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The Extent to which Community Policing and Nyumba Kumi Initiatives by the NPS Contribute to the Early Warning and Resolution of Resource Conflicts in Lamu County

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Abstract

Resource conflicts continue to pose significant security challenges, often escalating into violent confrontations that threaten livelihoods and stability. Effective resolution of such conflicts requires proactive engagement, collaboration with stakeholders and strategic interventions to mitigate tensions. This study examined the extent to which community policing and nyumba kumi initiatives by the NPS contribute to the early warning and resolution of resource conflicts in Lamu County. Conflict transformation and organizational legitimacy theories were utilized and it used a convergent parallel mixed-methods research design. It was undertaken in Lamu with all the adult residents as the target population. A multistage sampling was utilized of purposive sampling and random sampling to get the target population into four homogenous groups: Senior police officers, Junior police officers, the Local community members, the Village and Nyumba Kumi elders. Questionnaire and interview guides were used to collect data. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically. Numerical

data was examined by summary statistics of proportions, averages and pie diagrams. The study found six community policing and nyumba kumi initiatives by the NPS for early warning and resolution of resource conflicts: improved level of trust between police and public that enhances resource conflict management, increased frequency of joint security meetings between NPS and community improves early warning and resolution of resource conflicts, enhanced level of citizen participation in community policing activities expands early warning of resource conflicts, perceived reduction in resource-related conflicts and incidents, not enough resources and institutional support for community policing and nyumba kumi initiatives to lessen the resource tensions and conflicts. The study concluded: the NPS has successfully developed the social infrastructure for peace but has failed to provide the material infrastructure necessary to sustain it. The study recommends: that the NPS moves from individual heroism to institutional reliability for sustainability of the initiatives.

Keywords: Community Policing, Nyumba Kumi Initiatives, Resource Conflict, Resource Conflict Resolution, Collaboration, Stakeholders, Community Policing, Public Trust in Security Agencies

1. Introduction

Competition over natural resources often leads to disputes that, if not properly managed, can escalate into violence, economic instability and social unrest. Resource conflict resolution plays a crucial role in addressing these disputes by promoting fair distribution, sustainable management and peaceful coexistence among competing parties. According to Ghebretkle (2017) ^[9] resource conflict resolution refers to the process of addressing disputes that arise from competition over natural resources through mediation, legal frameworks and policy interventions. Effective conflict resolution strategies incorporate legal frameworks, alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms and stakeholder engagement to promote long-term stability and equitable resource management. Without proper intervention, resource conflicts can escalate into violence, economic instability and environmental degradation, making resolution efforts essential for sustainable development.

As for Ronquillo, Ellis and Toney-Butler (2023) ^[30] resource conflict resolution refers to the structured processes and mechanisms used to address disputes arising from competition over natural resource like land, water and minerals. It aims to prevent violence, promote fair resource distribution and ensure sustainable management by engaging stakeholders such as

government agencies, security forces and local communities. These efforts are essential in fostering long-term stability, reducing social tensions and enhancing cooperative resource governance among the competing parties. In the context of this study, the success of resource conflict resolution can be shaped by the National Police Service's (NPS) intervention, which provides security, enforces laws and facilitates mediation. Therefore, analyzing resource conflict resolution as a dependent variable helps assess the impact of policing efforts in mitigating disputes and promoting sustainable peace.

According to Kiunga (2021) ^[12] Police Service intervention encompasses the strategic actions and measures implemented by national law enforcement agencies to prevent, manage and resolve criminal activities and social disorders within a country. Police service intervention in resource conflict resolution involves maintaining public order, enforcing laws and facilitating dialogue between conflicting parties to achieve peaceful outcomes. While police officers frequently engage in public interactions involving conflicts, many studies have focused on the application of force instead of the successful conflict resolution approaches (Emsing, Ghazinour & Sundqvist, 2024) ^[5]. This emphasizes the necessity for solid conflict management skills among officers to maintain positive relationships with the public and handle disputes professionally.

Additionally, community policing has emerged as a vital strategy in resolving disputes, particularly in resource-prone conflict areas. Vundi, Chepsoi and Matanga (2020) ^[34] suggests that formal justice systems may not always provide effective resolutions, highlighting the need for proactive and community-engaged policing strategies. Therefore, while police service intervention plays a crucial role in resource conflict resolution, its success would largely depend on adopting comprehensive conflict management strategies and fostering strong community relationships.

In Germany, the National Police Service plays a pivotal role in resolving resource-related conflicts, particularly those arising from infrastructure projects and land use disputes. The police engage in conflict management by facilitating dialogue between stakeholders, enforcing legal frameworks and ensuring the public safety during protests or demonstrations. A scoping review by Emsing *et al.*, (2024) ^[5] highlights those German police employ de-escalation techniques and procedural justice to manage conflicts effectively, thereby fostering trust and cooperation among involved parties. While the German police employ de-escalation techniques and procedural justice to manage resource conflicts effectively, it is unclear how such approaches would apply or function in Lamu County. This research sought to bridge this deficiency through examining Community Policing and Nyumba Kumi initiatives in Lamu County and assessing whether strategies like those used in Germany could be effective in this context.

In Ethiopia, Conflict Resolution by the police has been instrumental in conflict resolution and peacebuilding within Addis Ababa. Alehegn (2020) ^[1] highlights that, prior to implementing conflict resolution, the city faced high rates of robbery, theft and violence. The introduction of conflict resolution led to a significant reduction in these crimes, fostering a safer environment. However, challenges such as limited community participation and inadequate training for officers persist, affecting the overall effectiveness of these

initiatives. While Ethiopia's police-led conflict resolution initiatives have contributed to crime reduction and peacebuilding, it was unclear how similar approaches would apply in Lamu County, Kenya. The unique security challenges in Lamu, including resource-based disputes and threats from extremist groups, required a tailored intervention by the NPS.

In Kenya, Kyulu and Masiga (2021) ^[17] examined the impact of police intervention on crime prevention and control in Kikuyu District, Kiambu County. The study found that community policing strategies led to a notable reduction in criminal activities, demonstrating its effectiveness in enhancing security. However, a key challenge identified was the persistent mistrust and negative public attitude toward the police, which hindered full cooperation amongst the police agency and the community. The study recommended the implementation of new community relations strategies and policies to address this issue. While the results emphasized the significance of collaboration in crime prevention, they did not explore how similar strategies could have been applied to resource conflict resolution in Lamu County. Given Lamu's distinct security concerns, including resource disputes and extremist threats, additional studies were required to assess the efficacy of Community Policing and Nyumba Kumi initiatives in managing resource conflicts in the region.

Muriungi and Mung'ale (2023) ^[23] examined the role of community policing in dispute resolution in Kiambu County, Kenya, finding it effective in reducing court cases and enhancing public safety. Using the conflict transformation theory and the Interest-Based Relational Approach, the study established a significant link between community policing and dispute resolution, though a lack of public awareness hindered its full potential. However, it did not explore how the Community Policing and Nyumba Kumi initiatives by the NPS would apply similar strategies to resource conflict resolution in Lamu County, where security challenges such as resource disputes and extremist threats create a complex policing environment. This underscored the need for further research on NPS interventions in managing resource-based conflicts in Lamu County.

2. Theoretical Framework

The two suitable theories that guided this study on Community Policing and Nyumba Kumi initiatives by the NPS contribute to the early warning and resolution of resource conflicts in Lamu county, were: Conflict Transformation Theory (John Paul Lederach – 1995) ^[19] and Organizational Legitimacy Theory (Mark C. Suchman – 1995) ^[31].

2.1 Conflict Transformation Theory (John Paul Lederach – 1995)

Conflict Transformation Theory, developed by John Paul Lederach (1995) ^[19], emphasizes addressing the root causes of conflict rather than just suppressing violence. This approach was highly relevant to the Community Policing and Nyumba Kumi initiatives by the NPS contribute to the early warning and resolution of resource conflicts in Lamu County, where disputes over land and natural resources are deeply rooted in historical injustices and economic marginalization. Traditional policing methods alone are insufficient; instead, long-term structural changes,

community participation and the relationship-building are essential for sustainable peace.

A key principle of this theory was on tackling underlying grievances. In Lamu, conflicts often stem from unresolved land issues and resource competition. The NPS can shift from reactive enforcement to proactive engagement, working alongside community leaders, government agencies and the civil society to address these concerns. Building trust between the conflicting groups is another crucial aspect, where community policing and structured dialogues can enhance collaboration and prevent violence. Additionally, empowering local actors can play a vital role in sustainable conflict resolution. The NPS should integrate traditional dispute resolution mechanisms, such as the elders' councils and religious leaders, to ensure culturally appropriate interventions. This multi-stakeholder approach would foster legitimacy and inclusivity in resolving disputes.

The theory also advocated for the restorative justice over punitive measures. Instead of relying solely on arrests and deterrence, the NPS can implement alternative dispute resolution methods, such as mediation and negotiation, to encourage reconciliation. Moreover, institutional and policy reforms are necessary to prevent recurring conflicts. The NPS can support legal reforms in land tenure and promote conflict-sensitive training for officers to enhance their peacekeeping role. In summary, Conflict Transformation Theory provided a holistic framework for NPS interventions, emphasizing root cause resolution, relationship-building, community empowerment, restorative justice and the institutional reforms. By adopting this approach, the NPS can move beyond law enforcement to foster long-term stability and peaceful coexistence in Lamu County.

But the Conflict Transformation Theory has its weakness that informed the use of a second theory. As it effectively addressed the root causes of conflicts and promotes sustainable peace, it assumed that all actors are willing to engage in transformative processes. This is a weakness in cases where police legitimacy is questioned, or trust between the security agencies and the communities is weak. To address this, the Organizational Legitimacy Theory was essential, as it explained how the police institutions gain or lose the public trust.

2.2 Organizational Legitimacy Theory (Mark C. Suchman – 1995)

Organizational Legitimacy Theory, proposed by Mark C. Suchman (1995) [31], explained how institutions gain, maintain or repair legitimacy in society by aligning their actions with the societal values and expectations. In the context of Community Policing and Nyumba Kumi initiatives by the NPS contribute to the early warning and resolution of resource conflicts in Lamu County, Kenya, legitimacy is crucial for fostering trust, ensuring public cooperation and enhancing the effectiveness of the conflict resolution strategies. A key aspect of this theory was pragmatic legitimacy, which focused on how an organization provides direct benefits to its stakeholders. The NPS can enhance its legitimacy by demonstrating responsiveness to local concerns, effectively managing disputes and ensuring the equitable enforcement of laws. When communities perceive those police interventions serve their interests, they are more likely to cooperate with the law

enforcement efforts in resolving conflicts over land and natural resources.

Another critical element was the moral legitimacy, which was based on the ethical and justifiable actions. Resource conflicts in Lamu often stem from historical injustices and competing land claims. If the NPS can be seen as impartial, fair and transparent in handling disputes, it strengthens its moral legitimacy. This requires adherence to human rights principles, accountability in operations and a commitment to the unbiased conflict resolution mechanisms. Cognitive legitimacy, the third component, referred to how well an organization's actions are perceived as necessary and appropriate within a given social context. The NPS can integrate community-driven conflict resolution strategies, such as involving elders, local leaders and the civil society in dispute resolution. Aligning police interventions with the traditional and the legal frameworks reinforces the public perception of the police as a legitimate authority in the resource conflict management.

However, in areas where past grievances against security forces exist, repairing legitimacy is necessary. The NPS can rebuild public trust through transparent communication, engagement forums and the conflict-sensitive policing. This would ensure that, the security interventions are not viewed as oppressive but as collaborative efforts toward peace and justice. In conclusion, Organizational Legitimacy Theory underscored the importance of trust, ethical policing and the community integration in NPS interventions on resource conflicts. By fostering legitimacy through pragmatic, moral and cognitive approaches, the NPS can enhance its effectiveness in promoting sustainable conflict resolution and long-term peace in Lamu County. Combining both the theories allowed for a comprehensive analysis of not only conflict resolution but also the role of police credibility in ensuring effective interventions.

3. Materials and Methods

A Convergent Parallel Mixed-Methods Design was the best approach for studying Community Policing and Nyumba Kumi initiatives by the NPS contribute to the early warning and resolution of resource conflicts in Lamu county, Kenya. It allowed the researcher to collect both the qualitative and quantitative data simultaneously, analyze them separately and then merge the results to compare, contrast and combine insights (Creswell, 2015) [3]. Quantitative methods for example, structured questionnaires provided statistical evidence on the extent of citizen engagement, perceptions and the key influencing factors. The qualitative methods for example, interviews offered rich, descriptive insights into the personal experiences, challenges and the motivations behind citizen participation and reluctance.

The study was conducted in Lamu County. It is on a land surface area of 6,474.7 square kilometers that includes the mainland and over 65 Islands (Lamu County Government, 2025) [18]. It is one of the 47 counties of Kenya founded in 2013 after Kenya's 8 provinces were subdivided into 47 counties. It also has the most diverse experiences of security operations and its home to several state security installations therefore offering the best example of resource conflict resolution (Mutonyi & Pesa, 2024) [24]. Lamu County constitutes ten county wards, which are, Mkomani, shella, Faza, Kiunga, Basuba, Hindi, Hongwe, Bahari, Mkunumbi and Witu (Lamu County Government, 2025) [18]. But its

results should be cautiously be presumed as a representation of other parts of Kenya.

The target population for this study were the local community members of Lamu from the age of 19 and above who understood the concept of resource conflict resolution. The approximate number of age 19 and above in the county were 69,370 (48.2%) (City Population, 2019) [2]. The researcher employed a multistage sampling technique to determine the sample size and identify respondents. This approach involved dividing the larger population into successive stages, thereby making the sampling process more practical and manageable. At each stage, methods such as simple random sampling, stratified sampling, or cluster sampling could be applied to ensure representativeness and rigor (Theresa & McBurney, 2012) [33].

First, 2 constituencies were purposively sampled (that is 100 of the total county wards). Gay & Diehl, (1992) [8] recommends 20% of an n compared to the general N . However, the researcher increased to 100% according to Martin and Bateson (1986) [21] who argued the statistical power is enhanced by increasing the sample size.

Second, 3 county wards were purposively sampled, that is 30% of the total constituencies. Gay & Diehl, (1992) [8] recommended 20% for a small number of n compared to the general N . They were Bahari, 123.31 (km²), Mkunumbi with land area of 1366.1 (km²) and Basuba with land area of 1708.7 (km²). They were selected because based on the Lamu County PCRA report, Bahari, Mkunumbi and Basuba wards experience more resource-based and human-wildlife conflicts than the other wards in Lamu County (CIDP, 2016) [32]. They were also in high population density areas and were also mostly experiencing frequent resource conflicts. This made them appropriate samples as they were rich in the information needed to address the objectives.

Third, clustering was used to group the target population into four homogenous groups: senior police officers, junior police officers, Village and Nyumba Kumi elders and the local community members. Clustering involved arranging a set of objects in such a way that objects in the same group (called a cluster) were more similar to each other than to those in other groups (clusters) (Kriegel, Kröger, & Zimek 2012) [16].

For an approximate number of age 19 and above in the county who were 69,370, a sample size of 381 was optimal (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970) [15]. But the researcher increased it to 390 to increase the statistical power. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) [15] produced a reference table for determining sample size. No calculations are required to use the table which is reproduced in Figure two (appendix IV).

1. The senior police officers were randomly sampled as 4 out of 12 of them which was 33.3%. Gay & Diehl, (1992) [8] recommends 20% of an n compared to the general N .
2. Seventy out of one hundred and seventy-six junior police officers below the rank of an inspector were randomly sampled as our respondent which was 40%. Gay & Diehl, (1992) [8] recommends 20% of an n compared to the general N .
3. Twelve out of fifty-two Village and Nyumba Kumi elders were randomly sampled as our respondent which was 23.1%. Gay & Diehl, (1992) [8] recommends 20% of an n compared to the general N .
4. The general public for every 6th member of the general public was systematic random sampled as our

respondent. A total of 305 were needed. Systematic random sampling is a type of sampling method in which sample members from a study population are selected according to a random starting point N^{th} number (Crossman, 2017) [4].

Table 1: Sampling and Sample Size

Respondents	Total	Sample
Senior police officers	12	4
Junior police officers	176	70
Village and Nyumba Kumi elders	52	12
Local community members	69,370	304
Total Sample	69,551	390

The mixed methods approach will be used in this study, with questionnaires collecting quantitative data, whereas one-on-one interviews with gather qualitative data.

Questionnaires (Appendix I): Questionnaires were administered utilizing both ‘closed-ended’ questions (questions that were mainly demographics) and the ‘open-ended’ questions (where respondents were given an opportunity to write their opinions and feelings about the responses). Research questions guided the construction of the questionnaire so that all areas are addressed. The questionnaires were administered with the help of the research assistants. People are more truthful while responding to the questionnaires regarding controversial issues due to the anonymity of the responses. The participants were allowed to complete the questionnaires by themselves.

Scheduled Interview Guides: One-on-one interviews were conducted with the: senior police officers and the Village and Nyumba Kumi elders. Interviews were an effective data gathering tool because they minimized the problem of unanswered questions and gave room for further probing.

This was carried out on a random sample of 40 respondents: senior police officers, junior police officers, Village and Nyumba Kumi elders and the local community members in Malindi County. It was not to be part of the study population but with similar characteristics as the sampled population. The results from the pilot study helped the researcher to refined and tuned the tools by correcting ambiguities, misinterpretation and irritating language. Kothari (2017) [14] recommended that the sample size of a pilot is expected to be equal to 10% of the sample population in the study.

The study was informed by data sourced from primary source, who are the four homogenous groups, who were expected to understand the phenomena of Community Policing and Nyumba Kumi initiatives by the NPS contribute to the early warning and resolution of resource conflicts in the region.

- **Questionnaires:** Amongst the junior police officers and the local community members, questionnaires were administered to them by the research assistants, who were present as the respondents fill.
- **Interviews to be recorded:** One-on-one interviews were scheduled with the selected respondents to be interviewed. They were the senior police officers and the Village and Nyumba Kumi elders.

Qualitative data was analyzed thematically, pinpointing, examining and recording patterns. It was then be presented in a report of key findings under each main theme or category, using appropriate verbatim quotes to illustrate those findings.

Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics like percentages, average and mean and the pie charts. The data from both the qualitative and the quantitative analysis, was triangulated to see the relationship of the police service interventions and resource conflict resolution.

4. Results and Discussion

The researcher dispersed 374 questionnaires for the Junior police officers and the Local community members. The researcher had 16 scheduled interview guides for the Senior police officers and the Village and Nyumba Kumi elders. In total they were 390 questionnaires and scheduled interview guides. Figure 1 shows the response rates from the different groups of the participants regarding Community Policing and Nyumba Kumi initiatives by the NPS contribute to the early warning and resolution of resource conflicts in Lamu county, Kenya.

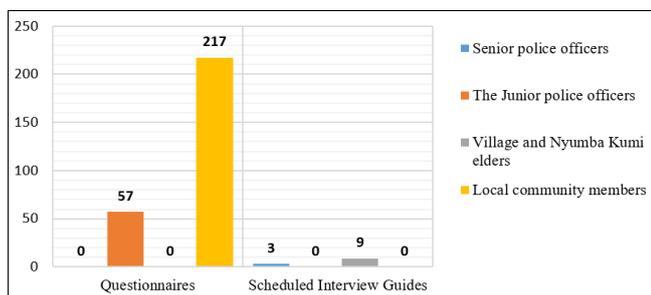


Fig 1: Respondents' Response Rates

The Senior police officers had a total of 3 responses, which constituted 75% of that cluster total sample population that was 4. The Junior police officers had a total of 57 responses, which constituted 81.4% of that cluster total sample population that was 70. The Village and Nyumba Kumi elders had a total of 9 responses, which constituted 75% of that cluster total sample population that was 12. And lastly were the Local community members had a total of 217 responses, which constituted 71.4% of that cluster total sample population that was 304. In total, out of the 390 participants, there was 286 respondents which constituted 73.3% of the sample. This met the recommended adequacy range of 33% to 66% of the response rate against the sample size as suggested by Hagaman and Wutich (2017) [10].

Overall, the study achieved robust response rates across all stakeholder groups, ranging from 74.5% to 81.4%, exceeding established benchmarks for mixed-methods research, thereby ensuring data adequacy, representativeness and methodological rigor for analyzing Community Policing and Nyumba Kumi initiatives by the NPS contribute to the early warning and resolution of resource conflicts in Lamu county, Kenya.

The research also sought to determine the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants. Understanding these characteristics was essential because they are recognized to affect the respondents' opinions and perspectives (Robertson & Watts, 2016) [28]. Therefore, the socio-demographic factors examined comprised of gender, age and the level of education.

Participants were asked to indicate their gender by placing a mark next to the relevant option provided (male or female). The responses are presented below (figure 2).

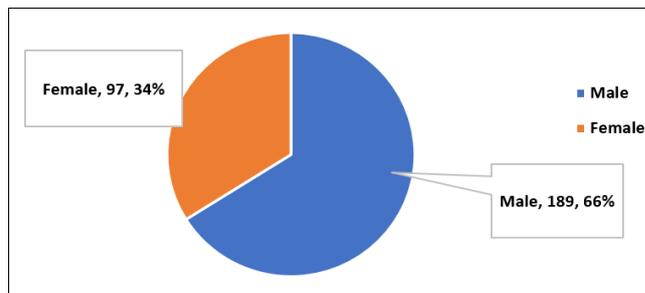


Fig 2: Responses by Gender

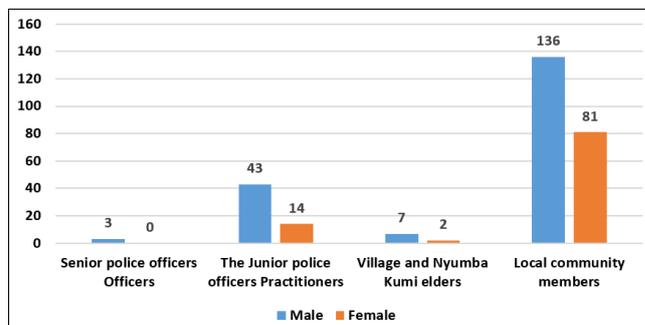


Fig 3: Respondents' Gender in Each Cluster

Figure 2 shows the gender distribution of the respondents, with 97 (34%) females and 189 (66%) males indicating that, the majority of the participants available for the study were male.

Figure 3 indicates the distribution among the various clusters, showing that all the 3 Senior police officers as male (100%) and the Junior police officers (43 male, 14 female) reflects the existing gender demographics within the National Police Service, where operational policing roles in Lamu County have predominantly been held by men. This distribution suggested a gender imbalance in both leadership and frontline deployment, implying that the perspectives captured in the study were more heavily influenced by the male officers' experiences. And historically, the field like policing has been male-dominated (Mutungi & Mavole, 2024) [25]. Therefore, the study's results are not unusual but rather they mirror the broader sociological and professional reality of the Kenyan workforce. Nonetheless, the inclusion of female junior officers provided some representation of women's views and helped capture gendered differences in policing practice, community engagement and conflict resolution approaches where applicable.

The Village and Nyumba Kumi elders were 7 male and 2 female, whereas the Local community members were 136 male and 81 female. The significant disparity among the groups in the society is a well-documented phenomenon where men often have a greater access to and higher rates of participation than women, particularly in developing countries (Piva Asaloko, Mondjeli & Tsopmo, 2025) [26]. Factors such as cultural norms contribute to this gap, leading to an overrepresentation of males on security focused studies. The gendered division of labor further restricts women's engagement, as they are disproportionately burdened with unpaid care work, leaving them with fewer opportunities to attend the community gatherings or assume elder positions within Village and Nyumba Kumi structures. This gender imbalance not only limits the diversity of

perspectives captured in security-focused research but also undermines the effectiveness of community policing initiatives, which require inclusive participation to address the safety concerns of all community members comprehensively. Consequently, deliberate efforts to promote gender-inclusive approaches in community security frameworks remain essential for achieving equitable representation and more holistic security outcomes.

The participants were requested to specify their ages by choosing from the given options. For those who took part in scheduled interviews, their age was recorded as part of the introductory questions. The data was recorded as shown in the Figure 4 below.

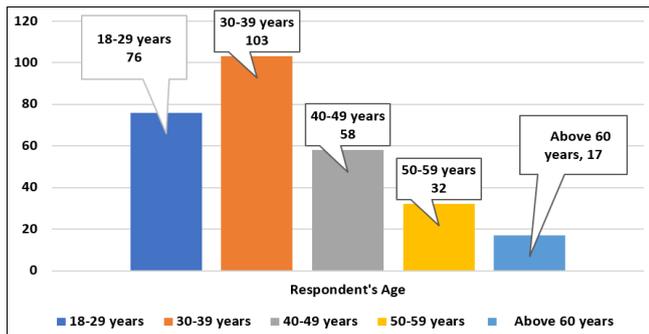


Fig 4: Age for the Respondents

According to the findings, the 30-39 years age group was the largest, comprising 103 respondents (36%). The second largest group was the 18-29 years category, with 76 respondents (26.6%). The 40-49 years group accounted for 58 respondents (20.3%). The second last smallest group were the 50-59 years at 32 respondents (11.2%). The smallest segment of the sample was the above 60 age group, with 17 respondents (5.9%).

The distribution of respondents by age group in this study offered important insights regarding the demographic makeup and the potential factors influencing participation in the research on police agents and resource conflict resolutions. The predominance of the 30-39 years age group, making up the largest segment of the sample (36%), suggested that this active workforce demographic was the most accessible and willing to engage in the study. This could be due to their central role in the socio-economic activities of Lamu County, where they are heavily involved in resource utilization and are arguably the most affected by police interventions. As implied by studies on resource conflict, this age cohort typically bears the primary responsibility for the economic provision, making their experiences with conflict resolution mechanisms particularly acute and their willingness to share them higher.

The substantial representation of the 18-29 years group (26.6%) indicated that, the younger adults also formed a significant part of the study population. This age bracket typically encompasses the individuals who are transitioning into adulthood, seeking employment opportunities and establishing their livelihoods in a resource-contested environment. Their notable participation could be linked to their heightened awareness of security dynamics, exposure to National Police Service operations and their vulnerability

to recruitment into the conflict-related activities. Furthermore, the younger adults may have been more responsive to research initiatives due to their familiarity with the data collection methods and greater availability compared to their older counterparts who bear more household responsibilities.

The 40-49 years group accounted for a considerable proportion of the respondents (20.3%), reflecting the continued engagement of mature adults in matters pertaining to resource conflict and security interventions. This demographic comprised established community members, including the traders, landowners and the local leaders who had witnessed the evolution of resource conflicts and police interventions over time. Their perspectives were particularly valuable as they possess historical knowledge of conflict dynamics and can offer comparative insights on the effectiveness of the various intervention strategies implemented by the National Police Service.

As age increases beyond 50 years, the proportion of participants decreases progressively, with the 50-59 years group at 11.2%. This decline reflected reduced accessibility, competing priorities and even lesser interest among the older adults to participate in security-focused research. Alternatively, it could also have been indicative of the study's recruitment methods or topics not being as immediately relevant to this age group, who may have delegated active involvement in the resource-related activities to the younger family members. Additionally, older adults in conflict-prone areas such as Lamu County may have developed a sense of desensitization and fatigue regarding security matters due to the prolonged exposure to conflict situations. The smallest group was respondents above 60 years (5.9%), which could be attributed to factors such as limited mobility, lower exposure to the public forums where police interventions are often discussed or the potential health limitations affecting their participation. Furthermore, the older adults in Lamu often hold traditional advisory roles and may have different communication preferences that were not fully addressed during the standard recruitment.

Overall, the downward trend in the respondent numbers with increasing age emphasized the need to consider age-specific engagement strategies in the research design. As Hübel, Stan and Tasente (2023) ^[11] stated, age significantly influences participants' perspectives on security, trust in authority and the attitudes towards conflict resolution structures. Understanding this demographic distribution is critical for interpreting the study's findings, identifying potential biases towards the perspectives of the active workforce and enhancing the representativeness of future research samples in conflict zones. These discussions can help to frame the findings within the broader social and methodological contexts, ensuring a better understanding of the population under study in Lamu County.

The respondents were instructed to specify their highest level of education by inserting a mark where the applicable selection was given. For the ones who were interviewed, their highest level of education was captured as a question during the introduction. The data is captured in below (figure 5).

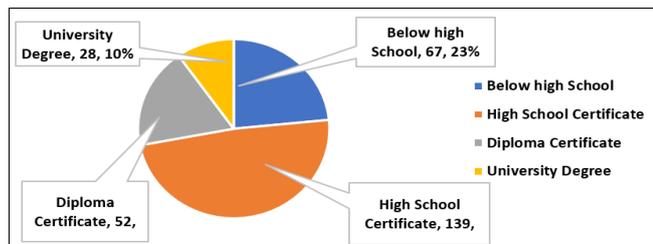


Fig 5: Respondents' Highest Level of Education

The distribution of respondents by educational attainment in this study offered important insights regarding the literacy levels and the potential capacity of participants to comprehend and meaningfully engage with research questions on Community Policing and Nyumba Kumi initiatives by the NPS contribute to the early warning and resolution of resource conflicts in Lamu County, Kenya. The predominance of respondents with High School Certificate, comprising 139 participants (48.6%), suggested that nearly half of the sample had attained the foundational educational qualification recognized in Kenya's education system. This level of educational exposure indicated that the majority of respondents possessed adequate literacy and comprehension skills to understand the research instruments and provide informed responses regarding security interventions and conflict resolution mechanisms in their community.

The substantial representation of respondents with Below High School education (67 respondents, 23.4%) indicated that a significant portion of the study population had not completed their secondary education. This could be attributed to various socio-economic factors prevalent in Lamu County, including limited access to educational facilities, early engagement in livelihood activities such as fishing and farming, or displacement caused by resource-based conflicts that disrupted formal schooling. As Maina, Limo and Keter (2023) [20] observed, conflict-prone regions in Kenya often experience lower educational attainment due to insecurity, displacement of families and the destruction of educational infrastructure during violent episodes. Despite their limited formal education, these respondents offered valuable grassroots perspectives on resource conflicts and police interventions based on their lived experiences.

Respondents holding Diploma Certificates accounted for 52 participants (18.2%), reflecting a notable proportion of individuals who had pursued post-secondary technical or professional training. This demographic typically comprised the individuals employed in semi-professional capacities, including teachers, healthcare workers and the administrative personnel who serve in Lamu County. Their educational advancement positions them as important stakeholders in community development initiatives and security matters, often serving as bridges between the formal government structures, including the National Police Service and local communities. Their participation enriched the study with perspectives informed by both professional training and community engagement.

The smallest segment of the sample comprised respondents with the University Degrees, totaling 28 participants (9.8%). This relatively low proportion could be attributed to the general national trends where university education remains accessible to a smaller percentage of the population, coupled with the tendency of university graduates to migrate to the urban centers in search of employment opportunities. In the

context of Lamu County, which is characterized by a predominantly rural economy based on fishing and agriculture the retention of highly educated individuals remains a challenge. Nevertheless, the participation of university-educated respondents added valuable analytical depth to the study, as they could articulate complex perspectives on the policy interventions, institutional frameworks and the effectiveness of National Police Service strategies in addressing resource conflicts.

Overall, the distribution pattern with High School Certificate holders as the modal category, complemented by the representation across all educational levels, suggested that the majority of the respondents were well-equipped to comprehend the questions being presented, owing to their educational exposure. The findings reflect Mukhalalati, Yakti and Elshami (2024) [22] who noted that the educational diversity within a sample ensures that perspectives from various literacy levels are captured, enhancing the comprehensiveness of the findings. Understanding this educational distribution is critical for interpreting the study's findings, recognizing potential variations in response quality, and designing appropriate data collection instruments for future research on conflict resolution in similar contexts.

4.1 Objective for the Study

After presenting and examining the demographic characteristics of the participants, this section concentrated on the presentation and analysis of the primary research objective. It is worth recalling that the study was examining the Extent to which community policing and nyumba kumi initiatives by the NPS contribute to the early warning and resolution of resource conflicts in Lamu County. The presentation of findings was based on the data collected from the field as shared by the participants in relation to this subject.

Table 2: The Extent to Which Community Policing and Nyumba Kumi Initiatives by the NPS Contribute to the Early Warning and Resolution of Resource Conflicts in Lamu County

The Extent to Which Community Policing & Nyumba Kumi Initiatives by the NPS Contribute to the Early Warning & Resolution of Resource Conflicts	Frequency of Mentions	% of Respondents
Improved Level of Trust Between Police and the Public	260	91%
Increased Frequency of Joint Security Meetings	221	77%
Enhanced Level of Citizen Participation	195	68%
Perceived Reduction in Conflicts	152	53%
Not enough availability of Resources/Support	92	32%

As indicated in the findings above in table 2, the most significant way community policing and Nyumba Kumi initiatives contribute to early warning and resolution of resource conflicts was through the improved level of trust between police and the public in police-community relations that enhances resource conflict management, represented by n=260 (91%). This was followed by the increased frequency of joint security meetings between the NPS and the community members improves early warning and resolution of resource conflicts, represented by n=221 (77%). At the third position was the enhanced level of citizen participation in community policing activities expands early warning of

resource conflicts, represented by n=195 (68%). This was followed in the fourth position by the perceived reduction in resource-related conflicts and security incidents, represented by n=152 (53%). And lastly, not enough availability of resources and institutional support for the community policing and Nyumba Kumi initiatives to lessen the resource tensions and conflicts, represented by n=92 (32%). These findings are discussed in the subheadings below.

a. Improved Level of Trust Between Police and the Public in Police-Community Relations that Enhances Resource Conflict Management

The analysis indicated that an improved level of trust between the police and the public in Police-Community Relations that Enhances Resource Conflict Management was the most frequently named contribution of the Nyumba Kumi and Community Policing initiatives. Trust acts as the cornerstone of these collaborative frameworks, replacing the historical skepticism with a cooperative partnership essential for intelligence sharing. By fostering confidence in the National Police Service, these initiatives encourage residents to proactively report early signs of resource disputes. Thus, the respondents identified the strengthening of police-community relations as the most critical element in effectively managing and resolving security conflicts in the region. A local community member from Lamu West provided some direct lived experiences...

"Things have really changed since the new OCS started attending our village meetings. Before, we used to hide information because we feared the police would favor the wealthy farmers in land disputes. But now, when there is a small argument about fishing boundaries, we feel comfortable reporting to the Nyumba Kumi chairman who contacts the police directly. Last month, a conflict over a dhow landing site was resolved within two days because the police listened to both sides and consulted our elders. This kind of respect makes us trust them more and want to share information early."

A Village/Nyumba Kumi elder offered some frontline mediation insights...

"I have been a Nyumba Kumi elder for three years, and the relationship between our community and the police has improved greatly. The officers now call me directly when they hear rumors about grazing or water point tensions. Two months ago, we prevented a serious clash between the Orma herders and the Pokomo farmers because the police trusted my early warning and came for dialogue instead of force. When the community sees police sitting with elders to solve disputes peacefully, they believe that reporting issues is worthwhile. Trust is what makes everything else work."

The verbatim responses from the respondents provided compelling evidence that the strategic shift towards community-centered policing has yielded tangible improvements in trust levels within Lamu County. The local community member's observation that residents previously "feared police would favor wealthy farmers" but now feel "comfortable reporting" indicated a significant restoration of legitimacy to the National Police Service. This finding

suggested that, the visible presence of the senior officers, such as the OCS, in the village meetings has dismantled the perception of the police as an aloof, elitist force.

However, a major challenge lies in the sustainability of this rapport, which currently appears heavily dependent on the individual personalities of specific commanders rather than the institutional policy. If these community-oriented officers are transferred and replaced by a leadership less committed to dialogue, there is a significant risk that the trust built could rapidly erode, causing the community to revert to their previous state of avoidance and secrecy. The scenario on the ground has shifted from one of avoidance to active engagement, whereas in the past, a dispute over a dhow landing site would have been handled through secrecy or vigilantism to avoid police extortion. The new reality involves the Nyumba Kumi chairman acting as a trusted bridge, inviting police mediation without the fear of arbitrary arrests.

The narrative provided by the Nyumba Kumi elder regarding the prevention of clashes between the Orma and the Pokomo groups highlighted the operational value of direct communication lines. The critical discussion here centered on the speed of information flow, where the elder's ability to "call the officers directly" demonstrated a functional early warning system that relied entirely on interpersonal rapport rather than the bureaucratic procedure. As Essia (2025) [6] stated united systems would benefit from better from mutual citizen and police trust and coordination due to better data-sharing protocols and joint response strategies. It was recalled of a scenario where when rumors of grazing tension arose at some water point, the police response was not a heavy-handed deployment of anti-riot squads hours later, but an immediate, low-profile arrival of the officers to facilitate dialogue before physical violence could erupt, effectively neutralizing the threat through soft power.

Furthermore, the elder's specific mention of police "sitting with elders to solve disputes peacefully" rather than arriving with force pointed to a cultural adaptation in policing tactics that was critical for building trust. This illustrated a fundamental change in the visual language of security in the region. The scenario transformed from the intimidating imagery of armored vehicles and tear gas which historically alienated the population, to a collaborative scene where uniformed officers sat on mats or under the trees alongside the traditional elders. This symbolic alignment of the formal law enforcement with the indigenous governance structures validated the community's cultural methods, thereby encouraging the public to view the police as partners in peace rather than agents of suppression.

The findings also corroborated the principles of procedural justice, where the perceived fairness of the process is often more important to the community than the outcome itself. By consulting with the elders and listening to "both sides," as noted by the community member, the police adhered to a standard of fairness that directly countered the historical narrative of bias. Critically, this shift addressed the root causes of silence in the community which the respondents indicated that, the removal of perceived bias towards the "wealthy farmers" or politicians was the catalyst that unlocked the flow of intelligence. This observation is strongly supported by the Organizational Legitimacy Theory, which argues that, an institution's authority is only effective when its actions are perceived as desirable and

appropriate within the community's social norms. By dismantling the perception of bias, the NPS effectively reclaimed its moral validity, ensuring that its interventions were voluntarily accepted by the public rather than being viewed as coercive impositions. Without this demonstrated impartiality, the Nyumba Kumi structure would likely have remained a hollow vessel, technically in place but operationally defunct due to a lack of genuine community buy-in.

Ultimately, these qualitative accounts underscored that trust was not merely a byproduct of the initiatives but the primary driver of their success. The specific mentions of successful interventions in fishing boundaries and herder clashes served as proof of the concept for the wider community. The critical implication of these findings is that the efficacy of the Nyumba Kumi and Community Policing frameworks in Lamu County was less dependent on the logistical resources and more dependent on the human element of building confidence. The respondents effectively argued that, the transaction cost of policing was reduced through trust, rather than spending resources on reactive suppression of riots, the police were investing time in preventive diplomacy facilitated by willing community partners.

b. Increased Frequency of Joint Security Meetings between NPS and Community Members improves early warning and resolution of resource conflicts

This section delved into the second most mentioned contribution, which was the increased frequency of joint security meetings between the National Police Service and the community members improves early warning and resolution of resource conflicts. These regular forums can serve as the operational platform for the Nyumba Kumi initiative, facilitating the continuous exchange of intelligence and the alignment of security strategies with local needs. By shifting from reactive responses to scheduled dialogue, these meetings can allow stakeholders to proactively address resource tensions before they escalate, making them a vital mechanism for effective early warning and conflict resolution. In the words of a Sub-County Commander respondent...

"We realized that policing Lamu from behind a desk was impossible, especially with the sensitive land and water issues here. I have made it a mandatory operational order for my station to hold bi-weekly security barazas in the hotspot zones like Mkunumbi and Basuba. These are not just talk-shops but they are our primary intelligence source. By meeting regularly, we pick up on the subtle changes like a sudden migration of cattle into farming blocks, weeks before a clash happens. It allows us to deploy proactively rather than reacting to a distress call when people are already injured."

Village/Nyumba Kumi Elder mentioned that...

"Before the Nyumba Kumi system was strengthened, we would only see a police vehicle when there was a raid or a body to collect. Now, we have a scheduled sit-down with the Ward Commander on the last Friday of every month without fail. This consistency has changed everything. It gives us a designated time to report which water pans are drying up and where the

pastoralists are moving their herds. Because we meet often, we do not let small arguments over crop destruction fester as we handle them right there in the meeting with the officers present as witnesses."

The Senior Police Officer's assertion regarding the "mandatory operational orders" for bi-weekly barazas revealed a significant paradigm shift in the tactical approach of the National Police Service in Lamu. This strategy from reactive to proactive policing aligns with the principles of intelligence-led policing, where consistent engagement acts as a sensor for community sentiment. It can be implied that, the previous security failures were largely due to a lack of presence and intelligence gaps. As informed on some instance where the Officer Commanding Station (OCS) moves away from the precinct and physically hosts forums in volatile areas like Basuba, instead of waiting for crime reports. The OCS uses these meetings to map out cattle migration routes based on community feedback, effectively neutralizing threats before they materialize.

The Village Elder's testimony that meetings now occur "without fail" on the last Friday of the month highlighted the importance of predictability in building institutional trust. When security engagements are sporadic, communities often view them with suspicion or as a reaction to a crisis, however, routinized meetings normalize the police presence. This finding suggested that, the regularization of these forums has created a stable administrative rhythm for conflict management. This has manifested in several cases where the farmers and herders have deferred retribution for minor offenses such as crop destruction, until the scheduled meeting, knowing there was a guaranteed platform for arbitration. The "last Friday" becomes a de facto court day where grievances regarding drying water pans are addressed collectively with the police as guarantors of the resolution. Both respondents emphasized the utility of these meetings as early warning mechanisms, transforming vague security concerns into actionable data. The Senior Officer's mention of picking up "subtle changes" and the Elder's reference to "where pastoralists are moving" demonstrated that these forums function as critical data collection points. The critical discussion centers on the seriousness of intelligence that can only be obtained through face-to-face interaction. However, a significant challenge inherent in these semi-public forums was the risk of exposing sources to retaliation, as identifying specific threats in an open meeting could mark the informant as a target for the aggressors. Furthermore, the reliance on verbal tips presented the challenge of verification, where personal vendettas could be disguised as security intelligence, potentially misleading the police into taking unwarranted action against innocent parties. A practical scenario involved an elder tipping off the police during a meeting about a specific influx of livestock from a neighboring county. And acting on this localized intelligence, the police then proactively deployed a buffer patrol to the specific grazing corridor mentioned, preventing a clash that a remote command center would have missed entirely.

The findings further indicated that the joint nature of these meetings facilitated a participatory approach to resource management. By having the police present as witnesses rather than just enforcers, the power dynamics of dispute resolution were altered. This corroborates findings by Rodgers (2021) ^[30] who argued that, the mere presence of

state authority in community dialogues adds weight to the local agreements. This arrangement addresses the enforcement gap often found in the traditional dispute resolution whereby while the elders can negotiate terms, they lack the coercive power to enforce them. The presence of the police validates the elders' authority, ensuring that agreements made regarding water access or compensation for crop damage are binding and respected by all parties involved.

Ultimately, the convergence of views between the security command and the community leadership underscored that the frequency of meetings was a determinant factor in stabilizing the region. The transition from ad-hoc crisis management to scheduled engagement allowed for the de-escalation of tensions at the micro-level. This observation aligns with the Conflict Transformation Theory, which posits that, sustainable peace is achieved not merely by suppressing violence but by reshaping the underlying social structures and relationships that fuel it. By moving from the episodic force to continuous dialogue, the meetings effectively are transforming the conflict dynamic from destructive confrontation into constructive engagement. The implication of these findings is that the frequency of interaction is inversely proportional to the severity of conflict. By institutionalizing these meetings, the NPS effectively has lowered the temperature of resource disputes, transforming potential security incidents into administrative matters handled through dialogue. This sustained engagement has proved to be a more effective resource conflict mitigation strategy than the episodic heavy deployment of security forces.

c. Enhanced Level of Citizen Participation in Community Policing Activities expands early warning of resource conflicts

This section explored the third most mentioned contribution, which was the enhanced level of the citizen participation in community policing activities. The success of the Nyumba Kumi initiative is fundamentally reliant on the willingness of the populace to actively engage in their own security architecture. The findings indicated that as citizens moved from being passive observers to active stakeholders, the capacity of the security apparatus to detect and resolve resource conflicts at the grassroots level was significantly amplified. A verbatim from a Junior Police Officer interviewed was that...

"In the past, when we conducted patrols in the villages, people would run away or look down and refusing to make eye contact. But now, the situation has reversed. Regular citizens, especially the boda boda riders and market women, actively flag down our vehicle to give us tips. Just last week, a shopkeeper whispered to me about a group of strangers buying large amounts of food supplies, which helped us intercept a group planning to encroach on the forest reserve. They treat us like partners now."

Local Community Member added that...

"We realized that if we leave security only to the police, we are the ones who suffer when the cows are stolen or the water is polluted. I used to be afraid to be seen talking to the police, but the Nyumba Kumi

training taught us that we are the first line of defense. Now, my neighbors and I have a rotation system where we watch the grazing corridors. If we see herders from outside the county, we do not wait for a fight but instead we report it immediately to the police post so they can handle it before it reaches our farms."

The Junior Police Officer's testimony highlighted a fundamental transformation in the operational environment of Lamu County, shifting from a landscape of social distance to one of active collaboration. The officer's observation that the citizens now "flag down our vehicle" indicated that intelligence gathering had become democratized, moving beyond the formal elders to include everyday actors like boda boda riders and traders. This grassroots participation effectively multiplied the surveillance capacity of the state without additional cost. A practical scenario has involved routine patrols that, instead of driving blindly through villages, they are acting as a mobile reception center for intelligence. An example was given where a market woman stopped a vehicle to report an unusual purchase of supplies, allowing the police to triangulate the location of potential forest encroachers and militants thereby converting a passive patrol into a targeted interdiction mission.

The Local Community Member's response revealed the psychological shift necessary for the effective community policing, which is, the transition from viewing security as a state obligation to viewing it as a civic responsibility. By stating, "we are the first line of defense," the respondent articulated a sense of ownership over their local safety that had previously been absent. This finding implied that, the Nyumba Kumi sensitization campaigns have successfully instilled a sense of agency within the residents. This has manifested in the formation of informal surveillance rings. For example, rather than ignoring a new group of herders entering a grazing corridor, residents now actively monitor these movements. In this scenario, the community acts as a tripwire, identifying potential resource conflicts at the perimeter of the village and alerting the authorities before the intruders can settle or cause damage. However, a significant challenge inherent in this heightened vigilance has been the risk of it devolving into ethnic profiling or vigilantism. If not carefully managed by the NPS, there could be a danger that communities may preemptively harass innocent herders based solely on their ethnic identity, thereby triggering the very resource conflicts they intend to prevent.

The intersection of these two narratives demonstrated that the enhanced participation bridged the "tactical gap" often found in resource conflict management. The community member's admission of previously being "afraid to be seen talking to the police" pointed to the dismantling of the stigma associated with 'snitching.' This shift is best explained by the Organizational Legitimacy Theory, which posits that constituents will only cooperate with an authority they perceive as morally and legally valid. By re-establishing their social contract with the community, the police have transformed intelligence sharing from a perceived act of betrayal into a legitimate civic duty, thereby reducing the social risk of reporting. The scenario on the ground has depicted a seamless handover of information where a shopkeeper and a farmer discretely passed

actionable intelligence to a junior officer during a casual interaction. This immediacy means that a dispute over a water point is reported while it is still a verbal disagreement, allowing for police intervention well before it escalates into the physical violence that typically characterized past conflicts.

However, this progress is not without challenges. The normalization of reporting carries the inherent risk of false accusations, where personal grudges or clan rivalries may be disguised as security tips, potentially leading to the wrongful targeting of innocent individuals. Additionally, in the communities where the stigma of informing has not been entirely eradicated, those seen cooperating with police may still face social ostracism or even retaliatory violence from aggrieved parties, thereby discouraging sustained participation.

Furthermore, the specific mention of diverse groups participating such as boda boda riders and neighbors having a "rotation system" suggested that community policing had permeated various social strata. This aligns with findings by Mutonyi and Pesa (2024)²³ who argued that effective community security requires a multi-sectoral approach. This broad-based participation has created a 'hostile environment' for any potential agitators, as there are no longer blind spots in the community. In a practical sense, was the one of the aggressive herders attempting to move cattle stealthily at night finding themselves exposed because the local youth and transport operators, who were active at those hours, had been empowered to act as eyes and ears for the security apparatus.

Ultimately, the data indicated that the enhanced level of the citizen participation served as a force multiplier for the National Police Service. The willingness of the residents to "report it immediately," as noted by the community member, drastically reduced the response time for security interventions. The implication of these findings is that the community has effectively become an extension of the police intelligence wing. By crowdsourcing early warning signals, the Nyumba Kumi initiative have enabled the police to act on real-time data regarding resource encroachment, thereby validating the premise that a participatory citizenry is the single most effective tool for preventing resource-based violence in geographically vast areas like Lamu.

d. Perceived Reduction in Resource-Related Conflicts and Security Incidents

This section presents the fourth most mentioned contribution, which was the perceived reduction in resource-related conflicts and security incidents. The findings reflected the respondents' assessment of whether the collaborative efforts between the National Police Service and the Nyumba Kumi structures had translated into a measurable decrease in violence over land, water, and pasture. This perception of improved safety serves as a critical indicator of the initiative's impact, validating whether the intelligence sharing and trust-building measures were effective. A Village/Nyumba Kumi Elder from Basuba ward, interviewed had this to say...

"I have lived in this area for over forty years and served as an elder for fifteen. In the past, every dry season brought bloodshed fights over water pans, killings over grazing boundaries and revenge attacks that would continue for months. We used to bury at

least three or four people every year from such conflicts. But since the Nyumba Kumi system became active and the police started working closely with us, I can tell you honestly that we have not had a single death from the resource conflict in this ward for the past two years. Small disagreements still happen, but they are resolved in meetings before anyone picks up a panga. The change is real as our women now fetch water without fear and our children graze cattle without armed escorts."

The Village Elder's testimony provided a longitudinal perspective that validated the efficacy of the community policing initiatives, citing a dramatic decline in fatalities from "three or four people every year" to zero in the last two years. This finding aligns with the ultimate goal of the Nyumba Kumi initiative which is, the preservation of life through preventive security. This discussion contrasts the historical prevalence of retributive violence with the current state of managed stability. A scenario was illustrated where in previous years, the discovery of cattle trespassing on a farm would have immediately triggered a violent raid by the farming community to seize livestock as compensation. But the current reality involves the aggrieved farmer reporting to the elder, who then engages the police and the herder for a non-violent restitution settlement. However, a critical challenge remains regarding the 'dark figure' of unreported coercion, where the weaker parties may be accepting unfair restitution terms simply to avoid some confrontation. In such scenarios, the reduction in reported violence might not represent true resolution, but rather the silencing of some marginalized individuals who fear that elevating the dispute could lead to retribution from more powerful clans.

The elder's specific mention that "small disagreements still happen, but they are resolved in meetings" highlighted the distinction between the elimination of conflict and the management of conflict. It underscored that resource competition in Lamu is structural and inevitable, but the response to it has evolved. This implied that the success of the initiative lies not in changing the scarcity of water or land, but in altering the community's reaction mechanism. This aligns with the Conflict Transformation Theory, which suggests that, the goal is not merely to eliminate conflict but to reshape the underlying relationships and structures that fuel it. By converting the lethal competition for water into a managed administrative process, the initiative effectively transformed the conflict from a destructive force into a catalyst for structured community cooperation. This manifests during the dry season when the water pans recede and instead of the herders forcibly taking over a well, leading to a standoff with pangas and arrows, the Nyumba Kumi structure facilitates a negotiated timetable for access, monitored by the local scouts, ensuring that competition remains administrative rather than lethal.

However, the findings also pointed to a potential fragility in this newfound peace. While the elder celebrated the current stability, the reliance on specific "active" systems suggested that, the reduction in violence is contingent on the continuous effort of current actors. There is an identifiable a challenge in sustainability, if the current collaborative rapport between the specific police commanders and elders deteriorates or even if the Nyumba Kumi structure faces funding cuts, the suppression of conflict could fail. Faroque and South (2022)^[7] indicated, the reasons that would

undermine the reduction of Resource-Related Conflicts and Security Incidents would be a lack of coordination among different stakeholders. As was mentioned of a scenario that involved a transfer of the cooperative OCS and the incoming commander reverted to a detached, enforcement-only approach, thereby the community's trust eroded, causing the "small disagreements" to once again spiral into the violent revenge attacks of the past.

Ultimately, the reduction in security incidents described by the respondent serves as the most significant outcome indicator of the study. The ability of women to "fetch water without fear" is a qualitative metric of security that surpasses arrest statistics. The implication of these findings is that the Nyumba Kumi initiative has successfully created a 'peace dividend' that directly impacts the socio-economic well-being of the population. Nevertheless, a major challenge is the susceptibility of this progress to the political interference, particularly during election cycles when the politicians often incite resource tensions to galvanize ethnic support. If these external political shocks overwhelm the local dispute resolution capacity, the economic gains made could be rapidly reversed, forcing the community back into a cycle of poverty and insecurity. By reducing the incidence of violence, the initiative has unlocked economic productivity, allowing the residents to focus on agriculture and trade rather than physical survival, although this stability remains vulnerable to external political and climatic shocks that could overwhelm the local dispute resolution capacity.

e. Not Enough Resources and Institutional Support for Community Policing and Nyumba Kumi Initiatives to lessen the resource tensions and conflicts

This section addressed the least mentioned contribution: not enough resources and the institutional support for community policing and nyumba kumi initiatives to lessen the resource tensions and conflicts. While the human infrastructure of the Nyumba Kumi system was acknowledged, the findings revealed a critical gap in the material backing necessary to sustain the operations. The respondents consistently indicated that despite the initiatives' success in trust-building, the lack of essential logistics such as transport and communication tools, severely hampered the ability of the elders and the police to respond swiftly to early warning signs of resource conflict across Lamu's challenging terrain. A Junior Police Officer (General Duties) interviewed had this to say...

"The willingness is there, but the tools are not. I cover an area of over fifty square kilometers, yet our post has only one motorbike that breaks down every other week. When a Nyumba Kumi elder calls to report tension at a distant water point, I sometimes have to wait two days for fuel allocation from headquarters before I can respond. By then, the situation has already exploded. We use our own money to buy airtime just to stay in contact with informers. The community sees us as lazy or uncaring, but they do not understand that we simply lack the means. If the government gave us even basic resources like reliable transport, radios and small allowances for the elders who help us, we could prevent most of these conflicts before they start."

A Nyumba Kumi Elder from Basuba mentioned that...

"We do this work voluntarily because we love our community, but it becomes very difficult without any support. I walk for three hours to reach some of the homesteads in my cluster and I have no identification card to show that I am an official elder. Sometimes people refuse to cooperate because they think I am just an ordinary person interfering in their affairs. We were promised reflector jackets and badges two years ago, but nothing has come. Even a small monthly stipend for transport would help us monitor the grazing routes more effectively. The government expects us to be their eyes and ears, but they have forgotten to equip us for the job."

The Junior Police Officer's testimony exposed a fundamental contradiction within the community policing framework: the existence of a willing human network undermined by a severe lack of operational capacity. The officer's revelation that response to early warnings was delayed by "two days for fuel allocation" demonstrated that the bottleneck in conflict prevention was not intelligence but logistics. The critical discussion here highlights the absurdity of a system that invests in training officers and sensitizing communities, only to have the entire mechanism stall at the point of action due to a missing resource as basic as fuel. However, a significant challenge arising from this scarcity is the emergence of 'facilitation corruption,' where officers are forced to demand fuel money from complainants before responding. This creates a two-tiered justice system where early warning is only acted upon for those who can afford to subsidize the police's logistical needs, leaving the poorest and most vulnerable community members defenseless against resource encroachment.

The Nyumba Kumi Elder's account further reinforced the systemic neglect of the grassroots actors who form the backbone of the early warning system. The elder's admission of walking "three hours to reach some homesteads" without any transport facilitation revealed the physical toll extracted from the volunteers who receive no compensation. This finding implied that, the sustainability of the Nyumba Kumi initiative is currently dependent on the personal sacrifice of individuals rather than an institutional investment. Nevertheless, a critical challenge inherent in this volunteer model is the high susceptibility of unpaid elders to co-option by the local elites or the wealthy offenders. Without a formal stipend to guarantee their economic independence, there is a substantial risk that financially struggling elders may compromise intelligence or skew dispute resolutions in favor of those who offer them 'allowances' under the table.

The lack of identification materials, as lamented by the elder, pointed to a legitimacy gap that directly impacted operational effectiveness. Without official badges or reflector jackets, the elders were often indistinguishable from the ordinary citizens, undermining their authority when attempting to mediate disputes or gather information. This observation is strongly supported by the Organizational Legitimacy Theory, which posits that an entity's ability to exert influence is contingent upon its perceived right to rule within a social system. By failing to provide visible symbols of state authority, the NPS inadvertently stripped the elders of the 'institutional validity' required to enforce most social

norms, rendering their interventions largely ineffective against the non-compliant actors. A practical scenario on the ground involves an elder approaching a group of unfamiliar herders to inquire about their intended grazing route; without any official insignia, the herders dismiss the elder as a nosy villager and refuse to cooperate. In contrast, an elder wearing an identifiable Nyumba Kumi jacket would command immediate respect and compliance, transforming a potentially hostile interaction into a productive intelligence-gathering opportunity.

Both respondents converged on the theme of being "forgotten" by the very government that mandated their roles. The Junior Officer's use of personal funds for airtime and the Elder's unfulfilled promises of equipment painted a picture of state abandonment at the operational level. This corroborates findings by Mwanza (2025) ^[27] who argued that community policing in Kenya often suffers from a gap between policy pronouncements and budgetary commitment. The critical implication is that the NPS has effectively outsourced a significant portion of its security function to unpaid volunteers and under-resourced junior officers, creating a fragile system that depends on the goodwill rather than the institutional strength. This arrangement is inherently unsustainable and leaves the entire conflict prevention architecture vulnerable to collapse during periods of heightened resource competition.

Ultimately, the findings indicated that the least-mentioned contribution, resource availability, was paradoxically the most critical barrier to the success of the other factors. Trust, participation and meetings are rendered ineffective if the actors cannot physically respond to the intelligence they gather. The scenario on the ground underscores this interdependence whereby a community that trusts the police enough to report a brewing land dispute and an elder who participates actively in monitoring, are both failed by a system that cannot dispatch an officer in time due to a broken motorbike or lack of fuel. The implication is clear that is, without a deliberate investment in the logistical infrastructure of community policing, the gains achieved in trust and participation risk being eroded by the frustration of a community that reports problems only to witness no response.

5. Conclusion

Based the findings of the study, it can be concluded that, that Community Policing and Nyumba Kumi initiatives have significantly contributed to the early warning and resolution of resource conflicts in Lamu County, primarily through enhanced trust, regular engagement forums and citizen participation. These factors have collectively transformed the security landscape from reactive enforcement to preventive diplomacy. However, the sustainability of these gains remains precarious due to severe logistical constraints and institutional neglect. Therefore, for these initiatives to achieve their full potential, deliberate investment in operational resources and the institutionalization of collaborative practices beyond individual personnel is imperative.

6. Recommendation

Based the conclusions of the study, the study recommended that, to sustain the current stability, the Ministry of Interior must operationalize a dedicated budget for Nyumba Kumi logistics and elder stipends. Addressing these material gaps

is critical to ensure that the actionable intelligence gathered through improved trust is matched with a rapid, effective police response capability.

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