

[https://doi.org/10.52326/jss.utm.2025.8\(1\).11](https://doi.org/10.52326/jss.utm.2025.8(1).11)  
UDC 351.746:316.3:303(630)



## CHALLENGES OF EMPOWERING LOCAL COMMUNITY: THE CASE OF ADDIS ABABA POLICE COMMISSION

Dawit Habetegabrael\*, ORCID: 0009-0003-8136-6070

Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

\* Corresponding author: Dawit Habetegabrael, [zebruk333@yahoo.com](mailto:zebruk333@yahoo.com)

Received: 02. 20. 2025

Accepted: 03. 25. 2025

**Abstract.** This study probes the challenges to implement the strategies of community policing in empowering the community at *Ketena 09*, Addis *Ketema* Sub city. The sub city was selected after a comparison was made among the eleven sub-cities of police in the metro Politian. To make the comparison objective, the study used the crime statics reported in the past three years. Qualitative method was the strategy employed to meaning data from in-depth interview solicited from 22 key informants selected based on the eligibility criteria. Six residents, seven members of the ketene advisory council, and nine police officers were finally identified. Data gathered from in-depth interviews were analyzed thematically. The findings indicate that the community olicing structure begins from family police at the grass roots level and hieratically grows to block and ketene council. The challenges are misusing the community policing philosophies for political gain, labeling and silencing critical voices, misuse of power and disempowering the lower structure where the police are there to deliver services. The study recommends the government officials, police chiefs, and community policing boards to review the policies, operational procedures, and structural arrangements and develop research informed frameworks to free the implementation from unnecessary grounds and political influences.

**Keywords:** *Community Empowering, Community Policing, Ketena Council, Political Benefits.*

**Rezumat.** Acest articol analizează provocările de implementare a strategiilor de poliție comunitară în împuternicirea comunității din *Ketena 09*, orașul Addis *Ketema*, care a fost selectat după ce s-a făcut o comparație între cele unsprezece secții ale poliției din metroul Politian. Pentru a face comparația obiectivă, studiul a folosit statisticile criminalității raportate în ultimii trei ani. Metoda calitativă a implicat strategia utilizată pentru a însemna datele din interviul aprofundat solicitat de la 22 de informatori cheie selectați pe baza criteriilor de eligibilitate. În cele din urmă, au fost identificați șase rezidenți, șapte membri ai consiliului consultativ pentru comunitatea din *Ketena 09* și nouă ofițeri de poliție. Datele culese din interviuri aprofundate au fost analizate tematic. Constatările indică faptul că structura poliției comunitare începe de la poliția de familie la nivel de bază și crește hieratic până la bloc și consiliu orașenesc. Provocările sunt: folosirea greșită a filozofiei de poliție comunitară pentru câștiguri politice, etichetarea și reducerea la tăcere a vocilor critice,

folosirea abuzivă a puterii și dezabilitarea structurii inferioare, în care poliția are datoria de a furniza servicii. Studiul recomandă oficialilor guvernamentali, șefilor de poliție și consiliilor de poliție comunitară să revizuiască politicile, procedurile operaționale și aranjamentele structurale, să dezvolte cadre bazate pe cercetare pentru a elimina motivele inutile și influențele politice.

**Cuvinte cheie:** *Împuternicirea comunității, poliția comunitară, consiliul Ketena, beneficii politice.*

### 1. Introduction

Modern policing is the product of numerous reforms and changes made to modernize the police service since the medieval period. The social, economic, political, and technological advancements contribute to the development of police professionalism [1]. The ancient Roman era had considerable influence and is a trajectory on modern-day policing to the ancient period recorded in history. In England, Henry Fielding Bow Street Runner's establishment in 1748 and Peelian reform contributed to the development of modern policing [2]. Sir Robert Peel, a pioneer and the "father of modern policing" proposed a return to the Anglo-Saxon principle of individual community for preserving law and order [2]. The creation of the police wanted to limit the political and military nature of the new police, but the economic, political, and social nature was instrumental in helping them to achieve their aim [3].

Policing is characterized by crime control as the primary function, a centralized efficient organization, professional remoteness from the community, and emphasis on preventive motorized patrol and rapid response to crime [4]. The poor state of police-community relations, the need for a more diverse police workforce, the ineffectiveness of traditional police strategies, and the need for more flexibility within police organizations are at the forefront in police practices [4]. The interaction of police with the community through community policing, the only platform bringing both the police and the community on board to mutually identify and solve community problems.

The police community relation develops only the degree of engagement of the community in decision making. Partnership between police and the community refers to the joint working arrangements where the police, the business community, and other stakeholders collaborate in all steps of designing and implementing the strategies crafted to draw the concerted efforts in combating crime [5]. The main objective of this type of partnership is to determine community, police, and other agencies' needs through consultation to promote accountability, transparency, and effectiveness [6]. Mabunda [5] argued that applying the community policing model in the police practice will lead to a greater sense of partnership between the community and various units within the Police department. Community policing creates platforms and social networks to address the needs of a community. It is impossible to tackle crime solely by the police or any other single agency and maintain a holistic and partnership approach based on shared effort, information, resources, and expertise among agencies [5]. Crime problems are controlled by forming partnerships with groups, individuals, organizations, and other government agencies within the community [7]. In support of the above explanations, Mabunda [8] has further described that crime goes down when citizens, police, and other organizations work together in partnership. It requires commitment from both sides to make the partnership successful. Community empowerment and active participation are essential to mitigate the scarcity of

divers' resources gathering from the neighborhood community to solve crime and social problems.

The global movement in policing requested the global police to adopt community policing principles to be responsive against terrorism, trafficking in persons, and drug abuse. Community policing is a recent philosophy of policing urging police departments to establish collaborative partnerships to address crime and safety-related concerns at the grassroots level [9]. Community policing is an alternative approach to the conventional model of policing, which narrowly defines the role of police in terms of law enforcement and order maintenance [10]. Broadening the mandate of the police to assume a more proactive role is placed at the heart of the philosophy of community policing [11-12]. Accordingly, police are expected to apply strategies aimed at improving neighborhood conditions to enhance the quality of life of citizens in both rural and urban areas. However, achieving these goals demands the police establish a new relationship with the public by empowering community groups and individual citizens to participate in identifying and solving community problems.

Community partnership, problem-solving, and organizational transformation are essential components in the philosophy of community policing. Partnership refers to joint working arrangements whereby the police, the business community, the community in each neighborhood, and other stakeholders collaborate to design and implement strategies aimed at combating crime [5]. The main objective of this type of partnership is to determine the community, police, and other agencies' needs through consultation to promote accountability, transparency, and effectiveness. Mabunda [5] argued that the implementation of community policing will lead to a greater sense of partnership between the community and various units within the police department. Problem-solving, on the other hand, involves an interactive process wherein police and communities work jointly to identify underlying causes and solutions to community problems [11,13-14]. Problem-solving, then, can be viewed as a process of intervening to alter, change, or eliminate the exhibited problem [15]. Establishing partnerships and solving problems need structural transformation and change of operational procedures in the very nature of the structure of police departments. Organizational transformation in this context implies decentralizing the police service, granting bottom-line officers to exercise meaningful power, and receiving input from citizens.

Community policing has a brief history in Ethiopia. The philosophy is introduced to meet one of the objectives of partnering the police with the community to put the concerted effort of both parties to protect the living neighborhood from criminals, anti-social behaviors, and anomalies. On the one hand, different programs conducted to bring a holistic change in police services were in line with the Ethiopian Police Doctrine graduated four years ago to establish consensus on shared values to fundamentally prevent crime based on public participation. The presence of the doctrine especially helped to avoid misconceptions and misunderstandings about the police and future trends of policing partnering the community in identifying and solving the community problems. Addis Ababa police adopted the community policing model as a leading policing strategy to meet public demand and attain service improvement. The aim is to encourage the public to actively participate in decision-making processes to alleviate social problems and maintain order in putting efforts with the area police.

The community policing structure in Addis Ababa Police Commission (AAPC) at sub-city level includes three components; family polices, block structure, and *Ketena*/district advisory council. The family police constitute the smallest unit in community policing

implementation structure at *Ketena* level. The very reason of instituting 'the family' police in the structure of community policing to decentralize the police service down to the household level in order to facilitate a setting where problems are resolved without causing harm to the very family structure. Devolving actual power down to ordinary citizens is the other rationale of instituting family police in the implementation framework to document problems encountered and corrective measures taken at the household level. The block structure is in place to help the implementation of the community policing programs at the neighborhood level and it is responsible for mobilizing residents at block level. The advisory council is mandated to coordinate the efforts of residents while ensuring local peace and stability. This structure involves in mobilizing residents to raise funds relevant to building community policing centers at the *Ketena* level and identifying and prioritizing major community concerns at the *Ketena* level. The council serves as a liaison between community residents and the local administration. Community policing structures, particularly the *Ketena* advisory council, are crucial in making the police service accessible to ordinary citizens at the grassroots level. Second, the *Ketena* advisory council helps provide residents with the opportunity to control the way they are policed. The advisory council enabled residents to question the quality of services that the police provide at the *Ketena* level.

Though community policing receives high attention across the police departments in the country, the studies conducted to understand the role played by the community and police partnership are rare and inadequate. Hence, most of the knowledge about multiple aspects of community policing in Ethiopia refers to the implementation rather than examining the relationships between police and the community. The official reports produced by the police departments do not depict the actual status of community policing since the reports lack facts on the ground and empirically supported evidence. Similarly, the existing empirical studies are not enough to present the status of community policing across the country. Focusing on a smaller geographic unit, this study explored the challenges of police to achieve the community policing goals and objectives in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. More specifically, the study focused on examining the structural barriers demotivating the active engagement of the public in identifying and solving the problems of crime in the neighborhood together with the area police.

This article sheds light on the practical implication of community policing to understand the contribution posed by to reduce the trend of crime and public fear of crime in the study area. It is with this knowledge and understanding that the community and police align in partnership to safeguard and protect citizens from crime and unlawful deeds. To this end, the study provides valid information on the gaps not discovered in another research. The findings further contribute new knowledge to the existing ones empowering the community to participate in community policing practices meaningfully and actively. On the other hand, the results bring practitioners, policymakers, and researchers together to discuss the prospect of policing to fundamentally overhaul the police service to ensure citizens' voices and priorities are appropriately represented.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

The study employed qualitative design. Qualitative design is preferred when little is known about the research problem. This is due to community policing is not well studied, and little account of empirical inquiries exists in Ethiopia. Besides, qualitative approach is preferable to harvest an in-depth account of a phenomenon, or issues forwarded for a

phenomenon. Thus, this study intends to widely explore the challenges restricting the implementation of community policing introduced in the area police to prevent crime through fostering partnership between police and the area community.

This study was conducted in *Ketena 09*, located in woreda/district 08 of Addis Ketema sub-city, one of the eleven sub-cities in Addis Ababa. This area is one of the busiest areas in the city and known for hosting Africa's largest open-air market, *Merkato*. The neighborhood is well-known for its high volume of crime and in the top priority lists asking numerous interventions to reverse the crime rates. Because of the crime situation, for instance, *Ketena 09* was among the first few neighborhoods in Addis Ababa selected to pilot the implementation of community policing. Accordingly, the neighborhoods and the area residents are said to be lucky to have the project. Consequently, community residents and groups in *Ketena 09* are obviously in a better position to observe the challenges exhibited during the program.

One of the mechanisms to ensure the research validity was the careful procedure in choosing informants for the study. To select participants for interviews, this study employed purposive sampling to include informants with high expertise, meeting the minimum service of two years in *Ketena's* community policing office and three years in the community-based associations and advisory council. After the overdue selection, 22 informants (six community residents, seven members of the advisory groups, and nine police officers) were selected for interview.

Interviews were conducted in places and times chosen by the study participants. Special attention was paid to the interview setting to keep the study participants focused and attentive. The interview lasts one hour and thirty minutes. The data gathered from key informant interviews were analyzed thematically. The interview was stopped after checking the accuracy and level of saturation are preserved. Furthermore, the interview data were initially classified into the steps of data cleaning, checking the relevance, categorizing various proverbs in the form of narrations, and giving meaning. It helps to avoid unexpected biases that might be errors in the selection of the informants. Finally, themes and meanings were extracted to mark the information clearly and remarkably.

### 3. Results

This article assessed different challenges in implementation of community policing.

There is an agreed consensus among the study participants regarding the relevance of the government structures at the grassroots level in resolving community issues to safeguard the area from crime and causes of crime. The study participants argued that the willingness of the local government administration to grant official recognition to different voluntary youth associations operating in the study area is paramount. However, significant numbers of participants are skeptical of the neutral and honest commitment of the local government administration in implementing community policing programs. Informants highlighted their dissatisfaction resulting from the nature and quality engagement of local government administration to effective the implementation of community policing programs.

Exposing the block structures in community policing for political purposes was reported as the ones that eradicated the participants' trust to uphold collaboration with the local government administration. The pressure from government officials increases during elections. In this regard, it was indicated that politicians usually wanted to approach every household in the neighborhood, particularly during national and regional elections. The

community policing structure has better access at reaching every resident at the community level. This caused frequent unconditional moves from local government officials to utilize the existing structures of community policing to influence residents to elect officials serving the period of four years in the government office.

Grassroots community dialogue sessions are wrongly manipulated by the local government officials to enforce their political interests through imposition. Community residents are not interested in attending meetings facilitated by the local government administration for known reasons. Thus, there is a tendency among local politicians to use the *shay-bunna* (coffee ceremony) sessions to conduct election campaigns at the neighborhood level. In simple terms, there has been an increasing interest from politicians to use the *shay-bunna* discussion forums to guarantee the nominees from the ruling party to defeat elections at the neighborhood level.

Forcing residents to contribute money for different development projects is another way discussants criticized. The campaign is not genuine and is to benefit the ruling party's political elites in the name of development. Study participants indicated that local politicians usually appear in meetings at *Ketena* or block levels to force residents to raise money for infrastructure. They openly refuse the opposition parties to preach to the people for voting using the stage in place. The problem, however, is not with raising money for development but the intention behind the fact is indeed political. In this regard, it was indicated that residents in neighborhood have intentions to contribute money for public projects, e.g., Grand Renaissance Dam. However, they hate the personality of government rulers at the woreda level attempting to politicize the public activities. For example, politicians usually force residents to buy bonds to get promotions in the government offices. This, in turn, made members of the ruling party explore and use all sorts of structures to guarantee political promotions.

Hijacking the meeting agendas was the other issue informants agreed with. Hijacking the agenda is deliberate, and crafting the discussion points in line with the political interest of the ruling party is the task on duty. Residents at the grassroots level lose interest in meeting and discussing the public concerns with the politicians delegating the local administration and office of the party. Thus, different sectors from the local government administration repeatedly pleaded with the *Ketena* community policing coordinators to arrange meetings so that they could advance their agenda. This, however, is straining police-community relations. Moreover, study participants reported that community residents lost trust in accepting the community policing coordinators genuinely and positively. The declining number of residents attending meetings arranged by community policing officers is evidence.

Community policing encourages police departments to listen to the concerns and interests of citizens while delivering policing services. The purpose of police-community partnership is to facilitate the active engagement of all community residents and groups in identifying and addressing safety and crime-related concerns at the grassroots level. Study participants have reported that the existence of multiple community policing structures whereby citizens are encouraged to provide inputs towards the improvement of police service in the study area. However, study participants also identified several instances whereby the police and local government officials attempted to misuse the community policing structures to intimidate residents who are critical of the police and local government administration.

Community residents who criticize the police department and administration are purposely neglected and disregarded to a call in the community dialogue sessions at any level. Moreover, those critical voices are recorded in the blacklist by the local government officials and those who uttered the voices are denied getting services from the local government offices. Community residents, particularly the youth, usually participate when informal gatherings of religious and public events are organized to voice their grievances against the local government officials with the neighborhood community. The participant indicated that people asking critical questions are usually labeled as troublemakers by the police and government officials. The police are not willing and do not want those who publicly criticize the police to attend any public gathering involving community residents and government officials later. In some instances, the police attempted to lobby and intimidate parents and elders in the community to advise the youth to stop criticizing the police and government officials.

Besides, the politicians of the ruling party and the police misuse the family police structure by intimidating the family members critical of the administration and the police department. Police assign individuals from the family to formally communicate. The police often approach the family police representative to lobby and sometimes to warn the family member creating trouble for government officials and the police at the *Ketena* or district level. In this regard, the participants indicated that the community always curious about the family police structure and they further indicated that although every family has its way of raising and socializing with children and family members, police attempt to teach citizen how to discipline children and they advise to stop cooperating with other political elites opposing the ruling party. They opposed the relevance of extending the community policing structure up to the family level, suggesting that the family issues are private, and denying the right to privacy is breaching one of the core elements of human rights. The structure of family police is misused by the police and spying on citizens has been its major duty.

Community policing implementation in AAPC follows the decentralized structure to reach the police services across the city. Several implementation structures stretched from family to police commission operate to facilitate the engagement of residents in forums police and community prepare. Study participants agreed to work with the police to promote the notion that community policing implementations pursue a decentralized approach to delivering police services. Participants said the structures lack sufficient power to address community concerns at various levels. The decentralization process does not go beyond building service centers at various levels the same as most of the community policing structures at the grassroots level are not authorized to make any decision.

Study participants used the phrase 'narrow service scheme' to express their feelings on how community policing is not integrated and aligned with the service packages of other police units. Community policing units are merely operational in proactive problem-solving, and the reactive one is not encouraged in the community policing paradigms. It is; therefore, a paradigm shifts the city police are making to deter crime before it damages the life and property of law-abiding citizens. Most of the services delivered by the Addis Ababa Police Commission are provided to the people by other units and officers. Those who are providing services different from the police institutions are not graduates in police sciences and knowledgeable in community policing. This, in turn, brought up confusion and frustration among the public about the entire mission and directive of the police commission.

Participants further indicated that community policing centers are far away for some of the residents to easily access the district police get help from criminals, youth gangs, discourage visitors and informants. On the one hand, the services offered to the area community are reachable in the departments of traffic and crime investigations. The problem, as said by the informants, matches to access the community policing structures, forcing the residents to take a taxi or bus to cover distances. The worst thing, however, is not only the inability to get services in the nearby community policing centers but the entire environment looks different from how services are delivered in the Ketena community policing center. Study participants reported several accounts of unfriendly and, in some cases, impolite approaches while visiting the Woreda police station for some services. One participant reflected lack of uniformity among the police officers for the similar activity. Although community police officers in the neighborhood have been so friendly and easily accessible at the community, things will be a bit different at police stations. The police officers at the police station start to mistreat people starting from the entrance gate and they use abusive words and tend to label all visitors as troublemakers. As a result, the dwellers prefer not to go to the police station to seek any support.

Community policing implementations in the study area are marred by flawed and inconsistent organizational structures. The AAPC has made efforts to decentralize the police service down to the family level. However, the decentralization process has not been substantiated with sufficient decentralization or devolution of power to the lower implementation structures. The finding also revealed that the service package within the framework of community policing is too narrow to provide comprehensive police service. Community policing is implemented as one typology of police service, not as a philosophy governing the entire service provision of the police department. This can be seen from the organizational set up in which units of crime investigation, road traffic management and rapid response police are organized parallel to the community policing unit.

#### **4. Discussions**

This article presents three challenges to implementation of the community policing.

##### ***4.1 Political intrusion in the implementation of community policing***

First, this found out political intrusion in the implementation of community policing. Active engagement of law enforcement agencies is indispensable to create safe and peaceful neighborhoods for at least two reasons. First, many of the issues causing crime and insecurity at the grassroots level have social and economic roots detracting the attention of local government administration. Second, police departments at all levels are challenged by the scarcity of resources and budgets to mobilize the police officers and the community all the time to combat crime and other safety-related concerns. Hence, the engagement of the local government administration in ensuring a safe and livable neighborhood remained debatable. The political encroachments laid down by the local government administration. Hence, they agreed to devise informal strategies to counterattack the political manipulations among inhabitants. These strategies reinforce the *Ketena* community policing coordinators to communicate the agendas before every meeting at the *Ketena* or block level. Avoiding the meeting arranged for the political gain is the other strategy informants agreed to safeguard the true nature of community policing. Nevertheless, it seems impractical to control political interference through these strategies, given that those in the upper structure are politicians affiliated with the then-ruling party. The community is devoted to freeing the implementation

by empowering the community to enroll in the decision-making process actively and decisively. In line with these findings, empirical literature suggests political interference or manipulation has long been the major threat impeding the successful implementation of community policing.

Gaines [16] noted that community policing usually serves the interests of the powerful since the police leaders are under constant pressure from the political elite to tailor strategies to the mainstream or hegemonic ideology. Ikuteyijo [17] has further argued that the political elite in Nigeria use police officers and community policing structures to advance inappropriate political advantage. Debela et al. [18] reported that the political partiality of the police is among the factors inverting the successful execution of community policing in Ethiopia. However, Denny and Kassaye [19] and Di Nunzio [20] provided the most comprehensive and critical analysis of the nexus between politics and community policing in Ethiopia. Community policing implementation in Ethiopia has been developed and framed within a particular political context. Community policing implementations have been portrayed as an extension of the overall desire of the government to ensure political hegemony and control [19]. Community policing implementation in Ethiopia was framed by the ruling party aimed at political conformity among the youth [20]. The police community relations are decisive to buildup trust between police and the community [21]. Police practice is highly sabotaged by the ruling party to honestly serve the political ideology stipulated in their manifesto [22].

#### **4.2 Police Profiling and Sabotaging the Critical Voices**

Second, this article identified police profiling and concealing the critical voices. The tendency to marginalize critical voices is listed as the factors jeopardizing the community policing implementation in the study area in at least two ways. First, community residents are reducing their engagement and collaboration with the local police department since the police and local government officials are only interested in listening to positive remarks about their respective organizations. Second, the police and local government administration are among the major stakeholders in solving crime and safety-related concerns at the grassroots level. Avoiding critical voices means the police and local government administration are not interested in improving the service provision and solving community problems.

Findings of this study support the assertions Onyeozili [23] indicated that the police department and local authorities are misusing the community policing structures to silence and prosecute critical voices, which severely damages the reputation of the program and the police department in general. More specifically, Di Nunzio [20] reported that community policing structures in Addis Ababa have been efficiently integrated with the political structures to suppress anti-government sentiments or movements in major metropolitan cities such as Addis Ababa. Beyond political encroachments, undemocratic approaches from the police department and violation of human and democratic rights pull out the residents discouraging the residents to meaningfully participate in community policing implementation programs in Ethiopia [24].

#### **4.3 Power Centralization and Decentralization**

Third, this study assessed power centralization and the question of decentralization. Community policing in AAPC is organized under a special unit (community policing directorate). Thus, the responsibility to undertake tasks related to community policing such

as community engagement and proactive problem-solving are barely left for officers in the community policing directorate. On the other hand, there seems to be no change to the overall structure and function of all police units other than community policing. Accordingly, the police service in AAPC is delivered through police units having divergent philosophy and orientation towards policing: community policing and the conventional or traditional model of policing. This in turn is not only confusing community residents in the study. Rather, it is also demotivating initiatives of community residents to actively engage in community policing implementation in the study area.

Consistent with the findings of this study, Debela et al. [18] noted that despite the decentralized structures enforced in community policing in Ethiopia has not yet assumed a department-wide or full-fledged implementation. Moreover, according to Dempsey et al. [1], police organizations noted by continue to operate along with the values of the traditional policing model, and police officers and community residents at the grassroots level are exercising insignificant power in preventing crime and disorder. Moreover, it reported that AAPC has not yet attained genuine organizational decentralization to promote community policing structures to realize active and meaningful community engagement. Services are provided in a fragmented manner, and community policing structures are not comprehensive enough to accommodate the service needs of communities at the grassroots level [1]. Denny and Kassaye [19] further argued that community policing structures in Ethiopia employ a centralized command structure and, hence, the area community and police officers at the bottom are powerless to decide on crime and safety issues.

## 5. Conclusions

In this study, the researchers explored the structural barriers that impede the successful and effective implementation of community policing programs in Addis Ababa. The study highlighted the multiple challenges of police to bear the responsibilities while implementing the community policing principles. Political encroachment is the major challenge hindering community policing implementation. The political elite, at all levels, have been attempting to manipulate the community policing structure for political purposes. This may partly relate to how policing and the role of police organizations in the country had been portrayed across different regimes in the country. Since the inception of modern policing in Ethiopia, police departments have been designed to serve the interest of regimes in power rather than the public. This study also confirmed that politicians at Woreda/district and sub-city levels usually encroach on community policing structures to attain some political ends, despite the city-wide implementation manual clearly prohibiting any political interference in community policing structures. The implementation of community policing is highly intruded by the intrusion of higher officials and political parties. Hence, efforts from the government side to free the police from any form of partisanship should be determined and enacted to advance police professionalism.

The challenges of the implementation of community policing relate to the police dilemma and government rivalry to implement the strategies partly entailed in the wide range of the program. Manipulating community policing structures to silence critical voices is the other major barrier to paralyzing community policing programs in Addis Ababa. Stretching community policing structures to the family level was partly helpful in facilitating proactive problem-solving at household and neighborhood levels. However, evidence from this study suggests that the police are using lower implementation structures to restrain

residents, particularly the youth, from questioning and challenging injustices in the local government administration. The incumbent and political elites are demanded to emancipate the police from party politics to ensure the profession is independent and impartial while enforcing the law of the country.

Insufficient power granted to lower implementation structures has also further exacerbated the sound execution of community policing programs. The study identified that the geographic decentralization of structures is not substantiated by the meaningful delegation of power and mandate to the lower structures. In other words, organizational transformation is not achieved to merit the philosophy of community policing in informing the department-wide implementation within the context of AAPC. Hence, the mandate given to community policing is too narrow to allow community residents at the grassroots level to enjoy a full range of police services. Besides, all police units, other than community policing units, are still functioning under the influence of the conventional model of policing. This, in turn, is eroding community trust, active engagement of residents in community policing implementation, and the community empowerment process in the study area. Thus, the government, police officials, and other individuals well known by the community should meet and work on the gaps to better achieve in the future. The capacity development programs are necessary across the nation to enhance the awareness level of the community, public servants, various organizations, and public offices settled in the study area to safeguard the practice from rivalries and anti-peace forces.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The author declares no conflict of interest

#### References

1. Dempsey, J.S.; Forst, L.S. *An Introduction to Policing*, 2nd ed. Wadsworth Publishing, NY, US, 1999, pp. 213-224.
2. Wroblewski, H.M.; Hess, K.M. *Police Operations: Theory and Practice*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Thomson Wadsworth WA, US, 2006, pp. 314-317.
3. Emsley, C. *The English Police: A Political and Social History*, 2nd ed. Routledge, UK, 2014, pp. 127-132.
4. Cordner, G.W.; Scarborough, K.E. *Police Administration*, 4th ed. Anderson Publishing, UK, 1989, pp. 104-121.
5. Mabunda, M.M. Community Policing: A Model for South Africa. *UNISA*, 2018, 12, pp. 117-123.
6. Skogan, W.G. *Police and Community in Chicago: A Tale of Three Cities*. OUP, UK, 2006, pp. 131-134.
7. Crawford, A. *Crime Prevention and Community Safety: Politics, Policies, and Practices*, 5th ed. Longman, UK, 1998, pp. 215-227.
8. Mabunda, M.M. Community Policing in Practice. *UNISA*, 2014, 4, pp. 89-97.
9. Newburn, T. *Handbook of Policing*, 2nd ed. Willan Publishing, UK, 2012, pp. 114-145.
10. Wilson, J.Q. *Thinking About Crime*, 4th ed. Basic Books, UK, 2013; pp. 23-43.
11. Fridell, L.; Wycoff, M.A. *Community Policing: The Past, Present, and Future*, 6th ed. Casey Foundation, London, UK, 2004, pp. 32-40.
12. Kappeler, V.E.; Gaines, L.K. *Community Policing: A Contemporary Perspective*, 6th ed. Elsevier, NY, USA, 2012, pp. 49-60.
13. Eck, J.E.; Spelman, W. Problem-Solving: Problem-Oriented Policing in Newport News. *Police Executive Research Forum* 2019, pp. 175-183.
14. Goldstein, H. *Problem-Oriented Policing*, 2nd ed. McGraw-Hill, London, UK, 1990, pp. 44-49.
15. Bucqueroux, B. *Community Policing: The Next Generation*, 3rd ed. Anderson Publishing, London, UK, 2007, pp. 77-84.
16. Gaines, L. K. Community Policing and the Politics of Police Reform. *CJR* 1993, 18, pp. 13-26.
17. Ikuteyijo, L. The Nigerian Police Force and the Challenges of Policing Democratic Society. *IJPSM* 2009, 11, pp. 285-293.
18. Debela, B. K.; Teka, F. A.; Abebe, T. G. Challenges of Community Policing Implementation in Ethiopia. *EJSC* 2020, 6, pp. 67-89.

19. Denny, L.; Kassaye, D. Community Policing in Ethiopia: Challenges and Prospects. *JASS* 2013, 4, pp. 45-60.
20. Di Nunzio, M. The Political Economy of Community Policing in Ethiopia Policing and Society. *JASS* 2014, 2, pp. 471-488.
21. Demelash, B. Police-Community Relations and Public Trust in Law Enforcement in Ethiopia. *JPS* 2022, 10, pp. 215-230.
22. Workneh, A. Community Policing and Political Influence in Ethiopia. *AJPS* 2016, 9, pp. 99-118.
23. Onyeozili, E. C. Obstacles to Effective Policing in Nigeria. *AJCS* 2005, 1, pp. 32-54.
24. Yitayih, M. Human Rights Violations and Community Policing in Ethiopia. *EJIS* 2019, 7, pp. 88-112.

**Citation:** Dawit, H. Challenges in Empowering Local Community: the case of Addis Ababa Police Commission. *Journal of Social Sciences* 2025, 8 (1), pp. 157-168. [https://doi.org/10.52326/jss.utm.2025.8\(1\).11](https://doi.org/10.52326/jss.utm.2025.8(1).11).

**Publisher's Note:** JSS stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



**Copyright:**© 2025 by the authors. Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

**Submission of manuscripts:**

[jes@meridian.utm.md](mailto:jes@meridian.utm.md)