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Community Policing and Crime Prevention: Evaluating the Role of Traditional Leaders under Chief Madliwa in Nkayi District, Zimbabwe

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Abstract

Community policing is a strategic consideration for contemporary policing, especially when police organisations worldwide increasingly seek cost-effective and sustainable methods of combating crime. The principle of community policing recognises the community and its leaders as equal partners in the prevention and reduction of crime. Hence, there is a need for research to interrogate how different police organisations have considered community policing as a panacea to their policing challenges. This study sought to evaluate the role of traditional leaders in community policing and crime prevention in the community of Chief Madliwa, Nkayi District in Matabeleland North Province of Zimbabwe. Interviews were carried out with eight village heads, four headmen and three key informants. Four focus group discussions were conducted to collect the villagers' insight on the role of traditional leaders in community policing and crime prevention. Participants were identified using purposive and convenience sampling. The findings revealed that community policing is an effective strategy for crime prevention and that traditional leaders play a pivotal role in the success of community policing and crime prevention. Traditional leaders play an integral role in the recruitment of members of the Neighbourhood Watch Committee, assist with organising the business community to cooperate with the police in the fight against crime and play an important role in organising the community to attend crime awareness campaigns arranged by the police.

Keywords

Community policing; crime awareness; crime prevention; mobilisation; traditional leaders.

Introduction

Community policing is a strategy that involves citizens in the design, implementation and evaluation of law enforcement programmes (Friedmann 1996). Community policing is also described by several authors as a philosophy that brings the community and the police together with a singular cause of promoting crime awareness and prevention. As an approach, community policing is among a host of local responses to security matters and concerns; this situates community policing within broader discursive arenas of community safety governance and economies of fear (Svendsen 2008; Tudor 2003).

Given that the discourse has by and large been biased in favour of cities, the present study offers an alternative rural perspective in community governance, community safety and security discourses. Although there is some truth to the notion that community security reflects a vacuum left by a state that has failed to implement formal, reliable security for its citizenry—as framed by some (Steinberg, 2001)—this assertion can also be disputed.

A potential contention is that, although community policing has been adopted in many parts of the country, some districts like Nkayi have lagged behind in its implementation. Thus, rural areas under colonialism were historically neglected spaces that represented backwardness and underdevelopment. As the state did not prioritise rural development agendas, an informal system of governance emerged. Governance matters in the then Rhodesia bifurcated: a formal white system for urban and semi-urban areas and a rural structure for commercial farm or rural areas (Tabona-Ncube 2015).

The African-occupied areas fell mostly under the ambit of traditional authorities who were arguably awkward appendages to the colonial administration. In this sense, the rural areas during the colonial era were never part of the state's security governance although security forces were deployed to stem rural support for the liberation movement. The Zimbabwean government in 1980, focused on the development agenda, which also included the rural areas through deliberate programmes e.g. education, health, agriculture as well as community involvement in crime related matters. However, despite efforts to incorporate rural areas into formal governance models (Hammar 2005) as well as modernisation programmes in the rural areas, unemployment among youth and middle aged increased, thereby creating the need for communities to work hand in hand with law enforcement agents in fighting crime.

As well as adding to the academic discourse on community policing, this paper connects the global with the local in the sense that it shows the disjuncture between development policies in global cities and in rural areas. Studies on community policing have been conducted of Western cities such as Chicago (Skogan and Hartnett 1997) and those in the developing world, with one examining the urban centres of South Africa (Pelser 1999).

This paper follows that of O'Shea (1999), who examined the matter of rural community policing. However, while O'Shea's study is situated in rural America, the present paper is situated in rural Zimbabwe. This makes it novel in the sense that it unearths the political economies of security in the Global South. In a sense, this study is in the domain of subaltern studies or an examination of development in the Global South.

The Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) proclaims that central to its crime awareness and prevention strategy is community policing. The organisation's crime strategy envisages several community-based policing initiatives that include the Neighbourhood Watch Committee (NWC), Crime Consultative Committees (CCCs), Home Officer's Scheme (HOS), Junior Call, police bases/posts, suggestion boxes, hotlines, social media platforms, among others. However, the CCCs and NWC remain a central mechanism for cooperation between the police and community, and it

is through both these key structures that the police seek to forge partnerships with the community.

Traditional leaders—including village heads, headmen and chiefs—are viewed as principal actors in community policing, especially in rural communities. They play a pivotal role in mobilising their communities to participate in community policing initiatives. Given this backdrop, the study sought to evaluate the role of traditional leaders in community policing and crime prevention. It also sought to appraise the role of traditional leaders in mobilising their communities to contribute towards community policing initiatives by the Zimbabwe Republic Police.

Connecting the local with the global

Although the focus of the study is on local experiences in a rural part of Zimbabwe, the study is not necessarily advancing a case of cultural exceptionalism. Despite its recent convoluted history and the nuances of its development, Zimbabwe is by no means unique in its handling of local security in communities. Democracy for post-independence states appears to have been accompanied by increased criminality (Comaroff and Comaroff 2006). As such, the study adds to the body of postcolonial studies and, in a sense, explores the experiences of a community in a postcolonial context. Therefore, it relates to the broader literature on the fight against crime in communities borrowing best practices currently in place in other developed countries. Achille Mbembe has problematised the postcolonial political economy as demonstrating the lingering challenges of the colonial state as well as the shortcomings of new African governments that leave citizens stuck in 'brief and dissipated life in every sense' (2001: 239).

Studies on community policing have been conducted elsewhere in Africa (van der Spuy 1993), Asia and other parts of the Global South, revealing similar themes across the globe (see Comaroff and Comaroff 2006). By and large, the key issues to emerge in these studies are the inadequate reach of the state as well as the challenges of policing all citizens, be they in urban or rural communities. Implicit in the positioning of this study in the academic arena is its comparative lens. In other words, the study allows us to envision comparisons and contrasts between formerly colonised communities of the Global North and contemporary marginalised insecure communities (Stogdill, 1974) such as those of the African Americans.

Background to the study

Zimbabwe is thriving under the traditional leadership system, which has been patriarchal in nature since time immemorial (Dodoi 2013; Makahamadze, Grand and Tavuyanago 2009). Traditional leaders are known for influencing ethical conduct of their subjects by setting binding communal norms, mores, values and systems. They exercise the power of sanction, which is bestowed on them by their role as traditional leaders. They are also pivotal in the allocation of communal resources and to the well-being of their subjects.

According to Dodoi (2013), traditional authorities are incorporated at present into the Zimbabwean government system based on the Westminster model of governance and encapsulated in relevant statutes. The *Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment Act (No. 20) of 2013*, and the *Traditional Leaders Act* of 1988, modified in 1999 *(Chapter 29:17)* recognise and outline the roles of traditional leaders under Zimbabwean law. Their role is customarily auspicious and predates the Western colonial legal systems on which current laws are codified. As such, it is imperative that a traditional leader is defined in the context of their customary, social, leadership and cultural roles.

Traditional leaders derive their powers and roles from customary laws, culturally inherited values that are complemented by the Zimbabwean current legislation. Based on this premise, their subjects cannot question the decrees and community rules meant to solve contemporary

problems like criminal activities in their communities. Ibrahim Jahun (2015) postulated that a traditional leader is a person who, by ancestral genealogy, occupies the throne of a specified geographic domain and has been enthroned in accordance with the customs and traditions of such domain. Such a definition is consistent with the Zimbabwean traditional system, which recognises traditional leadership as pre-existing British colonial rule.

As traditional systems are preserved, the modern laws in Zimbabwe ascribe traditional leaders the powers to preside over customary law courts, where they exercise reserved judicial powers, promote peace and security and maintain law and order in their communities. Teffo-Menziwa, Mullick and Dlamini (2010) observed that traditional leaders engender incontestable influence over multitudes of people at the grassroots level through community dialogue. They also influence government policy through their advice on matters of custom, tradition, heritage and culture. The legal obligations granted to traditional leaders under Zimbabwean laws endow them with an auxiliary role of enforcing the law and engendering safe communities. It is against this backdrop that the ZRP should respect and promote the participation of traditional leaders in community policing and crime prevention.

Mutanana and Bukaliya (2015) observed that sexual and gender-based violence cases are on the increase in Zimbabwe, including murder, rape, domestic violence, indecent assault, aggravated indecent assault and sexual intercourse with a young person. Teffo-Menziwa, Mullick and Dlamini (2010) asserted that traditional leaders have a key role in mitigating these crimes and mediating their resolution in their respective communities, as they exercise both judicial and advocacy roles as prescribed by custom and, to an extent, by statutory law.

However, McFadden(2003), have argued that there is role conflict and usurpation of the criminal justice system by traditional leaders in their moderation of sexual and gender-based violence cases; in some cases, there has been gross interference with justice and misapplication of the criminal law penal codes, thereby defeating the aims of criminal justice. According to law, sexual and gender-based violence cases should be reported to police, who in turn, present them to criminal courts for prosecution. Misappropriation of judicial powers by traditional leaders in cases of sexual and gender-based cases leads to fatal miscarriage of justice, as the punishments they prescribe are often not consistent with the penal codes of criminal law (McFadden, 2003). They at times, impose punishments on offenders based on previous unwritten traditional court precedents.

In another study, Mutanana and Mutara (2015) discovered an increase in the prevalence of teenage pregnancies and child marriages in rural communities. Most teenage pregnancies occurred in children under the age of 16.

Further, Mutanana and Gasva (2015) observed that victims of sexual abuse did not report to the police for fear of victimisation by their perpetrators. In most of these cases, the perpetrators were known to the survivor, if not to the elders or people living in the same community. There is a reluctance to report to the police and criminal courts; instead, people resort to customary systems presided over by traditional leaders. There is an active community desire to seek restorative justice, promote social cohesion and seek direct compensation for the victims' family. The victims end up trapped in early marriages that were instigated through arbitration between families and presided by traditional leaders. In such cases, there is a need for the police to engage traditional leaders in advocacy against such communal-based practices. Traditional leaders' influence in the community can be harnessed to promote legitimate and sustainable crime prevention strategies. In turn, such crime prevention strategies are premised on a sustainable community policing strategy.

In a conference on community policing at the 10th Annual General Meeting of International Police Executive Symposium in Bahrain in 2003, the Zimbabwean Commissioner General claimed that

the relationship between the police and the public is mediated through community policing. Trojanowicz (1994) described community policing as a philosophy and organisational strategy that promotes the new partnership between the police and the public. Similarly, Peak (1994) believed community policing to be a philosophy and distinguished it as a policing strategy that has become dominant in crime prevention.

Community policing is proactive in nature, decentralised and requires that police officers be assigned to a community or area for policing. In the process, the police work together with the community and its leaders as principal partners in identifying, prioritising and solving contemporary policing issues. Based on this paradigm, this study sought to evaluate and appraise the role of traditional leaders in community policing and crime prevention, under Chief Madliwa in the Nkayi district, Matabeleland North Province of Zimbabwe.

About the study

Traditional leaders have a customarily assigned influence over their jurisdictions and communities. They have a preserved cultural role as arbiters of conflicts arising from the ever-changing social, legal, ethical, political, technological and ecological trends in society. Some of these changes pose an existential threat to the very fabric that holds traditional societies together. For example, globalisation and consumerism appear to challenge the very vestiges of customs and practices that traditional institutions wish to preserve.

Such threats to tradition from exposure to foreign cultures has been discussed in the context of popular culture and music (Chari 2009). It is equally evident in intergenerational incongruence of values that permeate discussions in public spaces. Munyaradzi Mawere (2012) detailed the tensions and conflicts that new cultures impose on traditional practice, especially in light of indigenous knowledge systems that are transposed on young people of Zimbabwe.

While numerous other examples can be proffered to show incongruencies between traditional and imported cultures, the most important aspect is to highlight the fact that traditional leaders have to contend with a dynamic environment in which global, regional and local pressures are imposed from various spheres. As a result of these changes, traditional leaders should partner with the police in community policing activities aimed at eradicating crime and related vices. As such, the ZRP envisages community policing as a social contract between itself and the community leaders through which they can collaborate to combat crime. Engaging the community can be a daunting task that can be ameliorated if traditional or civic leaders positively exert their influence and magnify police objectives. If coordinated well and supported by traditional or civic leaders, community policing can contribute towards crime prevention.

Literature review

Traditional leaders

Dodoi (2013) postulated that traditional leadership is customary leadership practised through the rules of succession. It is a form of leadership in which authority is primarily conferred by tradition or custom (Makahamadze, Grand and Tavuyanago 2009), with the selection of traditional leaders differing according to norms, customs and contemporary laws of the respective countries (Rukuni et al. 2015). In one of the regions of Cameroon, for instance, traditional leaders are nominated and appointed by the government; in another region, power is customarily inherited. In Kenya, parliament selects or chooses traditional leaders who are remunerated in the same fashion as civil servants.

In Zimbabwe, traditional leaders are enthroned based on ancestral genealogy or nobility, and such appointments are endorsed by parliament. Upon appointment, traditional leaders in

Zimbabwe are ascribed with the authority enacted under the *Traditional Leaders Act (Chapter 29:17)*, which specify them as 'village heads', 'headmen' or 'chiefs'. Among other legal obligations, this legislation assigns traditional leaders the customary role of safeguarding and protecting the cultural heritage of their communities.

Dodoi (2013), Makahamadze, Grand and Tavuyango (2009) and Rukuni et al. (2015) posited that traditional leaders should be selected from within their communities according to traditional norms. They command a high degree of communal and cultural authority, to the extent of being worshipped as deities. The moral and social recognition afforded traditional leaders by their communities makes them principal actors in fighting crime (Palmary 2004; Southern Africa HIV and AIDS Information Dissemination Service (SAfAIDS) 2011; Teffo-Menziwa, Mullick and Dlamini 2010). Traditional leaders are held in high esteem and their views highly regarded. Dodoi (2013) further stated that traditional leaders enjoy the community's respect as a result of their wisdom, governing prowess, social skills, aura and charisma. As such, these cherished qualities make traditional leaders indispensable partners in mobilising the community to participate in local policing initiatives. The ideology of community policing in Zimbabwe cannot be envisaged without the involvement of traditional leaders, especially in so-called rural areas where a more substantial proportion of the population is domiciled.

Community policing

The Bureau of Justice Assistance (1994), Trojanowicz (1994) and Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS 2008) described community policing as a social contract between the police and the community to help identify and solve crime-related problems in communities. Further, Peak (1994) stated that such a partnership is a contemporary policing philosophy that advances a cooperative premise for crime prevention. Therefore, community policing can be viewed as a proactive approach that brings together the police and the community in the fight against crime. It provides a framework within which members of the community can be active participants in the quest to prevent crime and enhance safety in their neighbourhoods.

However, Friedmann (1996) opined differently; he strongly believed that community policing has either been misunderstood or not implemented. He lamented that there was little public discussion on what crime is and very little understanding of why it occurs. He argued that without an in-depth understanding of what crime is in society, community policing will not be effective. Nonetheless, some researchers have insisted that community policing is an effective method of preventing crime. For instance, Reaves (2015) suggested that close to 100 per cent of agencies worldwide had adopted community policing as a way of working collaboratively with communities to combat crime.

Suffice to say, Zikhali, Ncube and Tshuma (2014) advanced the '3Cs' theory, which postulates that community programmes should philosophically be premised on three fundamental principles: collective identification of problems, collective analysis of the problem and collective action or solution to the problem. In this regard, the participation of traditional leaders in community policing facilitates collective problem identification, formulation of feasible policing solutions to identified issues of crime and the adoption of sustainable crime prevention strategies. It is from this premise that traditional leaders in Zimbabwe are perceived as partners in the community policing strategy, especially in rural communities.

Role of traditional leaders in crime prevention

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2010), crime prevention is a strategy that seeks to reduce the risk of crime occurring in a community. It provides a framework for the police and other community-based principals to collectively and proactively design feasible activities aimed at pre-empting the occurrence of crime. Under this strategy, police and

traditional leaders should examine the potentially harmful effects of crime and apply solutions aimed at reducing the fear of crime among communities.

Regarding crime prevention, Teffo-Menziwa, Mullick and Dlamini (2010) identified the following as some of the roles of traditional leaders:

- preside over customary law courts and help to maintain law and order
- assist members of the community in their dealings with the state
- advise the government on traditional affairs within their communities
- convene meetings to discuss contemporaneous issues with communities
- protect cultural values and inculcate a sense of belonging in their areas of jurisdiction.

As such, it is cogent that traditional leaders have a critical role in community policing and crime prevention. They have an inalienable duty—similarly vested on regular law enforcement agents—to maintain law and order in their communities. In their role as custodians of custom and culture, traditional leaders help to promote social order and harmony in their communities. However, unlike the legal systems of Namibia and Botswana, that of Zimbabwe has taken control of customary courts and integrated customary law into the formal legal system. This, argued Keulder (1998), has deprived traditional leaders of their central authority and functions. Customary authority is now regulated by the state and their functions made to align with Western and international law.

Traditional leaders may use several strategies to enhance peaceful environments in their communities. Marshall (1998) identified restorative justice as one of these strategies. He explained that restorative justice is an approach in which parties to a specific offence resolve their problems collectively and deal with the aftermath of the offence and its implications for the future. Such an approach involves restoring justice to the victim(s), the offender and the damage caused by the crime to the community.

Palmary (2004) also identified mediation as another strategy for restoring justice in the community. This strategy enhances peace building and reconciliation between people in a social setting. Most criminal cases identified in rural communities have an element of violence, for instance, assaults, domestic violence and sexual gender-based violence, to mention but a few. Healthy social norms can be employed to prevent such crimes as rape, assaults and general misunderstandings between close relatives or extended families. Undoubtedly, traditional leaders have a compelling duty to ensure that cultural norms and values are preserved in their communities. Mutanana and Bukaliya (2015) also believed that traditional leaders are significant stakeholders in mobilising the participation of rural communities in community policing initiatives. As such, it is imperative that there is synergy and cooperation between the police and traditional leaders in implementing a community policing strategy.

Research methodology

This study is premised on a qualitative research approach, whose probity enables life experiences to be interpreted and made sense from the participants' perspectives (McLeod 1994). The researcher opted to employ the case study as a methodological paradigm, given that much of the study's focus is on the nuances of community policing in local areas. Although other paradigms such as surveys could have been employed, a case study was deemed appropriate because it explores a programme, an event, an activity, a process or one or more individuals in depth (Creswell, 1994). In addition, a case study approach enables more analytical and theoretically grounded insights into the phenomena studied.

To simply indicate that a case study paradigm was adopted would be reductionist because there is a collection of case study frameworks that researchers can employ. Yin (2003) outlined various matrices of case study frameworks. In light of this, and also bearing in mind that the specification of 'a case' is a process fraught with methodological contestation, the research identified the Nkayi district as a single case study area; specifically, traditional leaders who serve under Chief Madliwa were collectively identified as a case.

Consistent with the tenets of empirical studies, a defined set of research instruments was employed. Initially, a predetermined set of interviews were planned, but due to emerging logistical complexities, focus group discussions were later incorporated to obtain the collective insights of Traditional leaders and police.

Interviews were conducted with eight village heads, four headmen and three key informants from the ZRP's Community Relations Liaison Office (key informant 1), the District Administrator's Office (key informant 2) and a local councillor (key informant 3). The study carried out four (4) focus group discussions comprising ten (10) participants per group to collect their insights on the role of traditional leaders in community policing and crime prevention.

Participants were identified using purposive and convenience sampling—non-random samples typical of qualitative research. In purposive sampling, the sample is selected deliberately by the researcher (Kothari 2004). However, purposive sampling—and indeed, convenience sampling— are not based on a whim; they must be justified on methodological and logistical grounds. In this study, the fact that leaders and the police were few and within a small geospatial area meant that the researcher did not have a large pool of participants from which to select. In addition, the researcher was aware of the difficulties with obtaining sufficient interview time for interviews, especially with political leaders. As such, methods that could readily accommodate those leaders who were available were preferred. For example, had a random approach been employed, it would have been very likely that the study would have included and approached a very busy leader who was unlikely to have or provide the time for an interview. Having laid out the methodological terrain on which the study is grounded, we now turn to a discussion of its findings.

Findings and discussion

As earlier stated, this study is situated in the field of postcolonial studies. Although not a theoretical perspective per se, post-coloniality is a useful prism through which to trace the contours of power between communities and the state, among state organs as well as across 'fields' in a Bourdieusian sense. The centrality of resources and power invokes Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence as a conceptual lens (1989). Symbolic violence relates to concealed threats of violence to instil fear in those at the lower end of the authority spectrum. In this sense, communities become subject to symbolic violence from the police and other state apparatuses if, or when, they challenge the authority of the police. At the risk of employing a form of methodological reductionism, other Bourdieusian concepts are not employed (habitus, field and capital); however, Maton (2008) has stated that these concepts should not be seen as being independent entities. The reason for their exclusion here is that these concepts are not directly relevant to the focus of this study.

Community policing

The ZRP's fundamental structures of community policing are CCCs, NWC and HOS, among others. The Bureau of Justice Assistance (1994) identified the NWC and CCCs, especially as effective and inclusive community policing initiatives in which traditional leaders are involved.

The key informants acknowledged that the introduction of community policing initiative was a prudent and welcome development in their communities. Key informant 1 stated that the community policing initiative was introduced after an increase in crime in the area studied and referred to the initiative as reflecting collective consensus by the community. Therefore, it can be inferred that an increase in crime instils fear and negatively affects the community's sense of safety from any criminal activity. Whether real or perceived, such fear of crime—if not managed—normally inculcates an irreversible high degree of apprehension and insecurity within the community.

The dire consequences of prevalent crimes such as murder, rape, unlawful entry and theft (burglary), stock theft (theft of livestock) and robbery lead to the loss of life and property. Key informant 1 also believed that since the rural community is almost 60 kilometres away from the police station, available community policing initiatives and structures help to promote the exchange of useful crime intelligence between the police and the community. Asked to elaborate on the community policing initiative, he stated:

> In this initiative, we require the active participation of business leaders, churches, schools and the community in general. It is against this backdrop that we have the Neighbourhood Watch Committees, Junior Call, Crime Consultative Committees, Business Forum Against Crime in Zimbabwe amongst other initiatives. Traditional leaders have also been roped in, an attempt to bring together the police and the community closer. You would find that when we want to carry out some awareness campaigns, traditional leaders help by mobilising the community. This initiative has produced positive results.

According to the Bureau of Justice Assistance (1994), moves to involve the community in policing strategies have gained momentum in various countries where both the police and the community explore effective and affordable ways of promoting public safety. Community policing also enhances quality of life by inhibiting crime and promoting social cohesion. Prior to community involvement, the desired goal of promoting peace and security could not be achieved (key informant 3) and as such, there was no sense of safety among members of the community. This is consistent with Trojanowicz (1994) and Peak (1994) who described community policing, mostly in developed countries as a philosophy and organisational strategy that promotes a nascent partnership between the police and people and is touted as a dominant policing strategy against crime awareness and prevention.

The Bureau of Justice Assistance (1994) posited that community leaders are beginning to realise that they have a role to play in neighbourhood safety. Observations by informants in this study are evidence that community policing initiatives in their areas are not only sound but effective as well, as it enables them to live peacefully without the fear of crime.

Thus, it can be concluded that community policing is not the responsibility of one group or stakeholder but an inclusive process of engagement between various groups in the community. Such an all-encompassing participatory approach fosters acceptable and effective community policing and crime prevention activities. The participatory and assertive approach of communities and the resultant demonstration of symbolic capital translates into local level contests of domination in local politics.

Role of traditional leaders in crime prevention

Makahamadze, Grand and Tavuyanago (2009) propounded that traditional leaders are the custodians of security, peace and human rights in most rural communities. Dodoi (2013) also added that traditional leaders are appointed according to traditional norms and customs within their jurisdictions. Given the above considerations, traditional leaders are respected and deified

by their subjects because of their customary status and functions. In the Zimbabwean context, they are perceived as influential and wield authority so that members of the community abide by the country's laws. This is in line with the response of key informant 2, when asked to outline the role of traditional leaders in the community, "We are all subjects under traditional leaders, we respect and abide by what they say".

However, when probed on their current role in their communities, traditional leaders argued that their customary and traditional powers were being constrained by several social, political and legal factors, consistent with their struggle for resources in the political and cultural domains. They cited politicians as key antagonists who have gradually and systematically usurped the customary roles and powers of traditional leaders.

To understand these observations, the dual structures of local governance are instructive here (Tabona-Ncube 2015). As a legacy of colonialism, politicians wield more political capital by virtue of being recognised as representatives of a de facto legitimate political structure in the country, in contradistinction to traditional leaders, whose ambit is often confined to a relatively small geopolitical area. Similarly, Makahamadze, Grand and Tavuyanago (2009) strongly believed that state and administrative policies have had an adverse effect on chiefs in their exercise of traditional roles. The state interference directly relates to Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence. Despite claims to traditional authority, chiefs are subjected to pressures and controls from 'formal' structures of political authority.

Despite these challenges, the key informants agreed that traditional leaders are using their position, power and influence to transform Zimbabwe into a peaceful nation.

Traditional leaders were also in agreement that they still retain influence over their communities, probably evidence of deeply rooted cultural capital. They were aware of their role in crime prevention, community safety, peace and security. Thus, they are inexorable stakeholders in fighting crime, ensuring community safety and promoting crime awareness in their communities. The focus group participants and key informants agreed that traditional leaders have a direct and indirect role as actors in crime prevention. The findings revealed that village heads and headmen have taken the cue from their paramount chief in supporting the community policing strategy and crime prevention activities in their jurisdictions.

In an interview, key informant 1 explained that traditional leaders play a pivotal role in the recruitment and mobilisation of NWC members. The Bureau of Justice Assistance (1994) envisaged that NWCs are pivotal to community policing in any context. Members of the NWC are seconded to their respective policing areas based on their moral qualities, ethics, social standing and commitment to serve. Traditional leaders are usually assigned the role of decision makers in the mobilisation and recruitment of members into the committee. Some informants stated that since the introduction of NWCs in their respective areas, there has been a reduction in crime and crime-related incidents.

According to key informant 1, NWC members are ascribed powers of arrest as peace officers under the law. This power must be understood as being qualified because citizens are empowered to effect citizen's arrests under stipulated conditions. Nonetheless, the NWCs are viewed as viable proxies for regular police officers, who are located at the local police station almost 60 kilometres away. Their probity in expediently detecting crimes, preserving evidence or attending to crime scenes and preserving evidence   are key testimonies of them being invaluable and cardinal officers in the management of crime. It can be inferred that traditional leaders are vital in legitimising the NWCs because they facilitate the recruitment of individuals who have a social standing and are accepted by their communities. The social acceptance of these committees has primarily contributed to their success, as communities have confidence in their derivative role as the local regular police.

Traditional leaders are also spearheading the mobilisation of businesspeople to support the ZRP with moral and material resources (key informant 1). Key informants stated that the support offered by the business community has helped to resource community programmes aimed at crime prevention. For instance, the local police and NWC members were offered transport to carry out joint patrols in the area. Participants explained that because of this initiative, they were able to reduce crimes such as stock theft, unlawful entry, theft and robbery. As highlighted by some commentators (Bureau of Justice Assistance 1994; COPS 2008; Teffo-Menziwa, Mullick and Dlamini 2010), the business community plays a critical role in community policing. Often, the police suffer a resource gap in crime prevention operations, which is filled by mobilising local business people, especially through the provision of transport and logistical assistance.

Some local business people are also members of the CCC (key informant 1), who meet and deliberate on the formulation of crime prevention activities and resource mobilisation strategies. These members also utilise the CCC as a platform to channel or communicate community needs to the police. Key informants acknowledged the role of traditional leaders in facilitating interaction between police and the business community.

The findings also showed that traditional leaders mobilise villagers to work with the police. Key informant 2 revealed that traditional leaders in the community were deified and held great influence over their subjects. Similarly, SAfAIDS (2011) reported that traditional leaders remain influential in the southern regions of Zimbabwe. Such influence means that it becomes easier for the police to interact with members of the community (key informant 1). This informant also claimed that the police conducted crime awareness campaigns focused mainly on sexual and gender-based violence, while traditional leaders mobilised their communities to attend these crime awareness and prevention campaigns and meetings. Subjects are obligated to attend as both a sign of obedience to custom and an exercise of civic duty.

Traditional leaders reported that they play a pivotal role in the prevention and reduction of crime in their communities. Through their involvement in these community initiatives, they were able to apply customary law and acquire contemporary legal knowledge on sexual and gender-based violence to protect women and children. As described by SAFAIDS (2011), traditional leaders are custodians of custom and culture since they possess the required influence to proscribe values and beliefs that are detrimental to social order in the community. Similarly, Rukuni et al. (2015) affirmed that traditional leaders play a pivotal role in settling community disputes in rural Zimbabwe. They also corroborated that traditional leaders are regarded as the custodians of customary law, and as such, they receive the bulk of cases involving mostly antisocial behaviour and violence against women.

Traditional leaders indicated that they engender protective cultural environments within their communities. They reported that they employed their significant influence to promote positive and culturally acceptable behaviour. They also stated that they sought to actively prohibit socio-cultural norms and values that may promote crime and unethical conduct within their communities. The female participants reported that traditional leaders in their communities confronted sexual and gender-based violence in all its forms.

The million-dollar question to ask therefore is, what do all these assertions and observations tell us about the institution of traditional leadership and the role of traditional leaders in local policing in the post-colonial state? There is a clear demonstration of the relevance of traditional authority across both formal state policing and informal community policing. The influence of traditional leaders is broad. Moreover, they engage with various stakeholders with little restriction. They reside with the people; constantly interact with their subjects as opposed to politicians who only emerge or get closer to communities to solicit to be voted into office. While politicians may usurp their authority, it is traditional leaders who continue to wield significant

cultural authority. This is evident in their ability to influence community members in policing forums.

Conclusions

Based on these findings, the study concluded that community policing is effective in facilitating the prevention and reduction of crime under Chief Madliwa in the Nkayi district of Zimbabwe. The ZRP has forged a strong partnership with traditional leaders to create robust community policing and crime prevention initiatives in the community. Traditional leaders play a central role in the mobilisation and recruitment of NWC members. The committee and its members are a vital cog of viable community policing. Traditional leaders also mobilise the business community to provide the police with needed resources—mainly in the form of transport and logistics—to carry out crime prevention activities. Public crime awareness meetings organised by the police provide a direct channel of communication between the police and the community. By exerting their influence on subjects to attend these meetings, traditional leaders have facilitated legitimisation of these initiatives and enabled relationships to develop between the police and rural communities. As traditional leaders confront violence in all its forms, vulnerable groups like women and children feel safer in the community. As such, the study can conclusively state that through the deployment of various forms of crime prevention strategies by community members and other stakeholders, traditional leaders have played an indispensable role in community policing and have had positive effects on crime prevention.

Recommendations

Based on its research objectives and findings, the study recommends that the ZRP incorporate strategies that promote sustainable, consistent and enduring cooperation with traditional leaders if community policing is to continue to be effective. There is also a need to allocate adequate funding to grow current and future community policing initiatives. The key aspects of the programme to be developed and considered for additional funding include training and development of both the community police and principal actors, such as traditional and civic leaders. In seeking to achieve its strategic mission of becoming a world-class police service by the year 2020, the ZRP should view community policing as the future of sustainable policing. The government of Zimbabwe is encouraged to create an environment that motivates traditional leaders to work towards crime reduction in their communities. For example, formulating and implementing education programmes at the district or ward level, following consultation with traditional leaders, villagers and other stakeholders on ways of improving community policing strategies, can be a worthwhile endeavour. Monetary incentives for NWC members and the provision of transport resource in the form of motorbikes (or even bicycles) can make them feel recognised and motivate and enable them to attend crime scenes expeditiously.

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