





Research Article

# Future Role of Digital Platform of Community Policing in Malawi

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## Abstract

Internet evolution and digital platform popularity have revolutionized citizens participation in public security administration. However, digital platform ecosystem and functionality remains underexplored. Study examines the future role of digital platform for citizens participation in community policing in Malawi. Within frame work of exploratory sequential mixed methods, focus group discussion interviews purposively selected four groups of 10 respondents each, and used interview guide for data collection. Survey randomly sampled 432 households using Yamene (1969) formular to distribute structured questionnaires for data collection. Interviews were written on script then coded, later grouped into sub themes and finally into themes which corresponded to research questions aided by NVivo application. The survey was analyzed through SPSS version 20 to come up with descriptive statistics. Using pragmatics philosophical paradigm, broken window, democratic participation and social-disorganization theories, the study revealed that citizens may be encouraged to participate on digital platform in community policing by; (a) providing training to citizens on digital crime prevention and safety measures, (b) offering incentives or rewards to citizens who participate in neighborhood safety and security digital initiatives, (c) using social media and other digital platforms to raise awareness and encourage citizen participation, (d) creating more opportunities for citizen-police collaboration and dialogue through social media. Multinomial logistic regression shows gender may have impact on the future role of digital platform of community policing; (i) gain communications between police and community, (ii) detect a wider variety of insecurities (Transparency), (iii) promote the effective use of limited resources, (iv) move beyond the customary bureaucratic procedures at  $p=.017$ , (v) gain participation of women, minorities, and vulnerable population at  $p=.459$ , (vi) contribute to empowerment of the community at  $p=.003$ . Solutions to challenges of digital platform of community policing use are; (1) awareness (Sensitization) Campaign, (2) capacity building on the usage of ICT tools, (3) make available ICT merchant selling and maintenance points, (4) usage of Solar Powered ICT and (5) Place coordinated governance mechanisms. While previous scholars have argued that digital platform has allowed formal and non-formal wide participation, as well as increase transparency and accountability to police officers in handling policing issues and empowering citizens to take part in security of their times. Current revelation points that harnessing and promotion of digital platform gives chance to revolution for transformation that may influence accountability of public security administration to provide quality public services for better life to the challenges of the time.

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## Keywords

Digital Platform of Community Policing, Empowerment, Security Transformation, Revolution, Future Role, Challenges/Obstacles and Solutions, Encouraging Participation

## 1. Introduction

The quest for Malawi Vision 2063 is timely, considering country's stride progress in a number of areas inclusive improved uptake of mobile phone technology use. Participation through digital platform may help the acceleration of national transition to an upper middle-income economy status by creating a vibrant knowledge-based digital economy [16].

Malawi aims to breed responsive, open and transparent public security services that engage citizen, to participate with ethical conduct allowing innovation and openness to change. Furthermore, citizens participation through digital platform will promote and enhance the demand for accountability and contribute to the curbing and eradication of corrupt practices. Malawians must harness new technologies, including the use of digital platforms in public security [16].

Empowered citizens are able to promote respect of rule of law and harmonious co-existence that will promote attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 16: Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies [19]. The study focuses on what would be the future role of Digital platforms of community policing in Malawi?

### *Background information*

In South Korea Jang and Gim, conducted a study using Delphi survey, results indicate citizens are encouraged to participate in digital interactions when there is digital Service accessibility. Digital inequality marginalizes participation opportunities for information disadvantaged groups [8] in how to build social cohesion, collective efficacy as well as community guardianship in their neighborhood's security [8-11].

Williams *et al.*, reveal that healthy services through issued smartphones to patients advanced chronic condition handling, reduced disparities in health care and hospital readmissions, and gained quality of life [24]. Structured stakeholders feedback mechanisms are likely to identify challenges and solutions to digital care engagement [24]. Creating flexible and scalable solutions to technology related challenges will increase equity in accessing digital care and support more effective engagement of chronically ill population in the use of these digital care tools [24].

Lebezova and Ovcharenko report that, refining the interaction between population and the state may help advance citizens participation in public governance [14]. Research indicate that improvement of tools and channels of e-participation may gain the quality development of democracy and public governance [14]. Study results inspired authors to construct a

conceptual model as a tool for researching and optimizing the channels and technologies of digital participation [14]. Using this tool in the projects to develop information platforms for digital interaction of society and government authorities will allow perfecting their design and increasing quantity and quality of digital participation [14].

Shin *et al.*, systematically examined the dynamics and trend of digital platform tools to facilitate the flows of information from citizens to governments using advanced technologies [22]. Study assembled a comprehensive dataset of 116 digital tools from three public repositories [22]. Under the collective intelligence genome framework, adopted for the e-participation context. However, a prominent deficiency was identified in disseminating accountability information to citizens regarding how policy decisions are made, realized, and assessed [22]. Study recommends emphasis on democratic aspects, such as equity, equality, freedom of expression, representation, civic education and empowerment-all are crucial for measuring quality of e-participation [22].

Wilson and Tewdwr-Jones, claim there is longstanding objective for governments, communities and academy to enhance the role of citizens in shaping places [25]. Although a range of techniques has been developed by the state to give people an opportunity to get involved, these methods often struggle to create a meaningful way to communicate aspirations for places on citizens terms [25]. Jigs Audio device that allowed participants to share place views and aspirations beyond more traditional government engagement methods, is an open-source device fabricated by authors that encourages people to express themselves creatively through drawing and talking [25]. The research contributes to the understanding of how accessible and free technologies can reduce barriers to participation, whilst encouraging creativity and expression when talking about the future of places [25]. Technologies that embrace the multiple dimensions of feelings and aspirations of places could provide opportunities for richer and more considered representations, and serve to help people express more experiential accounts [25].

Esau, in the study addresses the role of citizens persona narratives and emotions on articulating personal and social values [3]. People can discuss security and universalism hence citizens narratives and emotions reveal social values that should become part of the deliberation process in order to be included in decision making [3]. Citizen's arguments and values could be a resource for understanding what exactly citizens define as a problem and

what they expect from places and administrative political staff [3]. This may empower citizens to transform their security lives because citizens know their lives, experiences and emotions better than they know scientific facts; they are experts of their everyday lives [3]. Citizens digital participation should allow democratic values to promote reciprocal partnership [3].

Clavell *et al.*, in a study in Spain, through desk research activities and empirical field work using interviews, results indicate that police officers see use of digital platform in community policing generating certain confusion as participants feel it moves at a fast pace difficult to keep up with, which raises some new challenges related to privacy and fundamental rights amongst citizens [1]. It needs, relevance, empowerment, stakeholders, context, trust, agency and participation, safety first, anonymity, social media, accessibility and resources [1]. However, Habermas and Petropoulos in United States of America, caution that the concept of “Universal value” must be redefined to give full benefits of contextual digital platform participation. Every context has its own internal and external factors that direct choice of priorities for digital participation [5].

In Malawian, constitutional fundamental principles state “*all institutions and persons shall observe and uphold this Constitution and the rule of law and no institution or person shall stand above the law*” section 12 (1) (f) of Constitution. The e-participation must not promote violation of other people’s freedoms.

Lago *et al.*, in Belgium, conducted a study of comparison of online participation of two Belgian cities and results indicate that digital platform might potentially be misused, and somehow bias the whole digital participatory process [13]. Research recommends about how to design, and launch and manage such platforms and, moreover, suggest that platforms should be supplemented by other digital or traditional participatory process in order to reach higher levels of participation [13].

Lago *et al.*, report that it is important to think about data processing before creating the platform. Involving citizens in every step would promote empowerment, and civic engagement, which would make digital platforms a Civic Tech tool [13]. Thus, digital platforms for citizen participation could serve different levels in the ladder of participation, depending on their framework, their underlying process and the goal pursued by the project managers [13]. Side-by-side with such digital platforms, face-to-face exchanges would foster additional debate and offer complementary richness through dialogue [13]. There is need for ore campaigns on subject issue. It is normal to encounter difficulties when setting up a new tool, and that our neutral, remote assessment should nurture a process of continuous improvement [13]. Technical and administrative support is essential to ensure that stakeholders understand the feasibility criteria before making suggestions that would anyway be automatically rejected by service providers during the analysis phase [13]. Such technical administrative support could be administered through the various meetings, info sessions and conferences organized prio and during the whole idea generation process [13]. Communicating results of this evaluation to

the citizens would be a recognition of their commitment and encouragement to pursue participation in the future [13].

Oliveira and Garcia, through literature review of e-participation research indicate that although participation is a right for which the citizens should be fighting for, they have been neglecting to act [18]. The government still plays a central role since information and opportunities flow through the government controlled technological platforms. Nonetheless, there is hope, to initiate a virtuous cycle in which citizens control and expend popular participation, leading to a greater demand for government action [18]. One of the reasons for non-participation of the citizens in these digital environments is the lack of knowledge of the environments. Few citizens were found to participate in electronic consultations. Lack of knowledge of digital platform environments [18].

Smit *et al.*, the article asks what digital literacy tactics low-literate Dutch adults employ to bypass their low-literacy to be able to participate in digital society, and what the consequences are for their socio-digital exclusion and inclusion [23]. Drawing upon participant observations and semi structured interviews with low-literate adult citizens in four libraries, a community Centre, and a school for adult education (N=73), this article develops a taxonomy of five tactics which enables low-literate citizens to digitally participate despite their linguistic and digital barriers: (1) informal support structures (2) formal support structures (3) non-written communication (4) translation software and (5) optimal character recognition [23]. Study shows how these tactics of appropriating the affordances of information and communications technologies (ICTs), and making use of social networks enable low literate Dutch citizens to participate in socially situated manners, making use of social support structures and digital literacies developed in relation to “foreign” languages [23]. Consequently, this study counters the stigma on such marginalized groups, who are often assumed to be unable or unwilling to participate and presents them as not adhering to the dominant discourse of participatory culture [23]. The paper argues that digital literacies should not be considered as a prerequisite for digital participation and inclusion, as study findings show that low-literate Dutch citizens are a highly diverse group that are capable of participating, despite their low (digital) literacy [23]. However, they do so in socially situated non-written manners in line with their digital and linguistic capabilities and barriers. The research highlights the significance of social participation in yielding social resource, which, in turn, facilitate various dimensions of social support. This may depend on every social welfare the country has invested in [23].

Peart *et al.*, explored the role of digital and socio-civic skills development, as facilitators for youth participation and analyses the relationship between sociodemographic variables (sex, age, educational level, and political ideology) with the participatory profile of participants. Imploring a quantitative methodology, where, based on non-probabilistic convenience sampling, 534 young people between 16 and 35 years old from Spain, completed an online questionnaire regarding the development of digital and socio-civic skills [20]. The results indicate how a

participant's participatory profile is related to other variables [20]. In addition, significant differences are observed between the different participation profiles and digital and socio-civic skills, underlining that the development of digital and socio-civic skills are essential for educating in digital citizenship [20].

Fung reports that increasing constraints on the public sector in many societies, combined with increasing demand for individual engagement and the affordances of digital technology, have paved the way for participatory innovations aimed at effective governance [4]. Deepening legitimization deficits of representative government create opportunities for legitimacy-enhancing forms of citizen participation on legitimacy is unclear [4]. Efforts to increase social justice through citizen participation face greatest obstacles [4]. The article concludes by highlighting three challenges to creating successful participatory governance: The absence of systematic leadership, the lack of popular or elite consensus on the place of direct citizen participation, and the limited scope and powers of participatory innovations [4]. Increasing citizen participation is sometimes seen as a way to increase the efficacy of regulation, improve the provision of public goods and services, and bolster outcomes in areas such as health, and education that straddle the boundaries between public and private, social and individual [4]. Many participatory democrats hope that participatory governance reforms will also advance social justice. It is here that direct citizen participation faces its greatest challenge [4]. The digital platforms must allow politicians to create the political conditions under which powerful organizations and leaders are motivated to advance social justice [4].

Manderscheid *et al.*, observed participatory planning approaches to main stream nature based, edible solutions to solve specific social urban problems in an international group of six-cities of Berlin (Germany), Carthage (Tunisia), Sant Feliu de Llobregat (Spain), Letchworth (United Kingdom), Semptor pri Gorici (Slovenia) and Lome (Togo) under the framework of EU-H2020 EdiCitNet Project that supported a large-scale collaborative project within a multi-stakeholder approach [17]. The paper, aimed to shed light on the potentials and trade-offs in shifting to online participation and who gets to participate under digital Participatory Action Research (PAR) circumstances [17]. Study implored a mixed-methods approach to evaluate the planning progress and the transition to working online in the six-cities during the first wave of the pandemic [17]. One year after the project started, the COVID-19 pandemic made it necessary to transfer most participatory planning processes to online platforms [17]. This new format presented challenges to planning and voluntary stakeholder engagement due to different capacities regarding technical requirements as well as location-specific social circumstances [17]. The study identified critical implications of COVID-19 on participatory planning processes, the challenges for online participation, and the effectiveness of measures applied to tackle those challenges. The transition to online participatory planning described in this paper emphasizes organizational rather than technical remedies

while the planning progress in all cities was delayed, some faced significant challenges in the transition to online due the lack of technical or community capacities [17]. This was fostered through the diverse and new realities of the stakeholders ranging from meeting existential needs to adapting to alternatives forms of working and caring [17]. The reflections in this paper offer learnings from the disruptions caused by COVID-19 to better understand how participatory planning processes can be managed online along the lines of equity, access and participation [17]. The findings demonstrate how participatory processes in the ongoing crisis can be maintained, with relevance to future waves of this and other pandemics [17]. Note Technical infrastructure, knowledge, and skills must incorporate social aspects inclusive equity and representation of stakeholders. It is not enough to offer online tools and expect volunteers to use them, because there is no one fits all solutions [17].

Leclercq and Rijshouwer engaged in a series of three participatory action research projects with the aim to support citizens' 'Right to the Smart City' through the development and use of digital platforms [15]. Results show that, although (the processes of co-creatively developing) these platforms do actively address citizens' engagement, empowerment and emancipation in smart city development, their contribution to provide participants with the opportunity to actually and sustainably reframe, reimagine and remake the smart city in a way that benefits them and their communities, is fairly limited [15]. Paper concludes that time and budget constraints, entrenched technocratic beliefs, as well as vested – traditional – and imbalanced power relationships and divergent views, concerns and objectives prohibit citizens' 'Right to the Smart City' [15]. Hence, the plea for 'Governance Beyond Participation: city making processes that do not perceive citizens as participants or clients, but as valued and trustworthy collaborators in the development and the governance of public space [15].

Hasler *et al.*, explored how digital technologies can be harnessed to generate new ways of involving citizens in city planning, using the data they produce [6]. Digital tools are changing the whole practice of urban planning by adding a non-expert but practiced knowledge layer in the planning process towards more sustainable cities [6].

Işikli report that it is possible to observe that the digital era that was actualized in the information society of the 21st century differs genetically in many areas ranging from economy to politics and from science to philosophy [7]. Today, governance, citizenship and democracy carry out a new transformation towards becoming electrolyzed or digitalized in their concepts and practice [7]. It can be stated that information and mass communication tools transformed democracy into e-democracy, citizenship into e-citizenship, and governance into e-governance when leaving issues that require multifaceted solutions such as speed, security, digital division, technology literacy and threats from large data [7]. Digital participation and digital governance of the digital society forces to abandon the



concept of modern democracy in which the power is entrusted to the rulers by elections and the rulers are called to account in elections [7]. This enforcement is a similar pressure experienced during the transition from constitutional democracies that restrict powers of the government in favor of people to parliamentary government, from there to pluralist democracy [7]. Digital citizenship means radical differentiation in general in individual-state relationship and in the inner functioning of citizenship concept in private [7]. The old implicit sediments of the absolutist, authoritative and one-sided dominance concepts that continue their existence in modern democracies through individual-state relationship began to melt with the digital activism of the digital citizens [7]. Through the concept of digital citizenship which is product of virtual reality culture derived from reel, mechanical and cybernetic ontologies, but originally differentiated from them, the issues, such as tendencies of rulers being not accounted for, idea of strong center, inactive principle of transparency, tools of restricted freedom of speech, and traditional media's establishment of deeper relationships with the centralized government, evolve into a different solution through digital participation, digital supervision, e-government, social media, internet blogs, virtual tax offices, corporate email, e-commerce, and e-marketing tools [7].

Secinaro *et al.*, report that researchers and practitioners are concentrating on the topics concerning citizens' demand for engagement and participation in the public administration [21]. Most recently, there has been significant recognition of digital platform tools that provide information fostering citizen participation [21]. The CONSUL application, most widespread ICT tool in the world with 100 institutions users, has enable the active participation [21]. Through systematic combining approach, based on an abductive process, the study analyses the case of Madrid (Spain) with the aim of contributing to the theory of the participatory platform on participation, accountability, and transparency [21]. Even though overall citizen participation is still far away, the results of the study revealed focus areas with implication for research and practice [21]. The study demonstrates that socio-demographic variables and support given by accessible financial and non-financial information must underpin future developments in e-participation and participatory governance [21].

Malawi has made tremendous developmental progress on improved uptake of mobile technology use. Datareportal shows that by 2023, 57% of Malawi population owns mobile phones and 5.04 million people access internet services [2]. Use of social media has become pervasive because of increased access to mobile devices in both rural and urban Malawi [9-12]. Digital platform service accessibility is significant to encourage citizens digital participation [8]. Citizens digital participation allow democratic participation that may promote reciprocal partnership between citizens and authorities. It empowers citizens to improve their public security management [3, 12]. Research has indicated that government still plays central role since information and opportunities flow through the government controlled technological platforms [18]. And there is hope to initiate virtuous cycle

in which citizens control and expend popular participation, leading to greatest demand for government action [18]. But few citizens were found to participate in electronic consultations [4]. However, increased citizens participation is sometimes seen as a way to increase efficacy of regulation, improve the provision of public goods and services, and bolster outcomes in areas of security that straddle the boundaries between public and private, social and individual. Many participatory democrats hope that participatory governance reforms will advance social justice [4]. It is against this background that this paper wants to examine the future role of digital platform of community policing to citizens participation in Malawi. The objective will be addressed by three questions (a) What strategies are to be put in place to encourage citizens participation on digital platform of community policing in Malawi? (b) What is the future role of digital platform of community policing in Malawi? And (c) What are solutions to the challenges of digital platform of community policing in Malawi?

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Study Site

The research was conducted at Muloza in Mulanje, and is almost 30 kms from main land Mulanje District Council headquarters, geographically positioned at 36 K 792628.97 m E 8220322.32 m S [9, 10]. Among other factors that contribute to criminal opportunistic activities are shallow Muloza and Ruo rivers that increase likelihood of un-charted routes, claiming of reciprocal rights on basic needs from both Malawians and Mozambicans thereby promoting reciprocal dual movements [11, 12]. Muloza borders with The Vila De Milange District Mozambican province with less than 10 km from the border to the east [9-12].

### 2.2. Research Design

Research started with qualitative phase to collect and analyze data, then triangulates results with quantitative research method [9, 10]. The practicality of using mixed methods is to help both methods to offset weaknesses of the other, and also allowing research collect data from multiple angles to come up with trustworthy and generalizable conclusions [9-12].

### 2.3. Strategies of Data Collection

#### 2.3.1. Interview Phase

Researcher identified four focus group discussions that had ten participants each. The four focus group discussions included police officers, business persons, citizens and community policing forum members [10, 11]. Respondents were identified within the research area, because are actors in the phenomena. The focus group discussions were guided by the interview guide [9-12].

### 2.3.2. Survey Phase

In survey phase, the Yamene (1969) formular led to the random identification of 432 participant from total population of 23, 408, who were randomly distributed within the ten localities of Muloza [10, 11]. Each locality had 43 randomly distributed participants. Survey utilized the structured questionnaire to collect data from respondents [9-12].

### 2.3.3. Information Explication

Focus group discussion interviews were written on script word by word, coded, grouped into sub-themes, then into themes [9-11]. The themes corresponded to research questions with aid of the NVivo (Version 12) software package [9-12].

Survey information was distillate using descriptive statistics of frequencies, percentages, and charts on each question from the structured questionnaire aided by Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 20 [9-12].

## 3. Research Revelations

### 3.1. Participant's Profile

Survey respondents comprised forty-Nine percent females and Fifty-One percent males with average age of Thirty-Nine years. Fifty- Seven percent were youth category. Five percent were no longer in marriage, Seven percent were on separation, Ten percent widowed, Twenty-Nine percent not married, and Fifty-Seven percent in marriage. Education status show, Sixteen percent never gone to and almost Three percent gone to adult school. Majority of Thirty-two percent of participants achieved primary, Thirty-Nine percent achieved secondary, and Ten percent attained tertiary education. Occupation status reveal, almost Seven percent were school going, almost Eight percent were casual labor, Sixteen percent were on formal employment, Sixteen percent were doing skilled employment, Twenty-six percent doing farming and almost Twenty-seven percent doing petty trading/business of average income of One Hundred-Three Thousand, Two Hundred Sixty-two Malawi Kwachas and Eighty-two Tambalas [9-12].

### 3.2. Strategies to Encourage Participation on Digital Platform of Community Policing

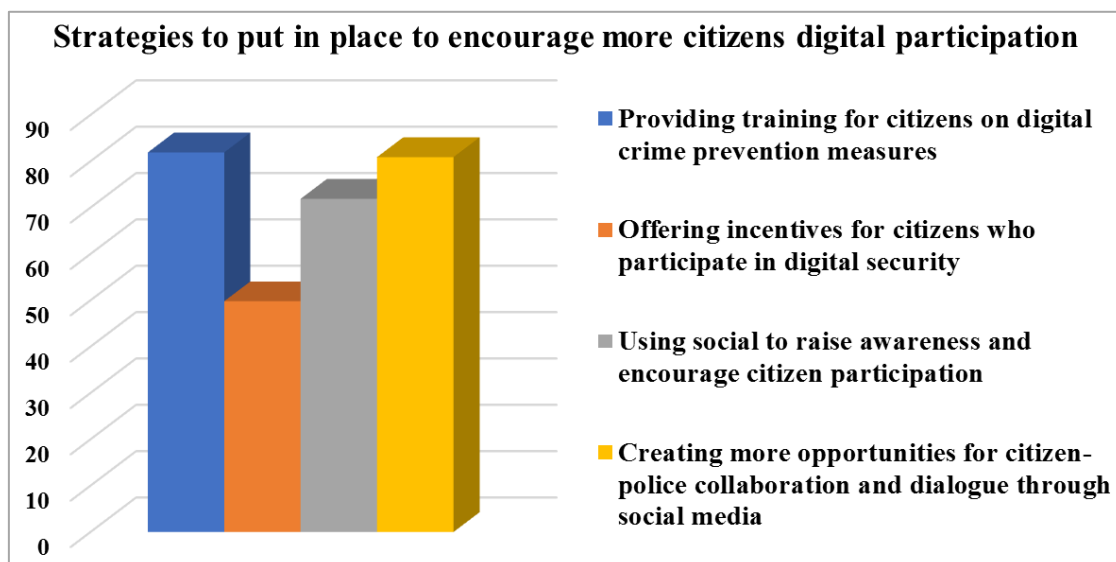
**Table 1.** Strategies to encourage participation on digital platform of community policing in Malawi.

	Frequency	Percent
Providing training for citizens on crime prevention and safety measures	352	81.9
Increasing police presence in the community	194	45.1
Offering incentives or rewards for citizens who participate in neighbourhood safety and security initiatives	214	49.8
Using social media and other digital platforms to raise awareness and encourage citizen participation	137	31.9
Creating more opportunities for citizen-police collaboration and dialogue	107	24.9

n=432 (Own source)

Table 1 above shows summary of participant's multiple responses on strategies to encourage participation on digital platform of community policing in Malawi. Majority indicate; Providing training for citizens on crime prevention and safety

measures at 81.9%, Offering incentives for citizens who participate in neighbourhood safety initiatives at 49.8% and Increasing police presence in community at 45%.



**Figure 1.** Shows translated results from [Table 1](#) above, indicate participants agreed that to encourage digital platform participation there must be; provision of training for citizens on digital crime prevention and safety measures at 81.9%, offering incentives or rewards for citizens who participate in neighborhood safety and security digital initiatives at 49.8%, using social media and other digital platforms to raise awareness and encourage citizen participation at 71.9%, creating more opportunities for citizen-police collaboration and dialogue through social media at 80.9%.

Results from analysed scribed interviews reveal that themes that were consistently mentioned on strategies that could be put in place to encourage digital platform participation in security issues are (a) Provision of training to citizens on digital crime prevention and safety measures, (b) Offering incentives to participants in neighborhood security digital initiatives, (c) Promotion of using social media and other digital platforms to raise awareness and encourage citizen participation, (d) Provision of opportunities for citizen-police collaboration and dialogue through social media.

To triangulate the interview results, house hold survey results in [Table 1](#) and [figure 1](#) above, reveal participants widely agreed that to encourage digital platform participation, the

government must work on some activities such as; providing training for citizens on digital crime prevention and safety measures at 81.9%, Offering incentives or rewards for citizens who participate in neighborhood safety and security digital initiatives at 49.8%, Using social media and other digital platforms to raise awareness and encourage citizen participation at 71.9%, Creating more opportunities for citizen-police collaboration and dialogue through social media at 80.9%.

Finding is similar to Williams *et al.*, that government issuing of smartphones to patients promoted chronic condition handling [24], reduced disparities in health care and hospital readmissions [24], and gained quality of life [24].

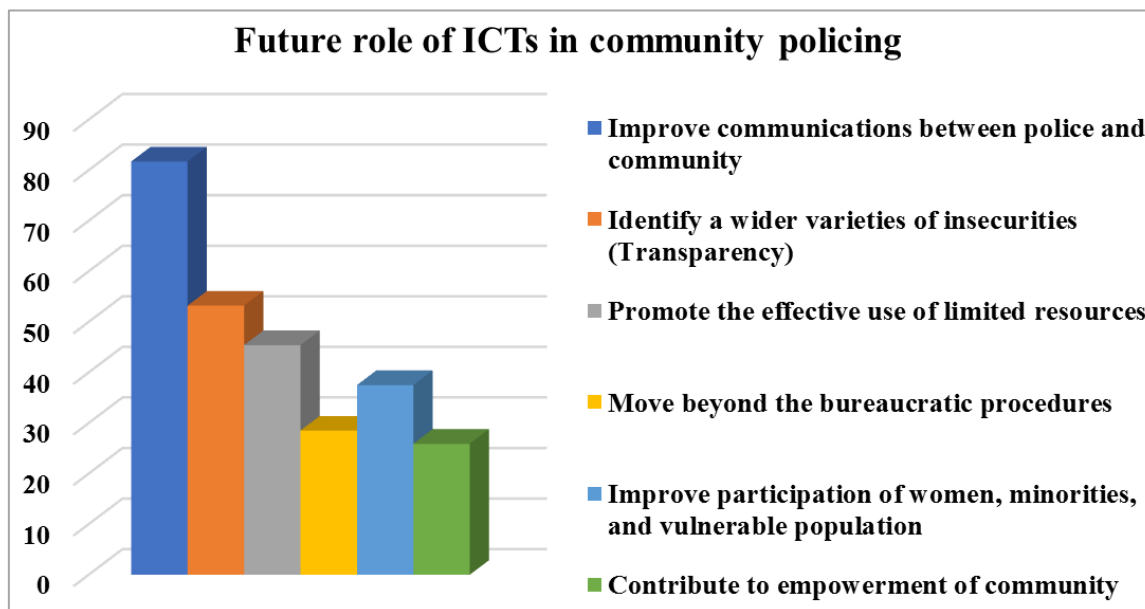
### 3.3. The Future Role of Digital Platform of Community Policing in Malawi

**Table 2.** Future Role of Digital Platform of Community Policing in Malawi.

	Frequency	Percent
Gaining communications between police and community	353	81.7
Detecting a wider variety of insecurities (Transparency)	230	53.2
Promote the effective use of limited resources	196	45.4
Move beyond the customary bureaucratic procedures	123	28.5
Gaining participation of women, minorities, and vulnerable population	162	37.5
Contribute to empowerment of the community	112	25.9

n=432 (Own source)

Table 1, above shows summary of participants multiple responses on the future role of digital platform of community policing in Malawi. Citizens agree that digital platform has role to play on community policing dominated by; Gaining communications between police and community at 81.7%, Detecting a wider variety of insecurities at 53.2%, Promote the effective use of limited resources at 45.4%.



**Figure 2.** Translated from Table 2 above, findings reveal respondents agreed that the future role of digital platform in community policing will be to; improve communications between police and community at 81.7%, identify a wider variety of insecurities (Transparency) at 53.2%, promote the effective use of limited resources at 45.4%, move beyond the customary bureaucratic procedures at 28.5%, improve participation of women, minorities, and vulnerable population at 37.5%, contribute to empowerment of the community at 25.9%.

Analysis from scribed qualitative interviews reveal citizens persistently mentioned themes of the future role of digital platform of community policing are; (a) Gain communications between police and community, (b) Detect a wider variety of insecurities (Transparency), (c) Promote the effective use of limited resources, (d) Move beyond the customary bureaucratic procedures, (e) Gain participation of women, minorities, and vulnerable population, (f) Contribute to empowerment of the community.

To generalize and widen the qualitative result above, survey finding in Table 2 and figure 2 above, reveal respondents agreed that the future role of digital platform of community policing will be to; Gain communications between police and community at 81.7%, Detect a wider variety of insecurities (Transparency) at 53.2%, promote the effective use of limited resources at 45.4%, Move beyond the customary bureaucratic procedures at 28.5%, Gain participation of women, minorities, and vulnerable population at 37.5%, Contribute to empowerment of the community at 25.9%. Multinomial logistic

regression in Table 3 below, shows gender may have impact on future role of digital platform of community policing; Move beyond the customary bureaucratic procedures at  $p=.017$ , Gain participation of women, minorities, and vulnerable population at  $p=.459$ , Contribute to empowerment of the community at  $p=.003$ .

Result is similar to Kumwenda *et al.*, that digital platform gains communication between citizens and police in Malawi [9]. Similarly, Kumwenda *et al.*, that Do-It-Yourself activities on digital platform of community policing empowers citizens to take charge of their security in Malawi [12]. Clavell *et al.*, that digital platform offsets for lack of resources and promotes less agents on ground in Spain [1].

Esau, if people are allowed to participate democratically on digital platform it empowers citizens to transform public security management, because citizens know their lives, experiences and emotions better than they know scientific facts; they are experts of their everyday lives [3].



**Table 3.** Multinomial Regression.**Impact of gender on adoption of future use of digital platform in e-participation in community policing.****Parameter Estimates**

Sex of respondent <sup>a</sup>	B	Std. Error	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp (B)	95% Confidence Interval for Exp(B) Lower Bound
Intercept	.673	.380	3.134	1	.077		
Improve communications between police and community	.010	.327	.001	1	.975	1.010	.532
Identify a wider variety of insecurities (Transparency)	-.109	.271	.161	1	.688	.897	.528
Promote the effective use of limited resources	.014	.323	.002	1	.964	1.014	.538
Move beyond the customary bureaucratic procedures	.872	.365	5.701	1	.017	2.391	1.169
Improve participation of women, minorities, and vulnerable population	-.250	.338	.548	1	.459	.779	.401
Contribute to empowerment of the community	-1.215	.414	8.610	1	.003	.297	.132
Other	1.216	1.146	1.126	1	.289	3.373	.357

a. Gender has impact on adoption of future use of digital platform in e-participation in community policing.

### 3.4. Solutions to Challenges of Digital Platform of Community Policing

**Table 4.** Solutions to digital platform of community policing challenges in Malawi.

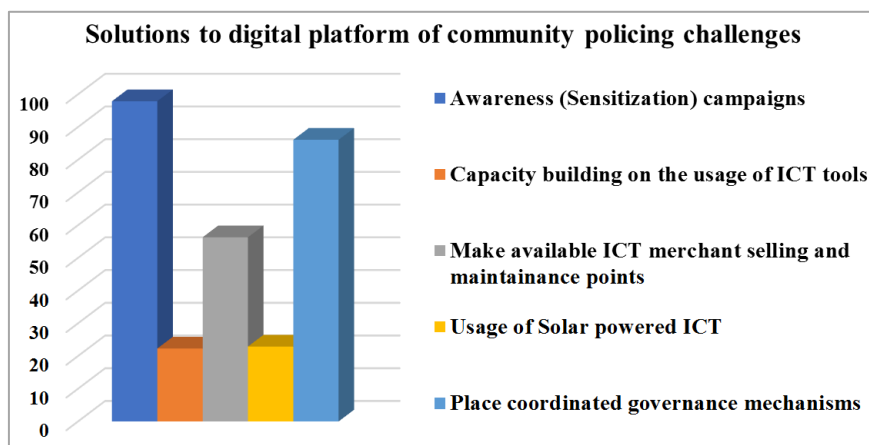
Item	Frequency	Percent
Awareness (Sensitization) Campaign	325	97.9
Capacity building on the usage of ICT tools	74	22.3
Make available ICT merchant selling and maintenance points	187	56.3
Usage of Solar Powered ICT	74	22.9
Place coordinated governance mechanisms	278	86.1

n=432

Source: Own survey (2023)

In summary [Table 4](#). Results reveal participants multiple responses agree that solutions to challenges of digital platform of community policing in Malawi are; Awareness campaigns at 97.9%, Capacity building on usage of ICT tools at

22.3%, Make available ICT merchant selling and maintenance points at 56.3%, Usage of Solar powered ICTs at 22.9% and Place coordinated government mechanisms at 86.1%



**Figure 3.** Translated information from Table 4 above, indicate participants pointed out solutions to challenges of digital platform of community policing are; awareness (Sensitization) Campaign at 97.9%, capacity building on the usage of ICT tools at 22.3%, make available ICT merchant selling and maintenance points at 56.3%, usage of Solar Powered ICT at 22.9% and Place coordinated governance mechanisms at 86.1%.

Analysis of scribed interviews revealed that respondents persistently pointed out to themes of; (a) awareness (Sensitization) Campaign, (b) capacity building on the usage of ICT tools, (c) make available ICT merchant selling and maintenance points, (d) usage of Solar Powered ICT and (e) Place coordinated governance mechanisms as solutions to challenges of digital platform of community policing.

To confirm and generalize the qualitative results quantitative survey result in Table 4 and figure 3 above, indicate awareness (Sensitization) Campaign at 97.9%, capacity building on the usage of ICT tools at 22.3%, make available ICT merchant selling and maintenance points at 56.3%, usage of Solar Powered ICT at 22.9% and Place coordinated governance mechanisms at 86.1% are solutions to challenges of digital platform of community policing.

Result is similar to Jang and Gim in South Korea, that citizens are encouraged to participate on digital platform when digital platform services are available and accessible [8].

Fung, that increasing citizen participation is sometimes seen as a way to increase the efficacy of regulation, improve the provision of public goods and services, and bolster outcomes in areas such as health, and education that straddle the boundaries between public and private, social and individual [4].

## 4. Discussion, Implication and Conclusion

Results reveal that to encourage digital platform participation there must be; (a) provision of training to citizens on digital crime prevention and safety measures, (b) offering incentives or rewards to citizens who participate in neighborhood safety and security digital initiatives, (c) using social media and other digital platforms to raise awareness and encourage citizen participation, (d) creating more opportunities

for citizen-police collaboration and dialogue through social media.

The future role of digital platform of community policing will be to; (i) gain communications between police and community, (ii) detect a wider variety of insecurities (Transparency), (iii) promote the effective use of limited resources, (iv) move beyond the customary bureaucratic procedures, (v) gain participation of women, minorities, and vulnerable population, (vi) contribute to empowerment of the community. Multinomial logistic regression shows gender may have impact on future role of digital platform of community policing; Move beyond the customary bureaucratic procedures at  $p=.017$ , Gain participation of women, minorities, and vulnerable population at  $p=.459$ , Contribute to empowerment of the community at  $p=.003$ .

Result indicates that citizens agreed that solutions to challenges of digital platform use in community policing are; (1) awareness (Sensitization) Campaign, (2) capacity building on the usage of ICT tools, (3) make available ICT merchant selling and maintenance points, (4) usage of Solar Powered ICT and (5) Place coordinated governance mechanisms.

### Implications

Implications are, citizens are anxious to learn more on participation through digital platform, and they need to be recognized as articulated in Sir Robert Peel's principle that citizens can become volunteer forces of police when recognized and trusted. Citizens are longing for more opportunity to utilize digital platform in security issues. Change is inevitable, and transformation is continuous inclusive participation through digital platform. Participating through digital platform empowers people to revolutionize and transform public security management in places they live. Digital platform is allowing people all over the world quest for universal value on how to deal with public security issues thereby promoting inclusive society. People need continuous education on adoption and use of developed technologies. They need these

technologies to be very readily available in subsidized standards to afford at the same time there is need to find alternative maintenance and power running mechanisms. Furthermore, global public security requires strong partnership to manage consultations, coordination and collaboration.

To accelerate national transition to an upper middle-income economy status by creating a vibrant knowledge-based digital economy calls for high expectation from practitioners on practicability of the digital platform that allow citizens to participate and create sense of security in Malawi. The Malawi vision 2063 is youth centric and as already noted that mobile technology is highly used. This means that citizens are using technology dominated by mobile phones, however, there are more technologies that are being used including computers, drones, CCTV cameras etc depending on the nature of the intended purposes and locations. It implies that research results dissemination must target the youth. This will mean strategic starting points should be primary schools, secondary schools and tertiary institutions. This will allow the majority youths to take lead in the adoption process. The other implication is that dissemination of results must also target policy makers so that policy making may consider knowledge advancement and adoption for the citizenry. At the same time national policies may benefit bridging the gap between generated knowledge and Malawi 2063 vision aspirations. The policy makers may even consider coming up with policies to introduce courses of digital platform of community policing in national syllabus.

Practically, internal security related departments and agencies may also be targets for dissemination. So, that they may consider purchasing need to have ICTs to manage the digital platform of community policing. However, it would also benefit practitioners to have a starting point of how to handle such need to have technology by aligning to conceptual model of digital platform that allow citizens participate in creating sense of security. The first option to start with is for the researchers to have systematic literature review on the works of digital platform of community policing in Malawi. The conceptual model may give some good starting points for easy adoption of digital community policing, and are already working on the conceptual model of digital platform of community policing for citizens participation in creating sense of security in Malawi.

Digital platform of community policing is utilizing ICTs, which means that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is significant topic that may discuss ethical compliances in the process of applying digital platform of community policing. Digital platform of community policing and human capacity to act through technology give the aspect of superhuman in handling security. However, to achieve responsive, open and transparent citizen engagement with ethical conduct allowing innovation and openness to change, study recommends more research in the topics of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital platform of community policing that allow citizens to participate in creating sense of security.

Current study discusses that, while previous scholars in digital platform of community policing have revealed that information communications technologies have allowed formal and non-formal wide participation, as well as increase transparency and accountability to police officers in managing policing issues, and empowering citizens to take part in security issues in their times. Current revelation is that citizens participation on digital platform has the power to allow citizens to revolutionize and transform public security management of challenges they face to create a better world to live during their time. Citizens must remember Universal value on digital platform of community policing may not apply to state's sovereignty.

## Abbreviations

AI	Artificial Intelligence
ICT	Information Communication Technology
LPDP Consultancy	Lilian Precious Dorah and Phelemero Consultancy

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## Author Contributions

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## Conflicts of Interest

All researchers of the study have declared no conflicts of interest.

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