

COMMUNITY POLICING HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY AND THE STATE OF DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL COMMUNITIES OF MASINDI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: To examine community policing history, philosophy and the state of development in rural communities of Masindi District

Methodology: It adopted a descriptive and analytical research design, cross-sectional survey, and case study strategy. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in analyzing data collected using questionnaires, interviews, and document reviews

Findings: There was a moderately high state of development in the rural communities of Masindi given a grand mean score of 3.25 [SD±1.26]. It is however observed that, although the history and philosophy of community policing show its advancement as more proactive approach to policing in preventing crime and reducing fear of crime, inter alia, its proactivity in contributing to the development to contain potential crime and disorder has been underestimated.

Unique contribution of the theory: ‘broken windows theory’ propounded by Phillip Zimbardo (1969) cited in Van der Weele., et al. (2017), the theory of change by Kurt Lewin in 1947 as cited in Burnes (2019), and the institutional theory of organizations founded in the period 1977 – 1983 (Guth, 2016). The chronological layout of these theories is based on the notion that, the premise of community policing necessity to development is set out of the need to address social disorder and crime that would deter development should be recognized. Once appreciated, the call for change in the community policing organisation would be imminent thus providing the base for the adoption of the theory of change. Once desired change is mapped out clearly, community policing organisation structures by which such development change in rural communities is attained should be institutionalised within the policing institution.

Keywords: Community Policing, Community-Police Partnerships, Organisation Transformation, Problem-solving mechanisms, and Development

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This study describes the historical and philosophical aspects of community policing as the independent variable of the study. It aims at aiding the understanding of the community policing concept and its practice in policing institutions especially in the context of the Uganda Police Force. It therefore presents the history of the community policing concepts, its

theoretical and philosophical base, the key contributors to the concept, and the current state of community policing in Uganda and the implications all this has on the development of rural communities. It therefore gives a descriptive view of the state of development of rural communities in Masindi District

1.2 Statement of the problem

Zero tolerance and hyper law enforcement may have adverse impacts on the communities. They create a community perception of police as one of the items on the array of their problems (Sparrow, 2015). Hence, evaluating the performance of any police agency at an aggregate level should involve an attempt to link the agency's outputs with societal outcomes. The contribution of the community policing model towards the development of communities is thus a critical measure of its performance. However, no studies were found to have been conducted on evaluating the impact of community policing on development in Uganda.

The obligations of the Uganda Police Force as set out in the Police Act Cap. 303 of: protecting the life, property, and other rights of the individuals, maintaining security, law enforcement, and ensuring public safety and order are imminently linked to the achievement of development goals. Deploying community-oriented policing as a proactive strategy offers the prospect of modest gains with negative consequences being of low risk (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018). Thus, the prevention and detection of crime in society; and the performance of any other functions assigned under the Act, echo the proactive commitment of community policing to provide an environment with minimal disruption to development activity in communities.

In the UPF Community Policing Strategy (2017) it is noted that "another arena of discontent that influenced the government's ability to comprehensively address crime in the country relates to the poor economic prospects and massive unemployment that motivated crime among different groups." This imminently provides a link between crime and development. Police should be skillful masters and experienced craftsmen who pick the best tools from the whole intervention's toolkit for each task (Sparrow, 2015). This study envisaged development focus as a tool for proactively countering crime and fear. In addition, where existing methods turn out to be irrelevant or insufficient to deal with an emerging threat, they should be so adept to invent new approaches. Real success in crime control is achieved by early spotting and suppression of emerging crime.

Since no study has been conducted on these themes, the study took a constructivist approach in evaluating the role of community policing in fostering the attainment of the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of development in Masindi District, Western Uganda which still faces significant levels of poverty, malnutrition, food insecurity, and disruption to commercial activity and environment among others. Road accidents, land conflicts, and environmental degradation as risk areas to which the district exposure is high (Masindi District Hazard, Risk, and Vulnerability Profile Report, 2016) noted. The sub-county of Kimengo for example registered high livestock pest infestation. Land conflicts were also reported to be common, and participatory assessments reported land degradation in the sub-counties of Bwijanga, Pakanyi, and Miirya. The contribution of community policing to the management of such development challenges in the district has not been explored before. This formed the base of the current study.

1.3 General Objective

The general objective of the study was to examine the influence of community policing on the development of rural communities in Masindi District.

2.0 THE HISTORICAL TRENDS OF COMMUNITY POLICING

Community policing traces its history way back in 1829 when Robert Peele introduced policing based on democratic principles in the United Kingdom. The principles of democratic policing introduced by him, envisioned the possibility of preventing crime without heavily intruding into people's lives (European Horizon Commission, 2020). It have over the decades transitioned through police change in approach from the traditional policing model to one where they sought to get more involved in communities so as to effectively deter and reduce crime (Schubert, 2021).

Table 1 Global historical trends of community policing

Period	Key trend aspect	Adoption Scope	Philosophical and Theoretical Influence	Key Scholars
1829	The origin of Community Policing – as democratic policing	United Kingdom [UK]	Democratic Thinking	Robert Peele
1930	Techniques of managerial efficiency became the motif of police professionalism	United States of America [USA]	The Professional Policing Model	Walker S
1960s	Police realization of the need for more presence and regaining community trust.	UK, USA and Netherlands	The Broken Windows Theory	Phillip Zimbardo
1970s-1980s	Police walking the beat adopting partnerships and joint-problem solving mechanisms -Walking than use car patrols	USA	Improved Broken Windows Theory	Wilson, Q. James & Kelling, L. George
1990s	Approaches to implementation of community policing	USA	Institutional Theory	Trajanowcz C. Robert
2000 to date	Community policing replaced with zero tolerance and tough-on-crime principles in fighting terrorism	Global	The theory of Change	Jones, H.

Source: Study literature reviews, 2022

The year 1930 marked the beginning of 'the decade of law and order' in which police management focus was on efficiency. Much emphasis was on creating more professional policing institutions which techniques of managerial efficiency were the main motif (Walker,

1977). During this period, police used more reactive strategies than proactive strategies where focus was on quickly answering emergency calls and reliance on intensity of motor vehicle patrols to deter crime.

In the United States, the present-day models trace their origin in the 1960s when urban riots and gang activity were at the peak. The brutal mechanisms that formed police response to these criminal activities damaged its reputation (Schubert, 2017). To regain the lost community trust and have more presence, the police had to increase their local presence in communities. From the enforcer's point of view, this change was influenced by the assumption of the broken windows theory that, 'if a broken window is not repaired, it alerts others that breaking windows is the norm' (Bratton and Kelling, 2006, & Zambardo, 1969). Whereas this had been from the crime point of view, it also had influence on the self checks of police operations and relations with the community. If community mistrust remained unresolved, community mistrust would aggravate mob justice in response to neighborhood crime.

Further influence of the broken windows theory on policing activities was derived by Wilson and Kelling (1982) from the foot-patrol experiment by the Newark, New Jersey police administration and the Police Foundation (1981). The main finding was that, in police swap form using patrol cars to walking beats, residents felt more secure, and believed more that crime had reduced (Bratton & Kelling, 2006). Subsequently, the 1970s and 1980s gave rise to the new norm of community policing as philosophy. During this period, the police engaged in partnerships and joint problem-solving efforts with community members, businesses, civil society organisations and others to combat crime (Schubert, 2021).

The 1990s set the foundation for the modern approaches to implementing community policing. Professor Robert Trajanowcz influenced the path to successful implementation of the elements of community policing. Approaches such as neighborhood watch groups and assigning foot patrol officers to specific geographic areas picked pace in policing operations. Many police institutions started integrating the elements of community policing and its institutionalization as a mainstream approach to policing (Bullock, 2013). However, since 2001, policing has realized certain change form given situations of extremism like terrorism. This has in certain instances led to community policing being replaced with zero tolerance and tough-on-crime principles in fighting extremist situation like terrorism.

Since 2001 to date, the events in global threats and crime like terrorism have premised the assumptions of change theory in which the rationale is that, analysis of the current policing and community situation in terms of needs and opportunities, the intended situation or outcomes, the forces that potentially affect the desired outcomes, and what inputs or needs to be done to realize them, aids setting realistic goals, clarifying accountabilities and establishing a common understanding of the strategies to be used in achieving them (Rogers, 2014, and O'Flynn & Moberly, 2017). Adapting to this theory, certain policing environment situations require a change in approach to effectively deliver on the sought outcomes of improved safety, reduced fear for crime, and thus improved quality of life that set the ideal environment for community development.

2.1 Historical trends of Community Policing in Uganda

In Uganda, political events especially since independence in 1962 have greatly the changing trend of policing. The period between 1966 and 1986 were characterized by turbulent political environments and illegitimate governments. This increased political strife and general insecurity yet the ability of governments to maintain law and order and combat crime was in a crippled state. This crippled state greatly influenced development trends in country. The disruption to economic activity, social order and safety led to unemployment and other undesirable situations. With the lost capacity of government to adequately deal with crime, community involvement in combating crime became imminent. This ushered in the concept of community policing. The historical trends are summed up as indicated in table 4.2.

Table 2 Historical trends of community policing in Uganda

Period	Key trend aspect
1970s	Notice of global trends towards adoption of the community policing philosophy
1986	Identification of the need for community involvement in combating crime so as to win public trust and confidence in the police as well as forming partnerships.
1989	Initiation of community policing as a proactive approach to combating crime
1993	Popularization of the community policing approach with experiments at Old Kampala Police Station
1995	Establishing the constitutional mandate of the implementing agency as Uganda Police Force under article 211 of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda.
2017	Establishment of the Uganda Police Force Strategy for Community Policing

Source: Study literature reviews, 2022

In Uganda, the 1970s ushered in significant notice of the community policing philosophy as it picked up pace on the global scene in the more developed world. Significant strides had been taken towards adoption of the philosophy in countries like United Kingdom, United States of America and Netherlands. Following the liberation war that led to regime change in 1986, the police institution under the new regime of the National Resistance Movement identified the need to drift towards a community-oriented policing model to combat crime so as that public trust and confidence in the police would be reinstated. It sought to have community-police partnerships to facilitate the implementation of the new policing model.

Around 1989, community policing was initiated as a proactive approach to combating crime in Uganda. Its adoption took a slow dimension and experimental efforts to popularize the model were made in 1993 at Old Kampala Police Station. For effective implementation and reform of the police, the 1995 Constitution of the Republic mandated the agency charged with policing and implementation of policing approaches like community policing to the Uganda Police Force under Article 211. To effectively guide the implementation of the community policing model in Uganda, the Strategy for Community Policing was developed in 2017. This provides

the basic practice guide to community policing in Uganda to date. It is the guiding tool to community policing at all levels of government that, is local and central government agencies.

2.2 Philosophical and theoretical aspects of Community Policing

Several philosophical views of community policing practices inform this study of community policing and development of rural communities. The broken windows theory by Phillip Zambardo (1969) and Buffalo State Community Policing Philosophy (1994) have been analysed in this study for alignment with the community policing philosophy adopted by the Uganda Police Force in the 2017 community policing strategy.

The broken windows theory by Phillip Zambardo (1969) is of theoretical relevance to the study on community policing and development of rural communities in Masindi District. Deriving its name from the experiment conducted by Zambardo (1969), the theory posits that, 'if a broken window in the neighborhood or community remains unrepaired, it alerts others that it is normal to do so. Therefore breaking more windows becomes more acceptable'. To the crime and development context, any crime that distorts development activity that, a disruption to economic activity, social order, and political order and democracy if not resolved by police quickly, it may escalate to levels that will deter community involvement in such development activity.

This reinforces the adoption of the community policing philosophy where the police is seen to get closer to the community and erode the fear of crime that would cause community disengagement from development activities. Founded on the experiment by Wilson and Kelling (1982) and the Police Foundation (1981), having police on foot patrol in communities cultivates a sense of collective identity and improves the secure feeling of the community. This deters criminal activities from flourishing and therefore creates an environment that is safe for community engagement in economic activity.

Drawing from the Buffalo State Community Policing Philosophy (1994), the community policing philosophy subscribes to viewing police and community as equal partners in the identification, prioritization, and solving contemporary community problems so as to improve the overall quality of life of the community. Besides service-orientation, accountability, problem solving, and partnerships, the Buffalo State Philosophical view of community policing emphasizes empowerment and education as critical features to effective community policing. It views community policing as an agent of empowerment and education. This is essential in the creation of a sense of joint responsibility and capacity needed to address issues that are the primary concerns of the community and the local police. This, maps out the constructive role of each stakeholder in the efforts to steer desired outcomes.

In Uganda, the Buffalo State community policing philosophy corresponds with the philosophical context adopted where community policing is envisioned as "a philosophy and an organisational strategy that promotes a new partnership between the people and their police. It is premised on the principle that both the police and the community work together to identify, prioritise and solve contemporary problems such as crime, drugs, fear of crime, social disorder and overall neighbourhood decay, to improve the overall quality of life' (Strategy for Community Policing, 2017).

Towards organisation transformation, the Buffalo State Community Policing Model proposes the establishment of a Community Policing Advisory Committee. Established at community level, the committee should have representation of key community stakeholders and the local police establishment. It is charged with the creation, implementation, and assessment of the community policing strategic plan to promote and maintain safety and crime prevention. Community emergency response team (CERT) to undertake training and preparation of community members on how to effectively respond to emergency situations in the community. According to the Strategy for Community Policing (2017), to operationalise the community policing philosophy in Uganda, community–police partnerships, problem solving and service orientation are emphasized as key approaches by the philosophical view of community policing in Uganda.

3.0 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

3.1 Data collection methods

This study collected two kinds of data that is, primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained using survey methods including questionnaires and interviewing. Review of documents on community policing and development was done to obtain secondary data. Since no single method of data collection could guarantee whole information or data needed to answer questions of the study, therefore a triangulated use of several methods was adopted.

4.0 FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

4.1 Descriptive findings on the state of development of rural communities

Descriptive analysis of data collected on the state of development in rural communities of Masindi District was done by establishing means and standard deviations of scores leading to results indicated in table 4.1. With mean scores ranging 1-5, interpretation was based on the sub ranges that; 1.00 – 1.79 is very low, 1.80 – 2.59 is low, 2.60 – 3.19 is moderate, 3.20 – 4.19 is high, and 4.20 – 5.00 is very high. While a standard deviation less than 1 i.e. $SD < 1$ implies a cluster of most scores around the mean, and a standard deviation greater than or equal to 1 i.e. $SD \geq 1$ implies a dispersion of most scores away from the mean.

Table 3 Descriptive statistics on the state of development of rural communities

Item	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.
The standard of living and quality of life has improved in the rural communities of Masindi District	122	1	5	3.23	1.22
There is improved household income in the rural communities of Masindi	122	1	5	3.27	1.31
There is efficient movement and flow of people and business activities in rural Masindi District	122	1	5	3.81	0.95
Law enforcement in Masindi is fair and facilitates business activity	122	1	5	3.03	1.24
There is sufficient safety of economic activities and business property in Masindi District.	122	1	5	3.40	1.18

Protection of the environment in the rural communities of Masindi District is sufficient	122	1	5	3.15	1.15
There is minimal disruption to social activity in Masindi District	122	1	5	3.34	1.14
In Masindi, enforcement of public health and waste management laws is effective	122	1	5	3.10	1.27
The quality and accessible education in Masindi District	122	1	5	2.99	1.32
There is adequate protection and security to society in Masindi District	122	1	5	3.65	1.15
Individual freedoms and expression have improved in Masindi District.	122	1	5	3.39	1.26
There is a significant improvement in respect for human rights in Masindi District	122	1	5	3.77	1.89
A conducive atmosphere has been created for political freedoms and democracy to thrive in Masindi District	122	1	5	3.22	1.37
Laws passed and enforced by authorities in Masindi District are of acceptable quality	122	1	5	2.93	1.11
There is improved accountability and reduced corruption in Masindi District	122	1	5	2.50	1.42
Grand Mean and Standard Deviation				3.25	1.26

Source: Primary Data Analyses, 2022

It was important for the study to determine the state of development of rural communities within Masindi District. The study established a high mean on efficient movement and flow of people and business activities in Masindi [Mean= 3.81, SD±0.95]. This means that, community police officers facilitate orderly movement of people and transport through control and regulation of traffic on roads and highways within the district. Furthermore, the study established a high mean on how significantly community policing has improved respect for human rights [Mean= 3.77, SD±1.09]. In line with this position, one interviewee noted that

“This has been achieved by ensuring that during performance of police duty, these officers respect and protect human dignity and also maintain and uphold the human rights of all residents.” [Respondent, CP1, Karujubu, November 4th 2022].

This can be interpreted to mean that, the observance of human rights by police officers promotes the contribution of community policing to the development of rural Masindi because they gain the respect and cooperation of the citizens, public cooperation which is crucial in detecting crime, the prevention of crime and ultimately implies a high level of development in the rural communities of Masindi.

The study established a high mean on adequacy of protection and security to society in Masindi District [Mean= 3.65, SD±1.15]. This implies successful maintenance of order, security, and also control crime in not only cost-effective ways, but also with integrity. A high mean score was also established on having sufficient safety of economic activities and business property

in Masindi District [Mean= 3.40, SD±1.18]. This implies that, in Masindi district there is enhanced well-being and improved quality of life among the rural communities though document review results revealed contrary results indicating cases such as;

Rampant land disputes curtailed the registration process of some pieces [Masindi District Local Government Development Plan, 2015/2016-2019/2020].

In Masindi, the study established a high mean on improvement of individual freedoms and expression [Mean= 3.39, SD±1.26]. This implies that, there is open dialogue, understanding and increased public knowledge among the people in a way that ensures free exchange of ideas and information especially on matters of how to achieve desired development. A high mean was obtained on having minimal disruptions to social activity in Masindi [Mean= 3.34, SD±1.14]. Achieving this requires policing focus on the fact that their job is to protect citizens and uphold human rights while maintaining public order. This implies that, police officers find ways of balancing their roles in a way that can ensure social safety. In Masindi, the study established a high mean on having improved household income communities [Mean= 3.27, SD±1.31]. This is achieved by police officers helping to build stronger, more self-sufficient communities in which crime and disorder does not thrive.

The study established a high mean on improved standard of living and quality of life in rural communities of Masindi District [Mean= 3.23, SD±1.22]. This implies that, policing in Masindi is flexible and capable of changing the quality of life for communities through effective solutions and strategies that enhance police-community relations. The study also established a high mean on creation of conducive atmosphere for political freedoms and democracy to thrive in Masindi [Mean= 3.22, SD±1.37]. In support to this view were interview results where one respondent to the question on evaluation of community policing contribution towards politics and governance in Masindi observed that,

“.....It has also united the politicians especially those in government and the opposition. There is political co-existence because it has shown some degree of nonpartisan practices and tolerance in most political activity in the area” [LCC1, Bwijanga, 26th October, 2022].

This implies that, community policing operations adhere to the development tenets of rule of law, fair law enforcement, fundamental political freedoms, and the protection of democracy.

Results in on the state of development in rural communities of Masindi reveal moderate protection of the environment in rural communities [Mean= 3.15, SD±1.15]. This implies that, though attempts have been made to enforce environmental laws and regulations, more effective protection of the environment and reduction in environmental harm improved emphasis and strict enforcement. The study also established a moderate mean on enforcement of public health and waste management laws [Mean= 3.10, SD±1.27] implying moderate application of measures in the management of waste to prevent harm to human health and ensure safety of citizens. Though the study established a moderate fairness in law enforcement and facilitating business activity [Mean= 3.03, SD±1.24], document review results revealed contrary findings observing that,

‘Most farmers were not covered by post-harvest handling programmes in the district’ [Masindi District Local Government Development Plan, 2015/2016-2019/2020].

This is indicative of some degree of unfair enforcement that undermines the sought development targets in the rural communities. Improving the state of development, requires community meetings where community stakeholders, agricultural extension officers, business owners, church groups can engage with police authorities to ensure fair access, distribution to agricultural technologies, resolving agro processing concerns, and promoting safety of business activity.

The study established a moderate mean on quality and accessible education in Masindi District [Mean= 2.99, SD±1.32], acceptable quality of laws passed and enforced by authorities [Mean= 2.93, SD±1.11], and low on accountability and corruption [Mean=2.50, SD±1.42]. This implies that, significant gaps in the level of development in the spheres of education, legal quality, accountability, and corruption.

5.0 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, overall findings indicate a moderately high state of development in the rural communities of Masindi given a grand mean score of 3.25 [SD±1.26]. It is however observed that, although the history and philosophy of community policing show its advancement as more proactive approach to policing in preventing crime and reducing fear of crime, inter alia, its proactivity in contributing to the development to contain potential crime and disorder has been underestimated. Therefore, testing the potential of community-police partnerships, organisation transformation, and problem-solving mechanisms of the community policing agenda in addressing these development gaps in key like education, legal quality, accountability, and corruption is essential to achieving improved development of rural communities.

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