates various community agents and re-establishes confidence among the community members (Ren, Zhao & He, 2019). In view of this, it is important that the local communities employ mechanisms that will complement the Police Service in providing and controlling insecurity at the local community.

In Africa, the role played by residents in ensuring community safety is often under-estimated by the police. Most commonwealth countries still face insecurity as a challenge that calls for new strategies to combat. The police must collaborate with the public to ensure there is security (Diphoorn & van Stapele, 2021). This can be done through the approaches and security strategies that are community-oriented to encourage the police to effectively work with the public. In regard to this, the participation program implies that a significant number of people should be involved in actions and situations that enhance security within their areas. Community participation is a significant concept that varies with how it is defined and applied (Pratt, 2020). For example, it can be seen as a matter of practice or principle, or an end in itself.

Kenya has over the recent years through the judicial, executive and legislative roles created related institutions and bodies including the police service, armed forces, judiciary and prisons service. Both primitive and civilized societies aspire to live in peace (Chemegemet, Njonge & Omulema, 2021). Thus, policies have been formulated to reduce or eradicate criminal activities in the community. However, despite the sole mandate of the institution to fight insecurity, and the need to use the multi-sectorial and multi-institutional approach, the police service is treated as the primary state institution mandated with spearheading the fight against insecurity.

Underdevelopment has been greatly witnessed in Mt Elgon as most business people and other civilians are being dispossessed of their valuable properties (Kamoet, 2019). Besides, most people have been killed by armed bandits. Increased crime rates and the inability of the Kenya Police to deal with the situation effectively have called for the adoption of community participation to complement conventional policing. Against this measure, community participation seems to be more prominent as an alternative strategy in fighting insecurity in Mt Elgon.

Security and peace are critical in sustaining the development of a country. Increased crime rates in rural areas of Kenya are an unavoidable consequence of poverty and illiteracy (Karuri & Muna, 2019). Crime in the rural areas should be seen as the price for change, a by-product and a developmental stage that is inevitable- they cannot be altogether prevented but can be improved. Much focus has been on the crime rates in urban areas, but it should be noted that crime rates in

rural areas should also be a matter of concern. It is further predicted that property crimes, including robbery with violence might increase in relation to the levels of social change.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The recent past has witnessed an increase in the intensity of insecurity in Mt Elgon, Bungoma County. The area has had an upsurge in armed robberies, murder, domestic violence, anti-social behavior, and land conflicts, among others. The police as the primary agents in fighting insecurity proved to be ineffective after the Sabaot Land Defense Forces (SLDF) became notorious in 2007 (Wanda, Muchemi & Kefa, 2019). This led to the establishment of the General Service United (GSU) camp in the region. However, property and violent crimes are still being committed every day without detection or prosecution in Mt Elgon. Based on this, the study sought to examine the effectiveness of community participation and security control in My Elgon Constituency, Bungoma County.

1.3 Research Objective

To examine the effectiveness of community participation mechanism in security control in Mt Elgon

2.0 Theoretical Review

2.1 Complexity Theory

Applied to the social world, complexity theory offers insights on social relations and behavior relevant for peace building. Social systems tend to be complex, and it has been acknowledged that peace building is all about influencing behaviors of these social systems that have been previously affected by conflicts and insecurity (Turner & Baker, 2019). Complexity theory holds that social systems are a type of a holistic system that is capable of adapting and demonstrating emergent properties that include self-organizing behavior. Complexity theory informs on how social systems are meant to organize themselves. In the context of peace building, self-organization describes the various mechanisms and processes used by the society to manage their own peace consolidation processes.

Mt Elgon can be described as fragile since for a long time now the community is still faced by insecurity. Complexity theory helped in understanding the governing security, economy, justice and politics of Mt Elgon. Also, Mt Elgon is at risk of tensions, crisis and pressures that may relapse into violent conflicts. This risk may only be gradually reduced by developing resilience that is necessary to cope with the threats. For a self-sustainable peace consolidation, the process should be context-specific, bottom-up and home-grown (McGee & Jones, 2019). Society's own norms are the product of their own culture, context and history. Therefore, the irregular processes, challenges and setbacks of the community should be recalled. To achieve peace, the society should study its own history so as to improve the understanding of their evolution.

In complexity theory, it is crucial that the communities and societies intended to benefit from the peace building interventions are involved in all the processes and aspects of the initiative. External fixes cannot work if they have not been internalized, thus local adaption is significant for sustainability. The theory guided on the decisions on peace building initiatives that actively involved the community. Communities should be represented in a way that variety and diversity of their needs, concerns and interests inform each step of the adaptation process. The affected community should also be represented in all the processes that determine the objectives and aims of the initiative and the whole process of analysis, assessment, evaluation and selection.

2.2 Stakeholder Theory

It is widely acknowledged that combating insecurity is a challenge that can best be addressed through combined efforts of different agencies, sectors and groups. Stakeholder theory argues that success of organizations depends on its relationship management with key groups that tend to affect its purpose realization. These different groups working on a common objective is what describes a stakeholder approach. The theory assumes that bringing together knowledge, skills, perspectives and resources leads to collective capacities, political will and sense of ownership needed to build sustainable peace. Multi-stakeholder allows for a systems approach to combating insecurity, where different actors with different initiatives complement each other (Quick & Bryson, 2022). Consequently, inclusivity is enhanced and it contributes to broader ownership of the crime and conflict prevention strategies.

Stakeholder theory helped in identifying groups and individuals with first-hand information on security related issues in Mt Elgon. This was beneficial to both the public and decision makers. With the increased global involvement of the public in decision making, policy formation and agenda setting processes, public participation has become one of growing interest concept in the world. Freeman wrote a book on stakeholder approach and defined a stakeholder as an individual or group who can affect or is affected by the objectives' achievement of an organization (Freeman, Dmytriyev & Phillips, 2021). Stakeholder theory implementation has thus far been extended from the corporate world to other fields, such as social sciences

3.0 Research Methodology

This research adopted a descriptive research design to examine the effectiveness of community participation in combating insecurity. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed to describe the data that was collected.

The study took place in Mt Elgon, Bungoma County. The region borders Uganda and is rich in fertile soil and cool climate conducive for mixed farming. The research involved an analysis of community participation and security control in Mt Elgon Constituency. Mt Elgon sub-county is further divided into six wards: Elgon, Kaptama, Kapkateny, Kopsiro, Cheptais, and Chesikaki. As per the national census, Mt Elgon constituency has an approximate population of 215,000 people who occupy an area of about 963.3 km^2 (KNBS, 2019).

This study primarily targeted community policing committees, national government administrative officers (NGAOs), religious leaders and the Kenya police. Respondents were selected based on the villages affected by rampant crime rates and insecurity. The key informants drawn from religious leaders, political leaders, community policing and administrative leaders, were specifically targeted because of their formal role of peace keeping and conflict resolution. The selected actors contribute to security control in different ways within the study community and were relevant to the view of the study objective.

Therefore, at the Ward level, the study targeted the National Government Administrative Officers (NGAOs-1 DCC and 16 chiefs to represent the whole population occupying the 16 Locations in Mt Elgon). Besides, 4 OCSs and 4 chairpersons of the community-policing in the 4 administrative Divisions of Mt Elgon were targeted- Kapsokwony, Cheptais, Kaptama and Kopsiro (KNBS, 2019). Also, 2 religious leaders were targeted to represent the Islam and Christian community within Mt Elgon constituency. Yamane (1967) formula was used to calculate the sample size for 15, 276 households in Mt Elgon constituency, using a 95% confidence interval. Therefore, 100 household heads were sampled to take part in the study.

The researcher used the non-probability sampling technique that adopts a purposive sampling method of selecting respondents. This method was used to target specific groups of people within the study area. Purposive sampling was used to select chiefs, chairpersons of the community policing committees (nyumba kumi), and Officer Commanding Police Stations (OCSs) who gave better insights on areas that witness frequent insecurity. Household heads were also be targeted in this study. Simple random sampling technique was used to sample the household heads. The 100 household heads were then divided by the 4 administrative wards in Mt Elgon. Therefore, 25 households were sampled per ward. The National Police Service (NPS), NGAOs, religious leaders and community policing chairpersons were sampled using census.

The researcher collected primary data using the interview and questionnaires. The in-depth interviews entailed the face-to-face encounters with the key informants drawn from the Kenya police, administrative leaders, community-policing chairpersons and religious leaders. This is because they have better understanding from their perspectives, experiences and situations regarding insecurity in the region. Guided questionnaires were filled by household heads. Data was collected through interview guides and semi-structured questionnaires. The data obtained from the interviews were then recorded in a descriptive form by taking notes. Before analysis, the collected data from questionnaires were sorted to determine those not completely filled.

The processing and analysis of data was done using descriptive statistical methods that include frequencies, percentages and tables for easy representation of findings in form tables and graphs. Also, to aid the analysis, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to cover wide range of graphical and statistical data systematically, making it easier to read the research material. Further, recorded responses from the interviews were transcribed into word form for analysis. The content analysis and thematic analysis approaches were also used to establish the presence of particular concepts, words or themes, and therefore quantify and analyze correlation and meaning of such concepts, words or themes. A regression analysis was also done to examine the relationship between independent and dependent variables.

A pilot study was carried out to ascertain the validity and reliability of the study. Therefore, a pilot study was carried out using 10% of the sample size. Therefore, 10% of 127 (13) formed part of the pilot study: 6 household heads, 4 NPS, 2 community policing members and a religious leader. The population that took part in pilot study did not participate in the final study.

The research's reliability was examined by ensuring that the questions in research instruments were relevant to the location's current state. Besides, for the responses to be fairly consistent the questions were made consistent among themselves in relation to the subject being investigated. Data collected from the pilot study was analyzed to measure the dependability of tools. To ensure responses were accurately captured, Voice recorders were used during interviews.

4.0 Presentation of Findings, Interpretation and Discussion

Descriptive statistics was done to analyze the effectiveness of community participation mechanisms in security control. This is presented in the table below:

Table 4.1: effectiveness of community participation mechanisms in security control.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
Neighborhood watch	68.48% 63	20.65% 19	6.52% 6	3.26% 3	1.09% 1	4.52
Community intelligence gathering	51.09% 47	34.78% 32	7.61% 7	4.35% 4	2.17% 2	4.28
Community meetings	63.04% 58	27.17% 25	4.35% 4	3.26% 3	2.17% 2	4.46
Community hotlines	36.96% 34	41.30% 38	17.39% 16	2.17% 2	2.17% 2	4.09
Community policing	45.65% 42	18.48% 17	26.09% 24	6.52% 6	3.26% 3	3.98
Average	**53.04%**	**28.48%**	**12.39%**	**3.91%**	**2.17%**	**4.27**

n=92.

Scale: Strongly Agree = 5, Agree = 4, Neutral= 3, Disagree = 2, strongly Disagree = 1, cut-off point = 3

From the analysis above, community participation mechanisms are effective in security control. The mechanisms analyzed includes; neighborhood watch ($\overline{X}$ = 4.52), community intelligence-gathering ($\overline{X}$ = 4.28), community meetings ($\overline{X}$ = 4.46), community hotlines ($\overline{X}$ = 4.09) and community policing ($\overline{X}$ = 3.98). Generally, the findings showed that neighborhood watch was the most effective mechanism attracting 68.48% of the total participants that strongly agree, followed by community meetings with 63.04% and then community intelligence gathering with51.09%. These community participation mechanisms were followed by community policing and community hotlines with a representation of 45.65% and 36.96% respectively.

On average all the statements on community mechanisms were identified as being 53.04% strongly agreed and adopted in Mt Elgon, followed by 28.48% who agreed, 12.39% were neutral 3.91% disagreed and 2.17% strongly disagreed.

4.1 Neighborhood Watch

Majority of the respondents revealed that neighborhood watch is an effective community participation mechanism in security control in Mt Elgon Constituency; with 68.48% of the total participants strongly agreeing, 20.65% agreed, 6.52% were neutral, 3.26% disagreed and 1.09% strongly agreed.

The national government came up with the nyumba kumi initiative as a neighborhood watch mechanism that has proved to be successful in ensuring community members co-exist peacefully. A community policing chairperson-a key informant revealed that the nyumba kumi initiative has proven to have helped in controlling security within Mt Elgon. This extensive nyumba kumi network as stated by Wanda, Muchemi & Kefa (2019) acts as a neighborhood watch in observing criminal activities taking place within the community. Besides, the community members help in pointing out individuals who are believed to vandalize people's businesses and property. Through neighborhood watch, taking action against criminals becomes easier thus restoring peace among community members.

4.2 Community Intelligence Gathering

From the findings, those that strongly agreed with community intelligence gathering as an effective community participation mechanism in security control in Mt Elgon Constituency were 51.09%, 34.78% agreed,7.61% were neutral, 4.35% disagreed and 2.17% strongly disagreed. With a mean of 4.28, Shared information through the community intelligence gathering as shown from the findings is effective in enhancing security. A key informant from the National Police Service (NPS) noted that the community can share information on any security related issues with the police and vice versa. Actively sharing information between the police and the community involves the public on issues involving security gradually boosts the confidence and trust of the citizens towards the police. Eventually, the main goal of security control is accomplished.

Intelligence gathered from the community concerning security issues affecting them must be collected, evaluated, analyzed, integrated and interpreted. This specialized mechanism of community participation provides the private and government security agencies with information required to further promote security within the community. Karuri and Muna (2019) observed that the intelligence gathering process is more likely to be successful in known places and people than in places that are unknown. The public security officers should be taking stocks of what the members of the community know about crime within their areas and even neighboring communities.

4.3 Community Meetings

Revelations from the interviews with key informants and questionnaires filled by community members revealed that community meetings are effective in security control. 63.04% strongly agreed with this mechanism, 27.17% agreed, 4.35% neutral, 3.26% disagreed and 2.17% strongly disagreed.

An interview with a key informant (Elgon ward chief) revealed that; *"The national government usually conducts public barazas (community meetings) that discuss the state of the community's security and how to solve these issues."* However, there is need to strengthen community mechanisms, reward and structure to enhance its effectiveness. This is because most community members shy away from providing the necessary information while in public barazas since they fear that they may fall victims later.

Community meetings as stated by Ren, Zhao & He (2019) has helped to prevent many crimes and other security-related issues by improving the public sense of security and reducing fears among community members. This mechanism acts as ready alternative in the delivery of security and justice by using local community knowledge, traditional leadership mechanisms and/or customary practices.

4.4 Community Hotlines

From the analysis above, community hotlines as a community participation mechanism are effective in security control in Mt Elgon. Out of the total respondents, 36.96% strongly agreed with the mechanism, 41.30% agreed, 17.39% were neutral, 2.17% disagreed and 2.17% strongly disagreed. Although community hotlines have not been fully implemented in Kenya and Mt Elgon in specific, community members from the study proved to have the knowledge and felt that it could be the best way to control security in the region.

Community hotlines should be free and functional throughout the days and nights for it to effectively control security among the communities. Hotlines are standard components of community participation approach to security control. For instance, hotline use in the United States

Finally, it is important to understand the effectiveness of community participation mechanisms in areas that record higher cases of insecurity. These mechanisms recognize and promote the community's active roles in promoting security. Besides, they seek to define the interaction and relationship between the community and the police in a way presumed to control security. Just like Walklate & Evans (2019), enhancing community cooperation and engagement through these mechanisms helps in securing security and public order. Therefore, community problem solving approaches should replace the law enforcement approach to security by the police.

Inferential Statistical Analysis of the Findings

A regression analysis was carried out to examine the relationship between community participation mechanisms and security control in Mt Elgon Constituency. It was found out that community participation mechanisms could explain security issues in Mt Elgon Constituency. These results are supported by an R Square (coefficient of determination) of 0.755. This means that the variable explained 75.5% of the variation in the dependent variable, which is security control in Mt Elgon Constituency. Therefore, the model applied in inking the relationship between the variable was satisfactory

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.869a	.755	.752	.35501

a. Predictors: (Constant), Community Participation Mechanisms

On the analysis of variance, the findings on community participation mechanisms further confirm that the regression model is efficient as it is supported by p-values less than 0.05 (F=277.401, p= 0.000).

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1. Regression	34.961	1	34.961	277.401	.000[b]
Residual	11.343	90	.126		
Total	46.304	91			

a. Dependent Variable: Community Participation

A regression of coefficient analysis was done to establish the relationship of statistical significance between community participation mechanisms (independent variable) and security control (dependent variable). The results findings wee that community participation mechanisms in Mt Elgon Constituency, Bungoma County is positively and significantly related (=0.049, p=0.000<0.05).

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t.	Sig.
1. (Constant)	.717	.210		3.413	.001
Community Participation	.808	.049	.869	16.655	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Security Council

The findings agree with existing empirical study. Dube, Mnguni & Tschudin (2021) reported on the importance of community participation in achieving good governance through the social action research. The report was based on fieldwork research carried out in Eastern Cape, South Africa that used a mixed method targeting communities involved and the local government. The study findings pointed that the local participatory processes-that is, community meetings and the new ideas on how to facilitate citizen's participation in combating insecurity were transformative in nature. Musa & Wilson (2022) highlighted the contributions of joint operations in combating insecurity in Juba city, South Sudan. A qualitative approach was adopted by the study where 32 respondents were interviewed. The target population was the service recipients-local community, and the law enforcers-police. The findings were that joint operation largely contributed to an improved capability of the law enforcements safeguarding the community. Community based intelligence helped in providing sufficient information regarding the city's security. Thus, community members should not be mishandled to achieve a successful join operation. Ingasia & Muna (2022) explored community participation and its effects in Westland's Sub-County security agenda setting. The findings showed that through the neighborhood-watch mechanism, the police easily accessed information on secure matters by engaging citizens. Besides, citizens tend to share information with the security agents thus making it easier to promote and maintain peace within the area. With the nature of insecurity in Mt Elgon, neighborhood watch and community-based intelligence works best in combating insecurity within the area (Njogu, 2021).

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the results and findings, the study concluded that community participation had a positive effect on security control in Mt Elgon constituency, Bungoma County. Also, the community participation mechanisms had a positive impact on security control in Mt Elgon region. The results suggest that there is need to strengthen and promote community participation in security issues in Mt Elgon region. There should also be police forums to aid in educating ad mobilizing the community to collaborate in matters dealing with overall safety and security.

5.2 Recommendations

There is need for security agencies such as the NPS to educate and create awareness to the local communities and other stakeholders on the importance of contributing to national security within an area by providing critical information. Therefore, stakeholders like business people and religious institutions should be incorporated to community's participation and security. These stakeholders may not necessarily provide the needed information but may take part by either providing resources for combating insecurity and creating awareness to other community members. The national police service should also have units that are well trained, as well as equipped with knowledge and skills on working and collaborating with the community. Having units specifically trained on dealing with the community will make work easy and promote community's participation in security agenda. Besides, it is paramount for the community to partner with the NPS to promote peace and safety. Community members should identify those that are associated with crime and other security related issues within the community. On the other hand, the police should be trusted enough to help restore order ad bring the culprits to justice.

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