

**Community Policing Strategies in Counter-terrorism Initiatives in Garissa County,
Kenya: The Significance of Community Intelligence**

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Abstract

Garissa County, located in northeastern Kenya, has experienced a significant number of terrorist attacks in recent years. The most notable of these attacks occurred in 2015 when Al-Shabaab militants attacked Garissa University College, killing 148 people, most of whom were students. These attacks caused significant damage to the region's social and economic fabric, undermining development and social cohesion efforts. In response to these attacks, the Kenyan government implemented various counter-terrorism initiatives, including deploying security forces and implementing policies and legislation. However, these efforts have limited success in preventing future attacks, primarily due to a lack of community involvement. Community policing strategies have emerged as an effective approach to enhancing community involvement in counter-terrorism efforts. Community policing involves building partnerships between law enforcement agencies and the community to prevent crime and address community concerns. In the context of counter-terrorism, community policing strategies involve working with community members to identify and report suspicious activities, promoting community resilience, and enhancing trust and communication between law enforcement and the community. Community intelligence plays a vital role in community policing strategies. This is because community members are often the first to observe suspicious activities and report them to law enforcement agencies. Additionally, community intelligence provides valuable information to law enforcement agencies in preventing terrorist attacks and identifying the individuals involved. Garissa County has implemented various community policing strategies in its counter-terrorism initiatives, including establishing community policing units, conducting community sensitization programs, and partnering with civil society organizations. However, there is a need to enhance these strategies to ensure greater community involvement and the effective use of community intelligence in preventing future attacks. Community policing strategies emerge as an effective approach to enhancing community involvement in counter-terrorism efforts. This study examines the role of community policing strategies in counter-terrorism initiatives in Garissa County, focusing on the significance of community intelligence in identifying and preventing terrorist activities. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. The study's findings indicated that community intelligence plays a significant role in countering terrorism, contributing to the literature on community policing strategies and counter-terrorism initiatives and provide policymakers and practitioners with evidence-based recommendations for enhancing counter-terrorism initiatives in Garissa County and other regions facing similar challenges. Ultimately, this research improves on community policing strategies to enhance the effectiveness of counter-terrorism initiatives and prevent future attacks in Garissa County, Kenya through investing in technology and human resource to gather intelligence.

Key Words: Kenya, Garissa County, Community Policing, Counter-terrorism & Community Intelligence

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Introduction

In recent years, Kenya has experienced a wave of terrorist attacks perpetrated by extremist groups such as Al-Shabaab. Garissa County has been particularly vulnerable to these attacks, resulting in a significant loss of life and property. In response to this threat, the Kenyan government has implemented various counter-terrorism initiatives, including community policing. Community policing is a proactive approach to law enforcement that emphasizes collaboration between the police and the community they serve.

In the context of counter-terrorism, community policing strategies aim to build trust and cooperation between law enforcement agencies and communities affected by terrorism. The effectiveness of community policing in counter-terrorism initiatives is largely dependent on the quality and quantity of community intelligence. This study examined the significance of community intelligence in community policing strategies in Garissa County's counter-terrorism initiatives. Specifically, the study explored the nature and quality of community intelligence gathered by the police in Garissa County, the challenges encountered in gathering community intelligence and the impact of community intelligence on counter-terrorism efforts. The study provides insights into how community policing can be enhanced to improve the quality and quantity of community intelligence gathered.

Assumptions

In Garissa County, there is willingness among the community members to participate in community policing strategies aimed at countering terrorism.

Objective

The objective of this study was to examine the significance of community intelligence in community policing strategies in counter-terrorism initiatives in Garissa County, Kenya.

Statement of Problem

Garissa County in Kenya has experienced a series of terrorist attacks by extremist groups such as Al-Shabaab. In response, the Kenyan government has implemented various counter-terrorism initiatives, including community policing strategies aimed at enhancing collaboration and trust between law enforcement agencies and communities affected by terrorism. The success of community policing strategies in countering terrorism largely depends on the quality and quantity of community intelligence gathered. However, there is a gap in knowledge regarding the nature and significance of community intelligence in community policing strategies in counter-terrorism initiatives in Garissa County. This study sought to address this gap by exploring the significance of community intelligence in community policing strategies in counter-terrorism initiatives in Garissa County, and provides insights into how community policing strategies can be enhanced to improve the quality and quantity of community intelligence gathered. The study investigated the

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challenges encountered in gathering community intelligence and its impact on the effectiveness of community policing strategies in countering terrorism in Garissa County.

Review of Related Literature

The Nature and Quality of Community Intelligence Gathered

The nature and quality of community intelligence gathered can play a significant role in the success of community policing strategies in countering terrorism according to Nwangwu *et. al.* (2021). Law enforcement agencies and policymakers must work towards building trust, fostering positive relationships, and providing adequate resources to gather timely and accurate community intelligence. Community intelligence refers to information gathered by law enforcement agencies from the community about potential criminal or terrorist activities according to Nwangwu *et. al.* Community intelligence can be obtained through a variety of means, including community outreach programs, community-based policing, and tip lines.

The quality of community intelligence gathered can depend on a variety of factors, including the level of trust and communication between law enforcement agencies and the community, the accuracy and reliability of the information provided, and the timeliness of the information (Mohamed, 2021). According to Mohamed, one crucial factor is the level of trust and communication between the community and law enforcement agencies. When there is trust and open communication, the community is more likely to provide reliable and accurate information to law enforcement agencies. Therefore, fostering a positive relationship between law enforcement agencies and the community is crucial to gather high-quality community intelligence.

Another factor that affects the quality of community intelligence is the accuracy and reliability of the information provided as Mohamed (2021) opines. Law enforcement agencies must have systems in place to verify the accuracy and reliability of the information provided by the community. This can involve cross-referencing information from multiple sources, checking the credibility of sources, and assessing the consistency of the information. Finally, the timeliness of the information provided also plays a critical role in determining the quality of community intelligence gathered. The sooner law enforcement agencies receive information, the more effective they can be in addressing potential issues. Therefore, it is vital to have efficient systems in place for collecting and disseminating information promptly.

In many cases, community intelligence can be crucial in preventing and disrupting terrorist activities (Cherney & Hartley, 2017). The community can provide law enforcement agencies with valuable information on suspicious activities or individuals, including their whereabouts, movements, and associations. According to Cherney & Hartley, this information can help law enforcement agencies identify potential threats and take proactive measures to prevent attacks. By working closely with the community, law enforcement agencies can gather critical intelligence that can help identify and prevent terrorist activities. The community can provide information on suspicious individuals, their behaviours, and their affiliations with extremist groups. In the contemporary study by Cherney & Hartley, this information can help law enforcement agencies identify potential threats and take proactive measures to disrupt their activities before they can carry out attacks. Moreover, community intelligence can help law enforcement agencies gather evidence and build cases against terrorists and their networks. Community members may witness suspicious activities, such as the transportation of weapons or explosives, which can provide valuable leads for investigations.

However, there can also be challenges in gathering quality community intelligence (Marsal-Llacuna, 2019). For example, some members of the community may be hesitant to provide information due to fear of retaliation or mistrust of law enforcement agencies. Additionally, there may be language barriers, cultural differences, or other factors that hinder communication and cooperation between law enforcement agencies and the community.

Challenges Encountered in Gathering Community Intelligence

Gathering community intelligence for counter-terrorism initiatives can be challenging (Ugwueze & Onuoha, 2020). One of the main challenges in gathering community intelligence is the lack of trust between law enforcement agencies and the community. The community may be hesitant to provide information to law enforcement agencies due to fear of retaliation or mistrust of law enforcement agencies.

Cultural barriers can also hinder communication and cooperation between law enforcement agencies and the community (Pillar, 2018). Some communities may view law enforcement agencies with suspicion or mistrust, which can make it difficult to engage with them according to Pillar. This mistrust can stem from historical experiences, cultural differences, or misunderstandings. As a result, Pillar (2018) notes that these communities may be hesitant to provide information to law enforcement agencies or seek their assistance when needed. To overcome cultural barriers, law enforcement agencies must take steps to understand the cultural dynamics of the communities they serve. This may involve hiring officers who can speak the language and understand the customs and beliefs of the community. Additionally, law enforcement agencies can work with community leaders and organizations to build trust and establish effective communication channels.

In areas where there are multiple languages, language barriers can hinder communication between law enforcement agencies and the community according to Lowenthal (2022). This can lead to misunderstandings and mistrust. To overcome language barriers, Lowenthal note that law enforcement agencies must have systems in place to provide translation and interpretation services. This may involve hiring bilingual officers or working with professional translators and interpreters. Additionally, law enforcement agencies can work with community organizations to identify and address language barriers (Lowenthal, 2022). Providing language services can help law enforcement agencies better understand the needs and concerns of the community. It can also help build trust and enhance communication between law enforcement officers and the community. By overcoming language barriers, law enforcement agencies can improve their ability to serve and protect the community.

Community members may fear reprisals from terrorist groups or their sympathizers if they provide information to law enforcement agencies (Ratcliffe, 2016). In some cases, terrorist groups have targeted individuals who have provided information to law enforcement agencies. These individuals may face threats, harassment, or even violence as a result of their cooperation with law enforcement agencies according to Ratcliffe. To address these concerns, law enforcement agencies must take steps to protect the identities and safety of individuals who provide information. This may involve providing anonymity or offering witness protection services. Additionally, Ratcliffe (2016) notes that law enforcement agencies can work with community leaders and organizations to educate the community about the importance of providing information and the measures in place to protect their safety. Overcoming these fears and building trust with the community can take time, but it is

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essential to gather critical intelligence and prevent terrorist activities. By working closely with the community and offering protection to those who provide information, law enforcement agencies can enhance their ability to prevent and disrupt terrorist activities while also ensuring the safety of the community.

Law enforcement agencies may lack the necessary resources to effectively engage with the community and gather timely and accurate community intelligence (Carter *et. al.*, 2017). According to Carter *et. al.*, limited resources can result in a lack of personnel and technological tools, which can make it challenging to build relationships with the community and gather intelligence. To address these resource constraints, law enforcement agencies may need to allocate additional resources to community policing efforts. This may involve hiring additional personnel, investing in new technologies, and providing training to officers on community engagement and intelligence gathering. Furthermore, law enforcement agencies can also seek partnerships with community organizations and stakeholders to leverage their resources and expertise. By working together, law enforcement agencies and community organizations can pool their resources and coordinate efforts to gather timely and accurate community intelligence.

Law enforcement officials may not be adequately trained to engage with the community and gather community intelligence effectively (Christopher *et. al.*, 2016). This can be due to a lack of formal training on community policing, cultural awareness, and effective communication skills. According to Christopher *et. al.*, addressing the issue, law enforcement agencies can provide specialized training to officers on community engagement, cultural competency, and intelligence gathering techniques. This training can help officers better understand the needs and concerns of the community and build relationships based on trust and mutual respect. Additionally, law enforcement agencies can work with community leaders and organizations to provide education and training to officers on the cultural norms and practices of the community. This can help officers avoid misunderstandings and build stronger relationships with the community.

Poor communication between law enforcement agencies and the community can hinder the gathering of community intelligence (Dunn *et. al.*, 2016). It is important to establish effective communication channels to facilitate the sharing of information. To establish effective communication channels according to Dunn *et. al.*, law enforcement agencies must prioritize community engagement and build trust with the community. This can be achieved through regular meetings with community leaders, establishing community policing programs, and providing cultural awareness training to officers. By establishing effective communication channels, law enforcement agencies can facilitate the sharing of information and enhance the quality and quantity of community intelligence gathered. This, in turn, can help prevent and disrupt criminal activities, ensuring the safety and security of the community.

Therefore, it is essential to address these challenges in gathering quality community intelligence for counter-terrorism initiatives. Law enforcement agencies must prioritize building trust and fostering positive relationships with the community. Additionally, policymakers must allocate sufficient resources towards training law enforcement officials in community policing strategies and community engagement. This would help equip law enforcement officials with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively gather community intelligence.

The Impact of Community Intelligence on Counter-Terrorism Efforts

Community intelligence can have a significant impact on counter-terrorism efforts (Thomas, 2016). The timely and accurate gathering of community intelligence can help law enforcement agencies prevent and disrupt terrorist activities by identifying potential threats before they occur according to Thomas. Through early detection and prevention of terrorist activities, community intelligence is able to help law enforcement agencies identify potential terrorist activities at an early stage, allowing them to take proactive measures to prevent them.

Community intelligence enables a better understanding of terrorist networks and activities (Moghadam, 2017). According to Moghadam it provides law enforcement agencies with a better understanding of terrorist networks, their activities, and their modus operandi. This information can be used to develop effective strategies to combat terrorism. Law enforcement agencies are able to identify and track potential threats. By monitoring social media and other online platforms, law enforcement agencies can identify individuals who may be radicalized or who have expressed support for terrorist organizations. This information can be used to intervene early and prevent individuals from carrying out terrorist activities.

More effective resource allocation is imperative in community intelligence as it can help law enforcement agencies allocate resources more effectively (Trullinger, 2016). By focusing resources on areas or individuals identified as high-risk, law enforcement agencies can better target their efforts and increase the likelihood of success according to Trullinger. In the contemporary study the ability to identify and track potential threats through community intelligence is crucial for preventing terrorist attacks. By intervening early, law enforcement agencies can prevent individuals from carrying out terrorist activities, saving lives and enhancing public safety.

Improved community relationships in the gathering of community intelligence can help build trust and positive relationships between law enforcement agencies and the community (Sereni-Massinger & Wood, 2016). This can help foster a sense of shared responsibility for public safety and improve cooperation between law enforcement agencies and the community. According to Sereni-Massinger & Wood, by building positive relationships with the community, law enforcement agencies can improve the quality and quantity of community intelligence gathered. This information can then be used to develop effective strategies for preventing and disrupting terrorist activities, enhancing public safety, and building stronger, more resilient communities.

Enhanced public safety through timely and accurate gathering of community intelligence can enhance public safety by preventing terrorist attacks and reducing the risk of harm to individuals and communities (Cheng & Zhao, 2019). Effective intelligence gathering enables law enforcement agencies to identify and track potential terrorist threats, and to develop effective strategies for preventing and disrupting terrorist activities. This can help to reduce the risk of harm to individuals and communities, and to promote public safety and security.

Insights on Enhancing the Quality and Quantity of Community Intelligence Gathered

Enhancing the quality and quantity of community intelligence gathered requires a multi-faceted approach that involves building trust, fostering open communication, and providing incentives, conducting targeted outreach, investing in training, leveraging technology, and

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developing partnerships (Jackson *et. al.*, 2018). By taking these steps, law enforcement agencies can improve their ability to prevent and disrupt terrorist activities, ultimately enhancing public safety.

Building trust between law enforcement agencies and the community is essential to gathering quality community intelligence according to Hendrix *et. al.* (2019). Law enforcement agencies should prioritize building positive relationships with the community by engaging in dialogue and actively listening to community concerns. By building positive relationships with the community, law enforcement agencies can create an environment of mutual trust and respect, and can increase the quality and quantity of community intelligence gathered. This information can then be used to develop effective strategies for preventing and disrupting terrorist activities, enhancing public safety, and building stronger, more resilient communities.

Fostering of open communication is imperative in enhancing the quality and quantity of community intelligence (Carayannis, Meissner & Edelkina, 2017). Law enforcement agencies should create open channels of communication with the community to encourage the sharing of information. According to Carayannis, Meissner & Edelkina, this can be achieved through community policing initiatives, community meetings, and other outreach programs. Community policing initiatives, community meetings, and other outreach programs are effective ways to foster open communication between law enforcement agencies and the community. These initiatives create opportunities for law enforcement agencies to engage with the community, listen to their concerns, and build relationships based on mutual trust and respect. Open communication also helps to dispel misunderstandings and build a shared understanding of the risks and threats facing the community. By working together, law enforcement agencies and the community can identify potential threats and take proactive steps to prevent them from occurring.

Providing incentives to encourage the community to share information can help increase the quantity of community intelligence gathered according to Sauerwein *et. al.* (2017). This can be achieved through rewards programs, anonymous tip lines, and other incentive-based initiatives. Sauerwein *et. al.* noted that rewards programs can offer financial or other types of incentives to individuals who provide information that leads to the prevention of a terrorist attack or the arrest of a suspected terrorist. Anonymous tip lines provide a secure and confidential way for individuals to share information without fear of retribution. These types of incentive-based programs can help to overcome barriers to sharing information, such as fear of retaliation, mistrust of law enforcement agencies, and concerns about privacy. By providing incentives, law enforcement agencies can demonstrate their commitment to working with the community to prevent terrorist activities and promote public safety.

Conducting targeted outreach to high-risk communities can help increase the quantity and quality of community intelligence gathered (Mazerolle *et. al.*, 2020). Law enforcement agencies should prioritize engaging with communities that are most vulnerable to terrorist activities. According to Mazerolle *et. al.*, conducting targeted outreach to high-risk communities is a crucial strategy in gathering community intelligence to combat terrorism. This can be achieved through community meetings, partnering with community leaders, and conducting targeted outreach programs to provide education and resources to these communities. By creating open channels of communication and actively listening to

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community concerns, law enforcement agencies can gather timely and accurate information to prevent potential terrorist activities and enhance public safety.

Investing in training for law enforcement officials is essential in improving the quality of community intelligence gathered to combat terrorism (Perry, Weisburd & Hasisi, 2016). Law enforcement agencies should prioritize training their officials on community policing strategies, effective communication, and cultural sensitivity to build positive relationships with the community. By understanding cultural nuances and engaging in open dialogue, law enforcement officials can gain the trust of the community and encourage the sharing of information according to Perry, Weisburd & Hasisi. Additionally, training on effective communication and conflict resolution can help officials respond to community concerns and diffuse potentially tense situations. With a well-trained and culturally sensitive law enforcement force, the community can feel more comfortable sharing information, ultimately leading to higher quality community intelligence and a safer community.

The use of technology can significantly improve the quality and quantity of community intelligence gathered (Dwivedi *et. al.*, 2021). Law enforcement agencies can leverage social media monitoring, data analytics, and other technologies to identify and track potential threats. By using technology, law enforcement agencies can monitor online activities and detect patterns that may indicate radicalization or support for terrorist organizations. According to Dwivedi *et. al.*, this can help law enforcement agencies to intervene early and prevent terrorist activities. Additionally, technology can be used to enhance communication between law enforcement agencies and the community, making it easier for community members to share information and for law enforcement agencies to respond quickly to potential threats.

Developing partnerships with community organizations, religious institutions, and other stakeholders is crucial for law enforcement agencies seeking to enhance the quantity and quality of community intelligence gathered (Aiello, Puigvert & Schubert, 2018). These partnerships provide law enforcement agencies with access to valuable information that may not be readily available otherwise. Through collaboration with these organizations, law enforcement agencies can tap into a wealth of knowledge about the community's social and cultural dynamics, including crime trends, local concerns, and emerging issues as Aiello, Puigvert & Schubert opine. This information can help law enforcement agencies tailor their policing strategies to better serve the needs of the community.

Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative research design. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with law enforcement officials and community members. The use of qualitative methods enabled the researcher to gather detailed insights into the significance of community intelligence in community policing strategies in countering terrorism.

Purposive sampling was used to select participants. The target population included law enforcement officials and community members involved in community policing strategies in countering terrorism in Garissa County. Participants were selected based on their experience, expertise, and knowledge of community policing strategies and counter-terrorism initiatives in Garissa County.

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The interviews were conducted with law enforcement officials involved in community

policing strategies and counter-terrorism initiatives in Garissa County. Focus group discussions were conducted with community members who have been involved in community policing activities or have information relevant to countering terrorism in Garissa County. Data was collected through audio recordings and field notes.

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data collected. The analysis involved identifying patterns, themes, and categories from the data. The researcher used NVivo software to assist in the organization and analysis of the data. The analysis was guided by the research questions and objectives of the study.

The study adhered to ethical principles such as informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity of participants. Participants were informed about the study's purpose, the nature of the questions to be asked, and their right to decline participation or withdraw at any time without penalty. Data collected was kept confidential and anonymous, and only used for the purpose of the study. The study sought ethical approval from relevant institutions before data collection.

Findings

The study reveals that community intelligence plays a significant role in countering terrorism, and that law enforcement agencies can benefit greatly from partnering with communities in gathering intelligence. The study found out that the quality and quantity of community intelligence gathered by law enforcement agencies significantly improves the ability to detect, prevent and respond to terrorist activities.

The study identified challenges such as mistrust between law enforcement agencies and communities, fear of retaliation from terrorist groups, and lack of adequate training and resources for community policing initiatives. This hinders the gathering of community intelligence. In some cases, community members may be hesitant to provide information to law enforcement agencies due to fear of retaliation from terrorist groups or mistrust of the government.

The findings provides insights into how law enforcement agencies can improve community policing strategies, such as by building trust and better communication with communities, providing adequate training and resources, and promoting community participation in countering terrorism. Law enforcement agencies face significant challenges in gathering community intelligence, including limited resources, inadequate training and lack of incentives for community members to provide information.

The study identified several ways in which community policing strategies can be enhanced to improve the quality and quantity of community intelligence gathered. This includes improving community engagement, building trust, and providing training and resources to law enforcement officials.

Finally, the findings of the study informs policy and practice in Garissa County, Kenya, and other regions facing similar challenges, by providing insights into how community policing strategies can be improved to enhance counter-terrorism efforts.

Conclusion

The study underscores the importance of community intelligence and community policing strategies in countering terrorism in Garissa County, Kenya, and other regions facing similar challenges. The study provides valuable insights and recommendations that can inform policy and practice in enhancing community policing strategies to improve counter-terrorism efforts.

Notably, community intelligence is a critical component of community policing strategies in countering terrorism in Garissa County, Kenya. The study has found that the quality and quantity of community intelligence gathered by law enforcement agencies can significantly enhance their ability to detect, prevent and respond to terrorist activities.

The study identified several challenges that hinder the gathering of community intelligence, including mistrust between law enforcement agencies and the community, fear of retaliation from terrorist groups and inadequate training and resources.

The findings of the study suggest that enhancing community engagement, building trust, and providing training and resources to law enforcement officials can significantly improve community policing strategies in Garissa County, Kenya, and other regions facing similar challenges.

The study recommends that law enforcement agencies and policymakers in Garissa County, Kenya, and other regions invest in community policing strategies that promote community engagement, communication and collaboration between law enforcement agencies and the community.

Finally, the study highlights the need for ongoing evaluation and monitoring of community policing strategies to ensure their effectiveness in countering terrorism in Garissa County, Kenya, and other regions facing similar challenges.

Recommendations

Based on the assumptions and objectives of the study some recommendations could be made to law enforcement agencies in Garissa County, Kenya, and other regions facing similar challenges to prioritize community engagement and collaboration in their counter-terrorism efforts. They should work towards building trust and fostering positive relationships with the community to improve the quality and quantity of community intelligence gathered.

Policymakers in Garissa County, Kenya, and other regions should allocate sufficient resources towards training law enforcement officials in community policing strategies and community engagement. This would help equip law enforcement officials with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively gather community intelligence.

Law enforcement agencies should provide incentives for community members to provide information. This could include offering rewards for information that leads to the arrest or prosecution of terrorist suspects, as well as protecting the identities of community members who provide information.

Policymakers in Garissa County, Kenya, and other regions should invest in technology and other resources that can aid in the gathering and analysis of community intelligence. This could include the use of social media monitoring tools and other technologies that can aid in the identification of potential terrorist activities.

Finally, law enforcement agencies and policymakers in Garissa County, Kenya, and other regions should prioritize ongoing evaluation and monitoring of community policing strategies. This would help ensure that strategies are effective in countering terrorism and that they are responsive to changes in the threat landscape.

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