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EFFECTIVENESS OF COLLABORATIVE POLICING INITIATIVES ON CRIME REDUCTION IN URBAN AREAS: EVIDENCE FROM GONGO LA MBOTO AND UKONGA WARDS, ILALA MUNICIPALITY

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ABSTRACT
This study examined the effectiveness of collaborative policing initiatives on crime reduction in urban areas, focusing on Gongo la Mboto and Ukonga Wards in Ilala Municipality, Tanzania. The article draws on the first two specific objectives of the wider study: to examine the current collaborative policing initiatives and strategies implemented in the two wards, and to assess the effect of collaborative policing on the reduction of specific urban crimes. A mixed-methods approach was employed within a case study research design. Quantitative information was obtained through structured questionnaires administered to 146 respondents, while qualitative explanations were collected through semi-structured interviews with selected ward and community security informants. Quantitative data were analysed using frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations, whereas interview information was examined thematically. The findings indicate that collaborative policing initiatives were implemented at a moderate level, with an overall mean of 3.271. Community security forums recorded the highest mean (3.500), followed by neighbourhood night patrols (3.363) and information-sharing arrangements (3.329). Public education through seminars (3.068) and the accessibility of the Ward Police Officer (3.096) were comparatively weaker. Regarding crime reduction, the overall mean was 2.952, indicating a moderate perceived effect. Half of the respondents reported improved control of youth-gang activities, while 53.4% disagreed that street mugging and robbery had noticeably decreased. Similarly, 49.3% disagreed that residential burglary and housebreaking had reduced significantly, and 52.7% did not feel safer walking at night than before the initiatives. Interview findings showed that collaboration improves local vigilance and the flow of information, but its contribution to crime reduction is constrained by offenders' ability to change their methods and locations, poor street lighting, difficult access routes and inadequate household protection. The study concludes that collaborative policing provides a useful community-based security arrangement, although its contribution to reducing urban crime remains uneven and conditional. It recommends strengthening regular community forums, improving the accessibility of Ward Police Officers, establishing reliable and confidential reporting channels, and combining community patrols with environmental improvements and household security measures.

Keywords:
Collaborative policing, community security forums, neighbourhood watch, crime reduction, urban crime, Ilala Municipality

1. INTRODUCTION

The responsibility for maintaining public safety has increasingly been understood as a shared undertaking between formal law enforcement institutions and the communities they serve. Conventional policing, which largely depends on police officers responding to offences after they have occurred, has gradually been complemented by approaches that encourage residents to participate in identifying local security concerns, sharing information and supporting preventive activities. Collaborative policing reflects this shift by recognising that police officers cannot independently observe every street, household or public space, particularly in rapidly expanding urban settlements where population growth and limited institutional presence place pressure on public security services.

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At the international level, collaborative approaches to security are associated with the wider objective of building peaceful communities and accountable institutions. The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 16 emphasises peaceful societies and effective institutions, while community-oriented policing approaches promoted by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services encourage partnerships between law enforcement agencies and local residents (UNODC, 2022; Office of Community Oriented Policing Services [COPS], 2024). In the United Kingdom and the United States, neighbourhood policing and community-oriented problem-solving have been used to improve police-community contact and encourage residents to contribute local knowledge to crime prevention. The evidence reviewed in the dissertation indicates that these arrangements can support crime prevention, although their results depend on the regularity of activities and the institutional support available to participating communities.

Across Africa, collaborative policing has developed in response to rapid urbanisation, uneven police coverage and the need to obtain timely local intelligence. Community Policing Forums in South Africa and the Nyumba Kumi initiative in Kenya illustrate attempts to connect residents with formal security institutions. However, collaborative arrangements also raise concerns about inadequate resources, mistrust, inconsistent participation and the risk that community volunteers may act beyond their lawful responsibilities (ISS Africa, 2023; Kyari, 2025). These experiences suggest that community participation is most useful when it operates within clear legal and institutional arrangements and is supported by accessible police services.

In Tanzania, the Government introduced Participatory Security (Ulinzi Shirikishi) in 2006, providing a policy basis for cooperation between the police and communities. Ward Police Officers, community security committees and neighbourhood watch groups are expected to support local surveillance, information sharing and crime prevention. Nevertheless, the existence of these structures does not necessarily mean that they are consistently active or that they produce measurable reductions in crime. The dissertation identifies continuing concerns about street mugging, residential burglary and youth-gang activities in peripheral urban settlements, where the availability of formal police infrastructure is limited.

Gongo la Mboto and Ukonga Wards in Ilala Municipality provide a relevant setting for examining this issue. The two wards have experienced rapid urban growth, unplanned settlement patterns and narrow access routes that complicate conventional motorised patrols. The dissertation reports that residents rely substantially on Ward Police Officers and community-organised security groups, while street mugging, burglary and youth-gang activities remain important security concerns. The central issue is therefore not simply whether collaborative policing structures exist, but whether the initiatives operating in the two wards are sufficiently organised and effective to contribute to the reduction of specific urban crimes.

Although previous studies have examined community policing and local security arrangements, the dissertation identifies a shortage of evidence on peripheral urban wards where collaborative policing carries a particularly important share of the local security responsibility. It also points to the need to distinguish between the existence of collaborative structures and their actual contribution to reducing different forms of crime. This article addresses that concern by presenting evidence from the first and second objectives of the wider study. It examines the current initiatives and strategies in Gongo la Mboto and Ukonga and assesses their perceived effect on street mugging and robbery, residential burglary and housebreaking, youth-gang activities, and residents' sense of safety.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The Government of Tanzania adopted the "Participatory Security" (Ulinzi Shirikishi) policy in 2006 to address rising urban insecurity. The ideal scenario, supported by the Police Force and Auxiliary Services Act (Cap 322 R.E. 2023), is that community security committees and Ward Police Officers collaborate to prevent crime. The specific expectation is that this partnership will lead to a measurable reduction in targeted urban crimes, specifically street mugging, residential burglary, and organized youth gang (Panya Buku) activities.

However, the reality in Ilala Municipality's peripheral wards sharply contradicts this policy ideal, as crime reduction is not being achieved. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) Crime Statistics Report for January–December 2025, Ilala District recorded 34,199 minor criminal offences, including 8,074 offences against state security and public tranquility. The situation is particularly acute in Gongolamboto and Ukonga wards, where the absence of a Class A or B police station forces over 100,000 residents to rely entirely on under-resourced informal groups. As a result, street mugging, residential burglary, and motorcycle theft remain persistently high, while organized youth gang activities continue to destabilize local neighborhoods. Recent research by Saidi, Nzali, and Ruheza (2025) confirms that the absence of financial resources and operational tools significantly undermines the ability of community policing to achieve measurable crime reduction in Tanzanian municipalities.

The failure to reduce these specific crimes has devastating consequences. Because street mugging and burglary remain high, residents live in constant fear. The inability of collaborative policing to curb youth gang activities has led to a breakdown in trust, with more than 52% of residents suspecting local security committees of corruption

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(Legal and Human Rights Centre, 2024). This frustration has fueled a rise in mob justice and extrajudicial punishments, further undermining the rule of law.

If this disconnect between national policy and operational reality is not addressed, the failure to achieve crime reduction will deteriorate further. Without empirical evidence to identify exactly which collaborative strategies are failing to reduce specific crimes like burglary and mugging, the government's investment will be wasted. The rate of these crimes will continue to rise, leaving vulnerable populations especially women and children at risk.

While existing literature discusses community policing in Tanzania, there is a significant geographical and conceptual gap. Previous studies, such as Mbwambo (2023) and Makwaya (2022), focused on urban centers with functioning police stations, failing to measure the impact on crime reduction in peripheral wards that operate in a "total administrative vacuum." Furthermore, these studies often treat "crime" as a single concept, rather than evaluating how collaborative policing affects specific crimes (e.g., burglary vs. gang violence).

Therefore, this study fills this gap by investigating the effectiveness of collaborative policing initiatives on the reduction of specific urban crimes (street mugging, residential burglary, and youth gang activities) in Gongolamboto and Ukonga wards.

1.3.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1) To examine the current collaborative policing initiatives and strategies implemented in Gongo la Mboto and Ukonga Wards.
2) To assess the effect of collaborative policing on reduction of Specific Urban Crime in Gongo la mboto and Ukonga Wards.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Social Capital Theory and Collaborative Policing

Social Capital Theory, popularised by Putnam (2000), explains how trust, social relationships, shared norms and networks enable individuals to cooperate in pursuit of common goals. In the context of collaborative policing, the theory helps explain why residents who trust one another may be more willing to attend security meetings, participate in neighbourhood watch activities and report suspicious conduct. The distinction between bonding and bridging social capital is particularly relevant. Bonding social capital refers to relationships within a community, while bridging social capital concerns connections between community members and external institutions, including the police and local government authorities.

The theory is relevant to Gongo la Mboto and Ukonga because the operation of community patrols and security forums depends on residents' willingness to cooperate with local leaders and police officers. However, strong relationships within a neighbourhood do not automatically guarantee effective communication with formal institutions. The dissertation also recognises the possible negative side of social capital: close networks may sometimes protect particular individuals or discourage residents from reporting people with whom they have social ties (Portes, 2022). Social Capital Theory therefore provides a useful basis for examining both community cooperation and the quality of the relationship between residents and the police.

2.2 Broken Windows Theory and Urban Crime Reduction

Broken Windows Theory, introduced by Wilson and Kelling (1982), argues that visible signs of disorder and neglected public spaces can weaken informal social control and create conditions in which more serious offences may occur. The theory draws attention to the relationship between environmental order, guardianship and public perceptions of safety. In urban neighbourhoods, poor lighting, neglected spaces, abandoned buildings and poorly maintained access routes may increase opportunities for offending and make residents feel vulnerable.

The theory is relevant to the second objective because collaborative policing is expected to strengthen local guardianship through patrols, community surveillance and information sharing. However, the presence of residents on patrol may not be sufficient where environmental conditions continue to provide opportunities for crime. The dissertation consequently uses the theory to interpret the difference between residents' recognition of community security initiatives and their assessments of actual crime reduction. It also acknowledges the criticism that Broken Windows Theory may place excessive emphasis on visible disorder while giving insufficient attention to structural factors such as poverty, unemployment and social exclusion (Sampson & Raudenbush, 2024).

2.3 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a structured analytical tool that serves as the theoretical roadmap for a research investigation. It visually and narratively details the presumed relationships between the study's core variables, providing the researcher with a logical structure for data collection and analysis (Swaen, 2024). In the context of this study, the conceptual framework is not merely a diagram; it is a synthesis of the theoretical literature reviewed above, specifically drawing from Broken Windows Theory, Social Capital Theory, and Social Disorganization

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Theory. It identifies the Independent Variable, the Dependent Variable, and the moderating factors that influence their relationship in the urban wards of Gongolamboto and Ukonga.

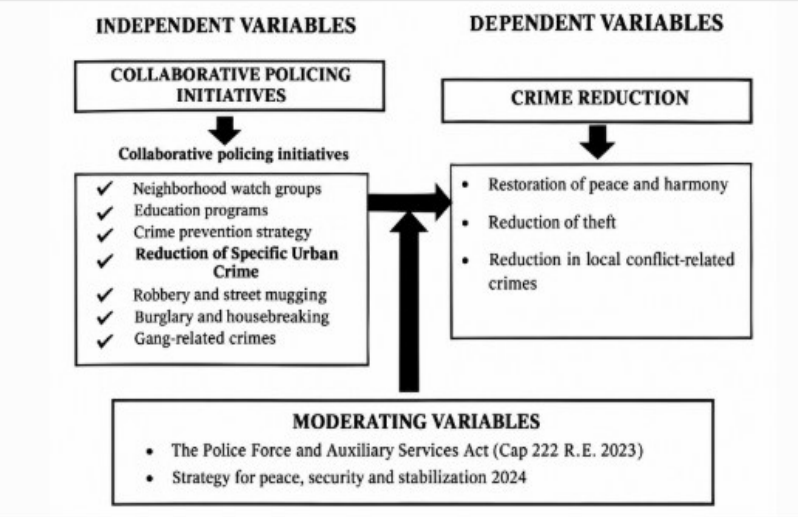


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework Showing How Collaborative Policing Initiatives Enhance Crime Reduction

2.3 Empirical Review

2.3.1 Collaborative Policing Initiatives and Strategies

Mazerolle et al. (2022) conducted a meta-analysis of 550 security initiatives in Australia, concluding that the SARA (Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment) model is the most effective framework for sustained urban crime reduction. The study provides robust evidence that systematic, data-driven problem-solving outperforms ad-hoc policing. However, its applicability to Gongolamboto is questionable. The SARA model assumes a baseline of analytical competence among local officers, an assumption that collapses in resource-constrained Tanzanian wards where personnel lack basic data literacy.

Slogan (2023) examined the impact of decentralization on police command through a longitudinal study of 1,200 residents in Chicago. The study demonstrated that neighborhood substations significantly enhance public satisfaction and accessibility. This finding is theoretically important because it validates the principle of proximity in community policing. However, Slogan's focus was exclusively on formal, state-funded infrastructure, leaving a critical unanswered question: can the same benefits be achieved through informal community structures operating without any state-funded physical presence?

Rogers et al. (2025) utilized a mixed-methods design with 400 participants in the United Kingdom to investigate citizen-generated knowledge. Their research revealed that residents identify crime hotspots with greater accuracy than conventional police data. This validates the value of local knowledge. Yet, the study was conducted in a high-trust, digitally literate environment. It does not address whether this knowledge can be effectively mobilized in contexts where historical mistrust of the police is deeply entrenched.

Kyari (2025) provided a regional benchmark through a case study of 150 local elders in Nairobi, evaluating the Nyumba Kumi (Ten Households) initiative. The study found that hyper-localized clusters were effective for counter-radicalization and intelligence gathering. While this demonstrates the potential of grassroots structures in Africa, it is limited by its exclusive focus on counter-terrorism. It does not address whether the same model can tackle the everyday property crimes that plague Gongolamboto.

Mbwambo (2023) provided the most directly relevant Tanzanian evidence through a survey of 200 police officers in Dar es Salaam. The study identified Ward Police Officers (WPOs) as the critical bridge between the state and the community, but argued that their effectiveness is structurally constrained by the sheer population size of their wards. Mbwambo's conclusion that a single WPO cannot maintain oversight without community support is compelling, but his reliance on police self-reports introduces potential bias. The community's perspective remains unmeasured.

The empirical literature on collaborative policing is dominated by a single, powerful consensus: the most effective initiatives are those that are hyper-localized and deeply embedded in the community. This pattern is visible across

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both the Global North and the Global South. In the Global North, Slogan (2023) found that neighborhood substations improved public satisfaction in Chicago, while Rogers et al. (2025) found that residents in the UK identified crime hotspots more accurately than formal police data. In the Global South, Kyari (2025) found that the Nyumba Kumi initiative in Nairobi was effective because it operated at the smallest social unit (the ten-household cluster), and Mbwambo (2023) argued that Tanzanian Ward Police Officers are effective precisely because they are physically stationed within the wards they serve. Mazerolle et al. (2022) provide a theoretical explanation for this consensus: the SARA model works because it requires officers to scan and analyze local problems, rather than applying top-down, one-size-fits-all solutions. The emerging pattern, therefore, is that proximity matters. The closer the security apparatus is to the everyday lives of residents, the more effective it is. This pattern is theoretically grounded in Broken Windows Theory and Social Disorganization Theory, both of which argue that local social networks are the most powerful deterrents to crime.

However, this consensus on hyper-localization masks a deep and unresolved tension regarding who should be doing the localizing. The literature is split between two incompatible models. Slogan (2023) and Mazerolle (2022) implicitly argue for the decentralization of the state, where formal police substations are planted in local neighborhoods. Kyari (2025) and Mbwambo (2023) argue for the devolution of security to the grassroots, where informal community structures become the primary apparatus. These two models are not interchangeable. Slogan's model requires a highly resourced state with the capacity to build and staff substations. Kyari's model requires a highly cohesive community with the social capital to self-organize. The literature has failed to address what happens when a ward has neither. Gongolamboto and Ukonga, which lack formal police stations and possess fragmented social ties, fall into this analytical void. The literature also exhibits a methodological blind spot: the strongest evidence for hyper-localization comes from stable, high-trust contexts (Australia, the UK, the US), while the African evidence focuses on specialized crimes (counter-terrorism) or relies exclusively on police self-reports. Ordinary residents are systematically excluded.

2.3.2 Collaborative Policing and the Reduction of Specific Urban Crimes

Bennett and Holloway (2023) conducted a meta-analysis across 18 countries, finding a 16% reduction in residential burglary in areas with consistent neighborhood watch schemes. The study is statistically robust but highlights a critical contingency: effectiveness depends on continuity and visibility. Sporadic patrols, such as those in Gongolamboto, are unlikely to replicate these results.

Govender (2023) provided urban-specific evidence from South African townships, finding that foot patrols reduced muggings by 22%. This finding is practically significant because it confirms that foot patrols are the only viable strategy in informal settlements with narrow alleys. However, the study relied on official patrol reports, which may overstate effectiveness due to reporting bias.

Magembe (2023) examined Gender-Based Violence (GBV) reporting in Dar es Salaam, finding a 30% increase following the introduction of collaborative structures. This is a crucial finding because it demonstrates that collaborative policing can improve the visibility of hidden crimes. Yet, it does not examine whether this increased reporting led to increased convictions or improved safety outcomes.

Lusekelo (2024) investigated youth gang recruitment in Tanzania, reporting a 15% reduction in wards with active community-police dialogues. This is highly relevant to Gongolamboto's gang problem. However, the study relies on self-reported data from community leaders, and it does not establish whether reducing recruitment actually reduces gang-related violence.

Kuen (2024) found in a study of 800 Singapore residents that increased police-citizen interaction improved feelings of safety even when objective crime rates remained unchanged. This distinction between objective crime and subjective security is theoretically vital. But Singapore's high-trust context makes it difficult to generalize to Dar es Salaam, where trust in the police is historically fragile.

Clear and Rose (2023) found a 20% reduction in reoffending among 350 ex-offenders in the US where communities actively supported reintegration. This expands the scope of collaborative policing beyond prevention to rehabilitation. Yet, the US has a formalized support system for ex-offenders that is completely absent in the Tanzanian context.

The literature converges on a robust pattern: collaborative policing effectively reduces opportunity-based property crimes, particularly burglary and street mugging. Bennett and Holloway (2023) provide the strongest evidence, reporting a 16% reduction in residential burglary across 18 countries. Govender (2023) reports a 22% reduction in street muggings in South African townships. This consensus is theoretically consistent with Routine Activity Theory, which suggests that offenders make rational choices based on the perceived risk of detection. When visible community guardianship is present, opportunistic offenders move elsewhere or desist. A secondary pattern is that collaborative policing increases reporting rates for hidden crimes. Magembe (2023) found a 30% increase in GBV reporting in Dar es Salaam, and Lusekelo (2024) found a 15% reduction in gang recruitment. The

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emerging consensus is that collaborative policing can deter property crimes and encourage the reporting of stigmatized crimes.

Despite this consensus, the literature is deeply divided on two issues. First, it cannot agree on whether collaborative policing reduces violent crime. Lusekelo (2024) argues that dialogue reduces gang recruitment, but no study has demonstrated that unarmed volunteers can deter armed criminals. Second, and more importantly, the literature conflates objective crime reduction with subjective safety. Kuen (2024) found that increased police-citizen interaction improved feelings of safety even when crime rates remained unchanged. This suggests that collaborative policing can function as a psychological placebo, reassuring residents without actually making them safer. If the residents of Gongolamboto feel safer but crime rates remain high, then the collaborative initiatives are failing at their core mandate. The literature has also failed to address the possibility of crime displacement. Govender (2023) and Bennett (2023) report reductions in specific neighborhoods, but neither study tracks whether crime migrated to neighboring areas.

The literature has never measured the effect of collaborative policing across the full spectrum of urban crimes (property crime, violent crime, gang activity) in a single African context. The studies are either geographically concentrated in high-income contexts or focused on narrow crime categories in Africa. This study fills that gap by measuring the impact of collaborative initiatives on property crimes, violent crime, and youth gang activities in Gongolamboto and Ukonga.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a mixed-methods research approach and a case study research design to examine collaborative policing in Gongo la Mboto and Ukonga Wards in Ilala Municipality. The mixed-methods approach enabled the researcher to combine numerical information on residents' perceptions with qualitative explanations from individuals involved in local security administration. A case study design was appropriate because it allowed collaborative policing to be examined within the social, administrative and physical conditions of the two wards. The target population comprised residents and relevant local security actors in the two wards. The dissertation identifies a combined resident population of approximately 103,431. A planned sample of 156 participants was established, comprising household heads, community security members, Ward Police Officers, Ward Executive Officers and street chairpersons. The quantitative findings presented in the dissertation are based on 146 questionnaire respondents. Simple random sampling was used to select household heads and community security members, while purposive sampling was used to identify key informants with relevant administrative and security responsibilities.

Questionnaires containing five-point Likert-scale statements were administered to household heads and community security members. The questionnaire items relevant to this article covered neighbourhood patrols, accessibility of the Ward Police Officer, community security forums, public education, information sharing and perceived changes in specific urban crimes. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected Ward Police Officers, Ward Executive Officers, street chairpersons and other relevant informants to obtain explanations of how collaborative policing operated in the study area.

Quantitative data were coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 27. Frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations were generated to summarise respondents' views. Qualitative information was analysed thematically by reviewing interview accounts, identifying recurring ideas and grouping related information into themes. The questionnaire was assessed through content review and pre-testing, while the dissertation reports an overall Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.826 for the 15 Likert-scale items. Ethical procedures included voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality and the use of collected information for academic purposes.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Current Collaborative Policing Initiatives and Strategies

The first objective examined the current collaborative policing initiatives and strategies implemented in Gongo la Mboto and Ukonga Wards. Respondents were asked to assess the regularity of neighbourhood night patrols, the accessibility of the Ward Police Officer, the existence of community security forums, public education and the availability of information-sharing arrangements. The results are presented in Table 1

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Initiative / statement	SD f (%)	D f (%)	N f (%)	A f (%)	SA f (%)	Mean	SD
Regular night patrols by neighbourhood watch groups	18 (12.3)	29 (19.9)	11 (7.5)	58 (39.7)	30 (20.5)	3.363	1.312
Ward Police Officer is easily accessible and interacts frequently	22 (15.1)	41 (28.1)	9 (6.2)	49 (33.6)	25 (17.1)	3.096	1.348
Established community forums or meetings on security	15 (10.3)	27 (18.5)	8 (5.5)	62 (42.5)	34 (23.3)	3.500	1.289
Residents educated on strategies through seminars	25 (17.1)	38 (26.0)	10 (6.8)	48 (32.9)	25 (17.1)	3.068	1.371
Functional system for sharing information on suspicious activities	19 (13.0)	33 (22.6)	7 (4.8)	55 (37.7)	32 (21.9)	3.329	1.332
Overall mean						3.271	1.330

Source: Field Data (2026).

The results in Table 1 show that collaborative policing initiatives were implemented at a moderate level, with an overall mean of 3.271. Community security forums recorded the highest mean score of 3.500, with 65.8% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that such forums had been established. This finding suggests that community meetings were the most visible and widely recognised arrangement for discussing security matters in the two wards. The forums provide residents with an opportunity to raise concerns, exchange information and communicate with local leaders and police representatives.

Neighbourhood night patrols recorded the second-highest mean of 3.363. A combined 60.2% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that neighbourhood watch groups conducted regular night patrols. This indicates that community members were involved in visible surveillance activities, although the proportion of respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed (32.2%) shows that the regularity of patrols was not experienced equally across all neighbourhoods. The standard deviation of 1.312 also points to differences in respondents' experiences.

The information-sharing arrangement recorded a mean of 3.329, with 59.6% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that a functional system existed for sharing information about suspicious activities. While this suggests that communication channels were available, 35.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. The result indicates that information sharing was present but not consistently experienced by all residents. In a community security arrangement, such inconsistency matters because residents may possess useful information but remain uncertain about where, how or to whom it should be reported.

The accessibility of the Ward Police Officer recorded a mean of 3.096. Although 50.7% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the officer was accessible and interacted frequently with residents, 43.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This relatively divided response suggests that access to the Ward Police Officer varied across the two wards or between individual residents. Public education through seminars recorded the lowest mean of 3.068, with 50.0% agreeing or strongly agreeing and 43.1% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. The result indicates that community education was less firmly established than security forums and patrol activities.

The interviews supported the quantitative findings by showing that collaboration was regarded as a practical necessity in areas where police officers could not independently address every security concern. One ward-level informant explained that residents provided information about suspicious movements and worked with neighbourhood leaders and security groups through patrols and meetings. However, the informant observed that participation differed between neighbourhoods because some residents feared becoming involved in conflicts with criminals. This suggests that the existence of a community security arrangement does not automatically guarantee consistent participation.

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Another informant explained that ward-level meetings were generally convened when security concerns arose. The meetings enabled residents to describe problems in their streets and allowed police officers to explain how suspicious activities should be reported. The informant also noted that some residents attended meetings only when a serious security incident had occurred. This observation helps explain why community forums received the highest mean score while public education remained comparatively weak: the forum structure was recognised, but its preventive and educational functions were not necessarily performed on a routine basis.

A street chairperson further explained that residents sometimes hesitated to provide information because they feared that criminals might discover who had reported them. Some residents also continued to regard security as the responsibility of the police rather than a shared community responsibility. These accounts reveal that information sharing depends not only on the availability of communication channels but also on trust, confidentiality and residents' confidence that reporting will not expose them to retaliation.

The findings are consistent with Social Capital Theory, particularly its distinction between bonding and bridging relationships. Residents' participation in meetings and patrols reflects cooperation within the community, while the uneven accessibility of the Ward Police Officer points to a less consistent connection between residents and formal security institutions. The results are also broadly consistent with Kyari (2025), who emphasises the value of local structures for intelligence gathering, and with Mazerolle et al. (2022), whose problem-solving approach highlights the importance of systematic analysis and follow-up. However, the interview evidence suggests that the two wards' forums are often activated by immediate security concerns rather than through a predictable programme of prevention and assessment.

Overall, the first objective establishes that the main collaborative policing initiatives in Gongo la Mboto and Ukonga are community security forums, neighbourhood night patrols and informal information-sharing arrangements. Their implementation is moderate rather than consistently strong. The main weakness is not the complete absence of community structures, but the uneven routine operation of public education, information sharing and contact with the Ward Police Officer.

4.2 Effect of Collaborative Policing on the Reduction of Specific Urban Crimes

The second objective assessed the perceived effect of collaborative policing on street mugging and robbery, residential burglary and housebreaking, youth-gang activities, residents' feelings of safety at night and the comparative effectiveness of local security initiatives against police-only patrols. The responses from 146 participants are summarised in Table 2.

Statement	SD f (%)	D f (%)	N f (%)	A f (%)	SA f (%)	Mean	SD
Noticeable decrease in street mugging and robbery	31 (21.2)	47 (32.2)	8 (5.5)	41 (28.1)	19 (13.0)	2.795	1.378
Significant reduction in residential burglary and housebreaking	28 (19.2)	44 (30.1)	9 (6.2)	45 (30.8)	20 (13.7)	2.897	1.364
Better control of youth-gang activities through community surveillance	24 (16.4)	39 (26.7)	10 (6.8)	48 (32.9)	25 (17.1)	3.075	1.359
Feel much safer walking at night than before the initiatives	35 (24.0)	42 (28.8)	7 (4.8)	39 (26.7)	23 (15.8)	2.815	1.425
Local security initiatives more effective than traditional police-only patrols	21 (14.4)	36 (24.7)	11 (7.5)	52 (35.6)	26 (17.8)	3.178	1.341
Overall mean						2.952	1.373

Source: Field Data (2026).

The overall mean of 2.952 indicates a moderate perceived effect of collaborative policing on the reduction of specific urban crimes. However, the results differ across the outcomes examined. The highest mean (3.178) was recorded for the statement that local security initiatives were more effective than traditional police-only patrols. A combined 53.4% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. This finding indicates that many residents recognised the comparative value of community involvement in local security, particularly because residents are familiar with the streets, people and activities within their neighbourhoods.

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The perceived control of youth-gang activities recorded a mean of 3.075. Half of the respondents (50.0%) agreed or strongly agreed that community surveillance had improved control of youth-gang activities, while 43.1% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This was the most favourably rated of the three specific crime outcomes. The finding may reflect the visibility of group activities and the ability of residents to identify locations or movements associated with organised youth groups. Nevertheless, the proportion of respondents who disagreed indicates that the improvement was not uniform.

Residential burglary and housebreaking recorded a mean of 2.897. A combined 49.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed that these offences had reduced significantly, compared with 44.5% who agreed or strongly agreed. The result suggests that collaborative policing had not produced a clearly established reduction in property offences from the perspective of a substantial proportion of residents. Similarly, street mugging and robbery recorded the lowest mean of 2.795. More than half of respondents (53.4%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that these offences had noticeably decreased, while 41.1% agreed or strongly agreed.

Residents' sense of safety at night also remained a concern. The mean score for feeling much safer walking at night was 2.815, and 52.8% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. This indicates that the presence of community security initiatives had not translated into a widespread improvement in residents' confidence when moving around the wards after dark. The result is important because residents' assessment of safety reflects not only their knowledge of patrols but also their everyday experience of streets, pathways and public spaces.

The interviews help explain the difference between residents' recognition of collaborative policing and their more cautious assessment of crime reduction. One informant observed that residents often notice suspicious movements before police officers become aware of them and that this information can assist response efforts. The informant also acknowledged that patrols had increased surveillance in some organised areas, but street robbery and burglary continued because offenders could change their methods and locations. Youth groups remained a concern, particularly where young people lacked meaningful opportunities.

A second informant emphasised the importance of the physical environment, noting that some residents felt more alert because of community security activities but still did not feel completely safe in areas with poor lighting and difficult access. The informant also indicated that burglary remained a concern where houses were not adequately protected. A third informant similarly explained that community members could identify places associated with criminal activities, but residents continued to report robbery and housebreaking, especially at night. The informant highlighted the need for stronger patrols, better lighting and faster responses to reports.

The interview findings suggest that collaborative policing improves local awareness and may encourage offenders to act more cautiously, but surveillance alone does not remove the conditions that make offences possible. The ability of offenders to change their methods or locations limits the effect of patrols, while poorly lit streets, narrow access routes and inadequately protected houses continue to create opportunities for offending. The findings therefore point to the importance of combining community-based surveillance with environmental and household-level crime prevention measures.

Broken Windows Theory provides a useful explanation for this pattern. The theory emphasises that guardianship and environmental order need to reinforce one another. In Gongo la Mboto and Ukonga, residents and community security groups contribute to visible guardianship, but poor lighting and difficult access routes remain concerns. The findings indicate that community surveillance may have a more noticeable effect on visible group activities than on opportunistic offences such as mugging and burglary. This interpretation is consistent with the relatively higher mean for perceived control of youth-gang activities compared with the lower means for mugging and burglary.

The findings partly correspond with Bennett and Holloway (2023), who identify the importance of consistent neighbourhood watch schemes in reducing burglary, and Govender (2023), who reports the potential of foot patrols to reduce muggings in South African townships. The present study, however, does not demonstrate comparable reductions. Rather, it shows that residents recognise the value of collaborative initiatives while remaining unconvinced that these initiatives have substantially reduced street and property crimes. The difference may be associated with the continuity of patrols and the environmental conditions in which they operate. As the evidence is based substantially on respondents' perceptions, it should not be interpreted as a verified change in recorded crime rates.

The second objective therefore shows that collaborative policing has a moderate and uneven perceived effect on specific urban crimes. Residents were more positive about the comparative value of local security initiatives and the control of youth-gang activities, but less positive about reductions in street mugging and residential burglary. The limited improvement in residents' sense of safety at night further indicates that community surveillance needs to be supported by environmental improvements and responsive formal policing.

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5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

The first objective found that collaborative policing initiatives in Gongo la Mboto and Ukonga were moderately implemented, as reflected by an overall mean of 3.271. Community security forums were the most recognised arrangement (M = 3.500), followed by neighbourhood night patrols (M = 3.363) and information-sharing mechanisms (M = 3.329). Public education through seminars and the accessibility of the Ward Police Officer received comparatively lower mean scores, indicating weaknesses in routine education and consistent police-community contact.

The second objective established that the perceived effect of collaborative policing on specific urban crime reduction was moderate (overall mean = 2.952). Half of the respondents reported better control of youth-gang activities, and 53.4% considered local security initiatives more effective than police-only patrols. However, 53.4% disagreed that street mugging and robbery had noticeably decreased, while 49.3% disagreed that residential burglary and housebreaking had reduced significantly. In addition, 52.8% did not feel much safer walking at night than before the initiatives.

5.2 Conclusion

The study concludes that collaborative policing has become an important component of local security arrangements in Gongo la Mboto and Ukonga, particularly through community forums, neighbourhood patrols and information-sharing practices. These initiatives demonstrate that residents are willing to contribute to the protection of their neighbourhoods and that local knowledge can complement the work of formal law enforcement institutions. However, the operation of these arrangements remains uneven, especially in relation to public education, reliable information sharing and regular access to the Ward Police Officer. The study further concludes that the contribution of collaborative policing to crime reduction is not uniform across different offences. While residents recognise its value in improving vigilance and controlling some youth-gang activities, the perceived reduction in street mugging and residential burglary remains limited, and many residents continue to feel unsafe at night. Collaborative policing should therefore be treated as one part of a broader urban crime-prevention approach rather than as a substitute for responsive police services, environmental improvements and household security.

5.3 Recommendations

1) The Tanzania Police Force, through the relevant Ilala police and ward-level authorities, should establish a predictable schedule for Ward Police Officer visits and community security meetings in Gongo la Mboto and Ukonga, and communicate the schedule to residents so that contact with police officers does not depend only on the occurrence of serious incidents.
2) Ward authorities and community security committees should use existing community forums to conduct regular public education on crime reporting, suspicious-activity identification, lawful community participation and the protection of residents who provide information.
3) The Ward Police Officers and street leaders should strengthen confidential information-sharing arrangements by identifying clear reporting channels, explaining how reports will be handled and taking practical steps to protect the identity of residents who provide sensitive information.
4) Community security committees should coordinate neighbourhood patrols with the police through agreed patrol schedules and clear procedures for communicating incidents, while ensuring that community volunteers do not assume powers reserved for law enforcement officers.
5) Ilala Municipal Council, in collaboration with relevant urban infrastructure authorities, should identify streets and pedestrian routes repeatedly associated with night-time insecurity and prioritise improvements in street lighting and access conditions.
6) Ward authorities and community security committees should promote practical household security awareness, including securing doors and windows, improving visibility around homes and promptly reporting burglary attempts, particularly in neighbourhoods where housebreaking remains a concern.

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