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### Barriers to Community Participation in Crime Control in Wa, Ghana

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#### ABSTRACT

In Ghana, despite the calls for the citizenry to participate in crime control to complement the efforts of the police and other law enforcement agents, communities' response has tended to be low. Against this background, this study sought to explore the factors which tend to hinder community participation in crime control using Wa in the Upper West Region, as a case study. Primary data were collected through focus group discussions and interviews from 46 respondents who were selected purposely in a case study design. The study found that: lack of basic working tools such as torch lights and boots; crime trade – the act of setting criminals free for monetary and other gains; breach of trust, and the idea of Tijaa-bunyeni (literally, we are all one or tribal brother/sister), are the major factors which militate against effective community participation. To sustain and promote citizens interest in crime control, the paper suggests that the security agencies and the media fraternity should sensitize the public to support the neighbourhood watchdog committees with basic working tools such as torch lights, batteries, uniforms, and boots. More so, police officers who divulge information confided in them to unauthorized persons or engage in crime trade should either have their ranks reduced, dismissed, or prosecuted depending on the severity of the issue. The outcome of such punitive measures should be communicated to the public to boost their confidence and support.

### 1. Introduction

Many cities across the globe are considered fragile due to their inability to guarantee and provide safety for their inhabitants (International Centre for the Prevention of Crime, 2016). The report indicated that urban crime poses great threat to contemporary cities, and as such, is a major concern of citizens and governments. Security and Defence Agenda (SDA) (2011) noted that the influx of people, many of them young, into major cities in the world, poses major new security and policy challenges to communities, police, and politicians. ICPC (2016) indicates that unemployment, harsh living conditions and alienation are forcing people into a fight for survival which often breeds insecurity. This according to the report creates a situation where local gangs, and organised crime are really taking control of whole urban areas. This development requires the mobilisation of huge amount of financial, human, time, and material resources by governments to maintain security, law and order.

The Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) (2015) estimated that the annual global public expenditures for the containment of crime - the costs of the government apparatus required to deal with crime and violent victimization alone in 2014 for instance, reached US\$1.989 trillion. This is a manifestation of how crime negatively impacts nations across the globe thereby necessitating a new approach to its control. SDA (2011) has stated that the social pressures and resultant crime in urban and peri-urban communities are exacerbated by a

lack of confidence in the police, who are regularly viewed as corrupt, and unwilling or unable to act. It concluded that technology alone is not a panacea to urban insecurity and that urban security requires an integrated comprehensive approach which involves partnerships between law enforcement officials, other local and regional authorities, the private sector, and international organisations. In this regard, Moser (2004) has recommended broad-based crime prevention approaches including community participation approaches. Community participation approach to crime control is conceptualised as the involvement of groups of citizens in addressing criminal threats which confront neighbourhoods (United Nations Office on Drug and Crime, 2010) which tend to undermine the health, livelihood, and economic prospects of people (Moser, 2004).

Wanda (2008) and Appiahene-Gyamfi (2003) intimated that, historically, the participation of communities has always been an important element in crime prevention and social control. According to Appiahene-Gyamfi (2003), prior to the advent of Western civilization and penal system, African societies had means of social control mechanisms which were enforced by council of elders, chiefs, and village heads. However, in contemporary times, crime is primarily controlled by various state agencies. For instance, in Ghana, the 1992 Constitution places the internal security of the country principally within the ambit of the Police Service (see Article 200).

Tankebe (2008), however, argues that crime is too complex a social phenomenon to be controlled solely by the police. This explains why the efficiency of the police as a law enforcement agency is in doubt. Consequently, community participation has emerged as a guiding philosophy in complementing the control of crime (Manaliyo, 2016) as it brings people to their toes and each individual serves as a watchdog to his/her neighbour through collaborative problem-solving approach in enhancing public and individual safety and security (Lersch, 2007).

Apparently, in Wa, the study locality, despite the calls for the citizenry to participate in crime control to complement the efforts of the police and other law enforcement agents, communities' response has tended to be low. The community seems to be blaming the police for their ineffectiveness. For example, Police visibility, a recent programme intended to stimulate public sense of protection through regular presence of the police in communities has been criticised by a section of the people in Wa as not helpful and described it as a 'police sleeping' concept (Ghana News Agency, 2014). The police equally blame their deficiency in controlling crime on low community participation. The question that this paper seeks to address is, why despite the emphasis on the need for effective participation in crime control, and the frequent calls by the police for community support, there seem to be low public response?

An understanding of the barriers to community participation in crime control is critical in today's growing concern for public safety (freedom from criminal threats). This is the niche of the study. Liebermann and Coulson (2004) have indicated that law enforcement bodies require the support from local communities who know their areas to fight crime effectively, which over the years is recognised in criminal justice theory and policy (Pattavina et al., 2006). This makes the contribution of citizens in crime control an essential strategy in meeting public safety (Wanda, 2008).

Apparently, in the Ghanaian context, scholarly works on the factors which militate against effective community participation in crime control are very limited. Dumenya (2017) and Marfo's (2016) studies for instance, focused on crime control from the perspective of the police, which according to the literature provides limited opportunity for public participation (Karn, 2013). Owusu et al. (2016) and Bagson et al. (2016) on the other hand, looked at the need for informal crime control mechanisms to complement and cater for the absence of the police, especially in urban communities. Their studies, however, did not closely examine the various factors which hinder communities from participating effectively in crime control initiatives as this study sought to do, which is envisioned as one practical approach of improving police-community relations and community perceptions, as well as meeting the security challenges of neighbourhoods which continue to battle with criminal activities.

## 2. Conceptual model

Manaliyo (2016) wrote that the voluntary and complementary roles by communities have helped in minimizing the vacuum created by the absence of the police and other law

enforcement authorities in controlling crime. Botterill and Fisher (2002) have argued that citizens' involvement in crime control initiatives enables societies to overcome financial challenges as community engagement is basically voluntary. It is in this regard that Vanderschueren (2013) has suggested the need for a strong partnership between the state and civil society in dealing with the growing demand of urbanization and the increase in complexity of crime. Botterill and Fisher (2002) however, express the opinion that to be able to sustain community participation in crime control, local communities need to be resourced with relevant skills.

Seemingly, a combination of cultural and contextual factors tends to weaken community-based crime control practices which invariably undermine the security and development of communities (Dukeshire and Thurlow, 2002). A study conducted by University of Ibadan (n.d) found that one major challenge which impedes community participation in crime control in Ibadan, Nigeria, was the issue of 'kin relation or settlement'. Kin relation demands that a relative or tribal folk should not be reported; information (intelligence) on him should not be given to the police. Flouting this principle, as found by University of Ibadan (n.d), is seen as an affront to tradition and ancestral relationships. What this revelation suggests is that people sharing similar kin relation are more likely to protect or shield a member who has committed a crime.

It has been documented that the horror of reprisal from criminals and lack of trust, prevent people from supporting crime control initiatives (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 2008). This development as found in Manaliyo's (2016) study, has prevented some residents and crime victims from reporting crimes to the police in South Africa. Kane (2005) in his study found that the perception held by the community members about the local police and other government institutions in New York City influences community members' decisions to volunteer in crime control initiatives. His study revealed that unprofessional conducts exhibited by the police such as poor working relationship, negatively influence community participation in crime control. This suggests that community participation in crime control thrives on trust building.

A study by Enshassi et al. (2016) revealed that lack of respect is one significant challenge which kills the desire of community members to cooperate with the police in the Gaza Strip Municipalities in Palestine. Additionally, studies conducted by Atuguba (2007), Faull (2011), Adegoke (2016) and Wekesa and Muturi (2016) among others, from Ghana, South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya have identified corruption and lackadaisical attitude of the police to crime situations and releasing suspects without charges as some major acts which tend to undermine any spirit of community participation in crime control.

The findings from these empirical studies suggest that the refusal to participate in crime control by various groups of citizens could be attributed to several factors. It can also be inferred that the willingness of citizens to collaborate and engage in voluntary crime control activities is contingent largely on the perceived conduct of the police (Scheider et al.,

2003). By implication, any attempt to address security challenges in contemporary societies with complex criminal activities will be an illusion without first trying to understand and address the barriers which separate the masses from the police. This in effect underscores the relevance of Cavaye (2010) Onion Theory of Participation which underpinned the study.

The Onion theory of participation likens community participation to an onion with several rings. According to this theory, in various community initiatives, we have few committed individuals just as an onion has a 'centre' or a 'core'. The theory posits that around this core are the 'participants' who provide support to the inventiveness of the core. The theory indicates that the 'observers', the third ring of people, normally may exhibit signs of interest in on-going development initiatives in their communities but decline to take part in the initiatives. The theory further states that the fourth ring of people, "the aware", are those who are conscious of the activities taken place in their community, yet they neither have the interest nor participate in such initiatives. The last ring, "the not aware", according to the theory are members of the community who have no knowledge of the activities taken place in their environment.

What Cavaye's Onion Theory of Participation suggests is that in any social setting such as Wa, the study locality, there may be several communities or publics. In this regard, while several communities (local actors) may actively participate in programmes/projects and policies affecting their own interest, many others may infrequently or passively involve themselves in local initiatives based upon the perception they hold about the police and their understanding of public safety. Besides, others with varying reasons, may not involve themselves at all in local initiatives which affect the interest of communities.

In applying Cavaye's onion theory of participation to the study, what is of much interest is how the efforts of the 'Core' and the 'Participants' - those who actively participate in crime control initiatives are hampered by various factors which invariably undermines community safety. The studies conducted by Faull (2011), Atuguba (2007) and Wekesa and Muturi (2016) among others from different countries, have identified several factors which tend to undermine any spirit of community participation in crime control. By examining and addressing these barriers, societies concomitantly may address the manpower needs of the police as well as security challenges of communities. As noted by Zhao et al. (2002), the participation of communities in crime control is voluntary and tends to supplement the scarcity of financial and human resources confronting societies.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Research design and study setting

Exploratory case study design was adopted in this study. This design was employed in that it enabled the researchers to gain in-depth understanding of the various factors militating against effective participation of communities in crime control in Wa from the respondents' point of view. Wa is the capital of the Upper West Region of Ghana. It is also the administrative centre of Wa Municipality. The Municipality

shares administrative boundaries with Nadowli District to the North, Wa East District to the East and South and the Wa West District to the West and South (Wa Municipal Assembly Report, 2016). The U.S. Government's Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative (2017), puts the population of Wa at 116,642 out of which 57,656 are males and 58,986 are females with an average household size of 5.3 persons.

The inflow of people in the study locality from other districts within the regions and across the country in pursuit of improved academic knowledge and the booming economic activities makes Wa Municipality a potential object of criminals (Marfo, 2016). Besides, the improved social amenities, averagely improved housing conditions, communication, and transport systems, have also served as pull factors leading to congestion and expansion of the Municipality towards the outskirts. The implication is that only small segment of the community is provided with police protection leaving a large portion unattended to (Dumenya, 2017). In this regard, crime can only be made a high-risk enterprise through the frequent physical presence of other community crime control actors who may always serve as guardians.

#### 3.2 Sampling techniques

Cavaye Onion Theory of Participation (2010) espouses that some citizens actively involve themselves in community initiatives. In the light of this, based on stake holders' analysis, the study cumulatively made use of 46 respondents comprising 43 crime control actors and three (3) key informants drawn from different backgrounds. All the respondents were purposely selected because of the crucial role they play in crime control and the promotion of public safety, and thus, have important information to contribute to the operationalisation of the study. Table 1 below illustrates the summary of the selected respondents.

**Table 1: Summary of selected respondents**

Identity	Males	Females	Total
Chiefs	6	0	6
Christian Council of Churches	2	0	2
Moslems/Office of the Chief Imam	2	0	2
Local Council Authority	5	1	6
Suntaa Nuntaa Women Association	0	8	8
PROTOA Officials	2	0	2
GPRTU Officials	2	0	2
Neighbourhood Watchdog Committee	7	0	7
Market Women Executives	0	2	2
Store Operators Executives	2	1	3
Health Officials	1	0	1
Ghana Police Service	2	1	3
Police informants	2	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>46</b>

Source: Field Study, 2019

### 3.3 Techniques of data collection and analysis

The researchers used interviews and focus group discussions to gather primary information. Aside the Suntaa Nuntaa Women Association (a self-help women association) and the Unit Committee Members, the researchers held 31 separate face-to-face interviewing sessions for the respondents with the aid of interview guide. Each interview session lasted approximately 25 minutes. The researchers, however, adopted focus group discussions, one each to solicit information from the Suntaa Nuntaa Women Association (eight discussants) and the Unit Committee Members (seven discussants) with the help of a check list. Each focus group discussion averagely lasted about 30 minutes. Primary data were supplemented by secondary information generated through critical review of journal articles and other official websites with the view of getting a broader picture of the problem which necessitated the study. Throughout the study, the consent of the respondents was sought. Likewise, the objective of the study was made known to them. The field work lasted for three months from December 2018 to February 2019.

Qualitative thematic data analysis was employed. The researchers identified and recorded passages of texts that were linked by a common idea. This approach allowed the researchers to index the text in categories as espoused by Gibbs (2009). The field notes were typed, whilst information generated through interviews and recorded with audio device were transcribed. The voices of the respondents were played where appropriate. Similarly, tables and quotes were used to present the findings where suitable.

## 4. Findings and discussions

### 4.1 Factors against effective community participation

The main aim of the study was to examine the factors which generally preclude the participation of citizens in crime control. The respondents were, however, first asked about their conception of community participation in crime control. The respondents virtually gave similar responses indicating that community participation in crime control involves all the assistance given by the ordinary citizens to the police to help improve safety of communities. Buttressing the point, the respondents cited direct neighbourhood watch or patrols, supply of relevant information on offenders to the police, the provision of financial and logistics support, and physical arrest of suspected and alleged offenders, among others, as how they contribute to crime control in the study locality.

The study asked the respondents about their motivation in participating in crime control. From the results, two broad views were expressed by the respondents. Twenty-eight (28) respondents were of the view that they form part of the major stakeholders in the study locality, and for that matter, have the duty to ensure that their communities are safe. Further 19 respondents attributed their participation in crime control to personal interest and safety. As Cavaye (2010) Onion Theory of Participation has espoused, these local actors who voluntarily participate in crime control initiatives and could be described as 'Core' and or 'Participants', have reasons for their actions. When the respondents were asked to identify the factors militating against effective community participation,

four broad challenges were recounted by the respondents as captured by Table 2.

**Table 2: Challenges militating against effective community participation in crime control**

Nature of problem	Responses
Breach of trust	25
Lack of basic working tools	7
Crime trade	15
Issue of 'Tijaa-bunyeni'	13

Source: Field study, 2019

#### i. Breach of trust

Trust is an essential ingredient in building a strong human relationship (Oluremi et al., 2014). Twenty-five (25) respondents were of the view that breach of trust on the part of the police is a major hindrance to any meaningful participation in crime control. These respondents expressed the view that often an information will be given to the police leading to the arrest of an offender. However, some police officers disclose their source of information making these informants targets of criminal attack. One respondent remarked:

*"I was narrowly saved when a group of young men attempted beating me up to the effect that I have reported them to the police as part of those who took part in a given violent act which occurred in my community. Indeed, I reported the people to the police, and no one knew about it except the police. Yet, these thugs got to know that I was the one who reported them. The police betrayed me. Even though I still assist the police in matters affecting the safety of my community, I am careful when dealing with them nowadays".*

The key informants admitted that mistrust erodes the confidence reposed in the police and tends to weaken citizens' level of participation in crime control. They emphasised that the police personnel have been trained in proper information handling and indicated that it is unfortunate that few personnel unprofessionally divulge confidential information confided in them to unauthorized persons. This is what one of them expressed:

*"As a human institution, occasionally, we receive complaints from the general public against some police officers who divulge confidential information to unauthorized persons. In all such situations, we do a thorough investigation, and those who are found culpable are sanctioned. The issue is that the public is generally not aware of what happens to police personnel who flouts the professional ethics of policing. In view of this, most people think that the police administration shields its own personnel who go wayward which is not true."*

The information gathered from the respondents is an indication that some police officers have betrayed citizens who supply them with relevant information on criminals by exposing them to the alleged offenders. This negative practice

has engendered mistrust and made those citizens objects of criminal assaults. This could explain why despite the frequent calls by the police for the citizenry to cooperate with them in controlling crime, the public response has tended to be low. Schanzer et al. (2016) in their study in America, found that policing agencies are unlikely to be successful in creating partnerships to address violent extremism and other related crimes until they establish trusting relationships with the communities they serve. They noted that increasing trust between the police and the communities serves as a platform for addressing many public safety threats including violent extremism, drugs, and gangs, among others. In their view, trust cannot be built without transparency which requires leadership commitment to community engagement and broad-based engagement efforts. What this means is that information, in this regard, intelligence management by the police, is critical in building trust and promoting a solid partnership between communities and the police in dealing with the menace of crime. Anything short of this has the potency to damage the police-public relation.

The finding from this study is in line with OSCE (2008) report which indicated that communities may be unwilling to assist the police due to fear of retaliation from criminals, or other forms of abuse and mistrust. Wekesa and Muturi (2016) in their studies found that due to certain negative practices including mismanagement of information, there is mistrust and low public confidence in the Police in Kenya. Manaliyo (2016) work equally revealed that due to lack of trust, some section of the public has no delight in participating in crime control in South Africa. This shows that breach of trust and the seemingly low public confidence in the Police are not peculiar to Ghana. This, however, is not to endorse such a practice which violates the professional ethics of policing, since it has been found to be detrimental to community initiatives in crime control.

### **ii. Lack of basic working tools**

Seven respondents identified lack of basic working tools such as torch lights and monetary incentive as one major issue which affects effective participation. A respondent by name Mr. Courage (pseudonyms or invented name) commented in a focus group discussion as follows:

*“We risk our lives by keeping communities safe through neighbourhood watch, yet, without any weapon. We do not have the needed basic working tools. We purchase torchlights and boots with our own money. Community members do not honour the voluntary contributions to support our work. This has profoundly reduced our number. Even though the police occasionally encourage us to continue in the work, we don’t receive anything from them. Our work as I have indicated is voluntary and the public should support us with their little monthly contribution”.*

The expression by Mr. Courage is an affirmation that members of the neighbourhood watch are dissatisfied about the attitude of both the police and the public as they only pay lip service to them. Working with such a spirit of discontentment, they may likely engage in crime trade with any suspected criminal in the course of their duty. This

assertion was confirmed by one of the key informants who indicated that some local crime control actors have been engaging in crime trade. The lukewarm attitude of the public towards the members of the neighbourhood watch may mean that most citizens still believe that crime control is the preserve of the government and therefore, have no obligation in such enterprise. This may call for a vigorous public education to change such a mentality. Crime control is a shared responsibility. A study by Schanzer et al. (2016) revealed that a successful approach that ameliorates crime and enhances communities’ safety in growing towns and cities, is contingent on transparent and solid partnership between communities and the police.

Given the fact that community involvement in crime control is purely voluntary as identified in this study, all the necessary motivations should be given to these local actors who risk their lives in protecting the masses especially in the night, for such engagement to be sustainable. As argued by Botterill and Fisher (2002), to be able to sustain community participation in crime control, local communities need to be resourced. The implication is that the public cannot expect much from these local crime control actors when they are denied of the needed basic working tools.

### **iii. Crime trade**

The study also identified crime trade – a situation where criminals are set free by the police for monetary and other gains, as another challenge confronting the people in their quest to control crime voluntarily in the study community. This view was expressed by 15 respondents. According to the respondents, in some instances, criminals who have been reported to the police or are arrested and handed over to the police are set free because the police negotiate and take various sums of monies or other benefits from them. A respondent remarked:

*“I once informed the police about some young men whom I suspected were dealing in stolen motorbike. The people were arrested and later set free. Upon my own investigation, I learnt the police took money from them. This system of crime trade is not the best and should be discouraged through severe punishment”.*

A key informant agreed with the respondents, condemned such act, and stated:

*“In 2017, two police officers who took money and escorted contraband goods were arrested. They first had their ranks demoted and subsequently dismissed. It is true that some few police officers may team up with criminals but once such act comes to the notice of the authorities, the affected officers are always sanctioned. This issue of crime trade is not only limited to the law enforcement alone but equally occurs among the local actors. I am not however, trying to justify this act. We must all be watchful to expose such behaviour which undermines any effective control of crime in our communities”.*

This finding is an indication that some law enforcement officers take advantage of crime situations to enrich

themselves by accepting monies and other gains or bribes, in what has become known as ‘crime trade’. This practice is quite a disincentive and discourages individuals who intend supporting the police in controlling crime. The danger is that some local crime control actors may be tempted to accept similar offers from criminals and refrain from reporting them to the police. This probably could explain why some community crime control actors engage in crime trade as confirmed by the key informants. In such situation, the overall community safety may be worsened. Receiving monies and other benefits from criminals and setting them free without allowing them to face justice amounts to corruption. Section 244 of the Criminal Code of Ghana, Act 1960 (Act 29), defines a bribe as any valuable consideration accepted before or after an act done by a public officer or a juror.

The finding is in line with the work of Faull (2011). Faull (2011) study found that series of allegations are levelled against the police for accepting bribes and releasing suspects without charges, and unprofessionally responding to crime situations. This finding is not different from an earlier study conducted by Atuguba (2007). According to Atuguba (2007), most Ghanaians are dissatisfied with the Ghana Police Service and perceive the police as among the most corrupt institutions. A recent explorative study by Amagnya (2017) involving 33 police prosecutors and one Public Director of Prosecution, equally found that corruption perception held among the public about the police in Ghana was relatively very high as affirmed by 75% of the respondents. Negotiating with criminals and setting them free for material or economic benefits by law enforcement agents and in some instances by local crime actors as revealed in this study demands a tactful approach in its control.

#### **iv. Issue of Tijaa-bunyeni (We are all one)**

Various communities in Africa have different worldviews which foster a sense of unity and peace among the people. One of such orientations held among some people in southern Africa is ‘Ubuntu’, an African philosophy of humanity and community (Skelton, 2002) which stresses on cooperation and discourages competition that could lead to division in any community (Masina, 2000). This study found a similar philosophical view, ‘Tijaa-bunyeni’ (literally meaning, ‘we are all one’ or ‘tribal sister or brother’), which is held by the Waala and Dagaaba, the two dominant ethnic groups in the study community (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). According to 13 respondents, *Tijaa-bunyeni* philosophy though promotes spirit of unity, nonetheless in some dimensions undermines effective crime control in the study community. These respondents indicated that offenders who share similar *Tijaa-bunyeni* philosophy are often protected by their kinfolks from being arrested and prosecuted in the law courts. Tiger in a moody manner expressed as follows:

*“This issue of Tijaa-bunyeni (he/she is my tribal brother/sister) must stop. In the name of ‘we are all one’, we shield criminals from being arrested by the police. Our traditional leaders especially, must stop this practice. Personally, I always alert the police any time I receive relevant information on any person engaging in any criminal act”.*

Another respondent shared similar sentiment by saying:

*“I know it is not easy for people to change their world view and styles of living. I still have the strong belief that if the police and the media fraternity continuously educate the public on the benefits communities stand to gain by helping the police in controlling crime, this act of protecting criminals in the name of Tijaa-bunyeni will be reduced. It is good that we must be one to ensure a peaceful coexistence, but such sense of unity should not translate into cooperate crime. Honestly speaking, this practice is not helpful in dealing with criminal threats in Wa”.*

The key informants corroborated what was said by the respondents and stressed that getting information and effecting arrest of offenders are often thwarted by this sense of ‘tribal sister or brother’. One of them remarked:

*“I remember not quite long the police went out to effect an arrest. Upon an enquiry, they were told by a group of people that the suspect had escaped. Apparently, the suspect was with them, but they misled the police that the suspect was not available because he shared similar view with them. Just as the police were returning, they saw one person running and upon a second enquiry from another person, they were informed that the suspect was the one running away. If the public will not cooperate with us but rather continue to protect criminals because they think they are all one, then I am afraid it will be difficult for the police to control and maintain law and order as expected. The public must seriously be educated to refrain from protecting criminals and allowing them to escape justice. Honestly speaking, it is a problem to us here in Wa”.*

By inference, the study found that kinship fosters a sense of communality among kin groups which is productive to community sense of belongingness and peace as gathered from the respondents. Writing about the strong force of kinship, Nukunya (2003) found that among the Ashanti of Ghana for instance, those who share similar clanship do have much in common and behave towards one another with greater consideration than would have been the case if they were not so related. He argues this is particularly so with chiefs for whom common clanship can be the source of very close ties. On the contrary, the study found that, this idea of communality has been negatively applied by a section of the community to shield their kinfolks who indulge in criminal practices. This of course, is counterproductive to any meaningful crime control approach and community’s sense of safety.

This finding from the study is not different from the revelation in a study conducted by Ibadan University (n.d) among eight communities in Ibadan, Nigeria. The study found that one major practice which affects community participation in crime control was the issue of ‘kin relation or settlement’. According to kin-based settlement, reporting kin to the police or giving out information on him/her is seen as an offence to tradition and ancestral relationship. What this

finding suggests is that people who share similar *Tijaa-bunyeni* philosophy or other philosophical orientations in the study locality are more likely not to report their kinsfolks in connection with criminal matters as they may be considered as traitors. Another implication is that the strong sense of oneness that exists among a given group of people can be both productive and dysfunctional to communities' sense of safety and peace building. To be able to deal with the negative influence of kin relation in criminal matters, intensive education is required to orient the public about the dangers of shielding or protecting criminals.

## 5. Conclusion and recommendations

This study has found that various factors notably, breach of trust, crime trade and 'Tijaa-bunyeni' philosophy militate against the efforts of community members in their attempt to participate in crime control in the study community. Understanding and addressing these barriers is one surest way of encouraging those citizens who volunteer to complement the efforts of the police. With this, the security situation in the study locality could be improved as effective crime control thrives on strong partnership between the police and communities. Based on the findings, the study recommends the following:

At the national level, periodic in-service training should be given to the police personnel by the police administration and other security experts to help transform their conduct of operation and attitude to the public. Similarly, police officers who engage in crime trade and divulge information confided in them to unauthorized persons by the community actors should either be summarily dismissed or have their ranks reduced, or should be prosecuted, depending on the severity of the issue. The outcome of such punitive measures should be communicated to the public to boost their confidence and trust.

The media fraternity, as well as other stakeholders should encourage the public to support the community actors especially the neighbourhood watchdog committees with a token of money and other basic tools such as torch lights, batteries, uniforms, and boots as their work is purely voluntary. More so, the police and the media should periodically educate the public on the dangers of shielding criminals as this invariably undermines their own safety.

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