

Promises of Community Policing: Assessing the Impact of Community Policing in Reducing Fear of Crime in Tanzania, a Case of Dar Es Salaam City

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Abstract

This study was carried out to assess the impact of Community Policing in reducing fear of crime in Tanzania was conducted in Dar es Salaam City from March to May, 2013. The study covered around 550 respondents. The main tool of data collection was field research survey using Paper and Pen interviewing approach. Findings indicated that the perception on impact of Community policing in reducing fear of crime is good. The findings also indicate that there is poor impact of Community policing in reducing fear of crime. The study has further demonstrated that the impact of Community policing in reducing fear of crime is satisfactory. Generally, the results of the current study revealed that there are perceived an improvement of Community policing in reducing fear of crime in Dar es Salaam City since its inauguration. In conclusion, Community policing promises are inadequate in solving problems of fears and disorders. Different stakeholders should be involved in this programme and people need to play their part. Community safety has to get to the heart of the problem by planning, learning, and investing in security matters. Involvement of different stakeholders and institutions, private security companies, education should join to the program to ensure that solutions are found to long running problems of safety and security in communities by using local problem-solving techniques for petty offences.

Keywords: Police, Community policing, Fear of Crime, Stakeholders, Communities

1. Introduction

The police plays important role without which the sustenance of order, legality, development and democracy may be difficult. Therefore, any pro-poor change initiative must take account of the facilitative and inhibitive roles of the police in society (Alemika E.E.O and Chukwuma, I.C, UD). The primary role of police is policing – securing compliance with existing laws and conformity with precepts of social order. But the police are not the only agency involved in policing, in the broad sense of the term. Policing has always been necessary in all societies for the preservation of order, safety and social relations. The necessity of policing becomes even more evident in modern societies characterized by diversities and contradictions arising from population heterogeneity, urbanization, industrialization, conflicting ideologies on appropriate socio-political and economic form of organization. The diverse nature of policing function calls for concerted efforts by involving communities and therefore is a shared functions, hence Community Policing (CP) sets in.

Traditionally, policing was the responsibility of all adults in the community. In medieval society, all adult males were obliged to contribute towards the prevention, control of crime and disorder under the systems of ‘hue, cry and pursuit’ and the ‘watch and ward that preceded the emergence of specialized police forces as organs of the state (Alemika E.E.O. and Chukwuma, I.C. UD)¹. Additionally, traditional crime control measures rely upon members of the community playing an auxiliary role in support of official law enforcement agencies. The "community" ought to be part of the eyes and ears of the police, and merely assist their crime control efforts. But the emergence of the state, with its vast bureaucracies anchored on centralization, hierarchical power structure and professional staff changed the traditional policing philosophy rooted in the idea of policing as everybody’s business, that is CP.

Community Policing is democracy in action. It requires the active participation of all stakeholders such as local government, civic, business leaders, public, private agencies, residents, churches, schools and hospitals. All who share a concern for the welfare of the neighborhood should bear responsibility for safeguarding that welfare. CP is being advocated by leaders at the highest levels of government. Additionally, it has been suggested that CP can play a primary role in changing the way all government services are provided at the community level (BJA, 1994).

1.1. Safety and Security Challenges

The question of fear destabilizes everything ranging from socio-economic to political affairs. Fear of crime is a social and political fact with concrete existence as Cordner, G. (2010) had this to say: *consequences for big-city life. The costs of fear are both individual and collective. Fear can confine people to their homes, and it undermines their trust in their neighbors and, especially, in their neighbors' children. Fear is a key "quality of life" issue for many people. Research also indicates that concern about crime has bad consequences for the neighborhoods in which we live. Fear leads to withdrawal from public life, and it undermines informal and organized efforts by the community to control crime and delinquency. It is difficult to organize activities in neighborhoods where people fear their own neighbors. Fear undermines the value of residential property and thus the willingness of owners to maintain it properly. When customers and even employees fear entering a commercial area, the viability of businesses located there is threatened* (Cordner, G. 2010).

During 2014 and 2015 there erupted group of hooligans who threatened people in some parts Tanzania Dar es Salaam in particular coined as 'Panya Road²'. The gangs comprised about 510 young culprits and three ringleaders were arrested by instilling fear to the community. Lwangili, J (2015) quoted Commissioner of Police Special Zone Dar es Salaam that:

"... POLICE in Dar es Salaam are still carrying out an operation in different parts of the city to arrest all young people who are members of a criminal group known as 'Panya Road' who are alleged to have invaded and attacked people.." (Lwangili, J. 2015).

More importantly, the communities were silent at their homes, businesses and observing early reporting to avoid the menaces might have caused by the "Panya" Road business. Although it is clear that the fear of crime in most part of Dar es Salaam City is common, there is no documentation on the impact of community policing in reducing fear of crime as socio-economic activities are done during the threat period. Therefore, the aim of this study, was to assess the impact of community policing in reducing fear of crimes in the said City, and provide a general picture for policy and decision-makers of the side effects of fear of crime as far as sustainable socio-economic development is concerned.

2.0 Materials And Methods

2.1 Study Area

The study was conducted in Dar es Salaam City. The City is located at 6048' South, 39017' East (-6.8000, 39.2833), on a natural harbor on the Eastern coast of Africa, with sandy beaches in some areas. Administratively, the Dar es Salaam region is divided into three districts: Ilala, Kinondoni, and Temeke. Dar es Salaam is the largest city in Tanzania, with a population increase of 5.6 percent per year from 2002 to 2012.

Safety and security is a constitutional and legal obligation of local authorities in Tanzania, which requires to maintain peace, order and tranquility within their areas of jurisdiction. Most local authorities lack the capacity, expertise and resources to implement this duty. In 1997 the Dar es Salaam City Commission sought support from UN-habitat and the International center for the prevention of crime (ICPC), based in Montreal Canada, to provide technical assistance by building the capacity and mobilizing resources to enable the authority implement this obligation through a Safer City program. The main goal was to develop a sustainable crime prevention strategies based on local partnership approach, involving the main social and institutional actors, enabling citizens to participate in making their city safer place from crime. The prevalence of fear of crime in Dar es Salaam city and its suburbs were the major reasons for selecting the study area. Logistic support from Regional Police Commanders was another reason for selecting the named city.

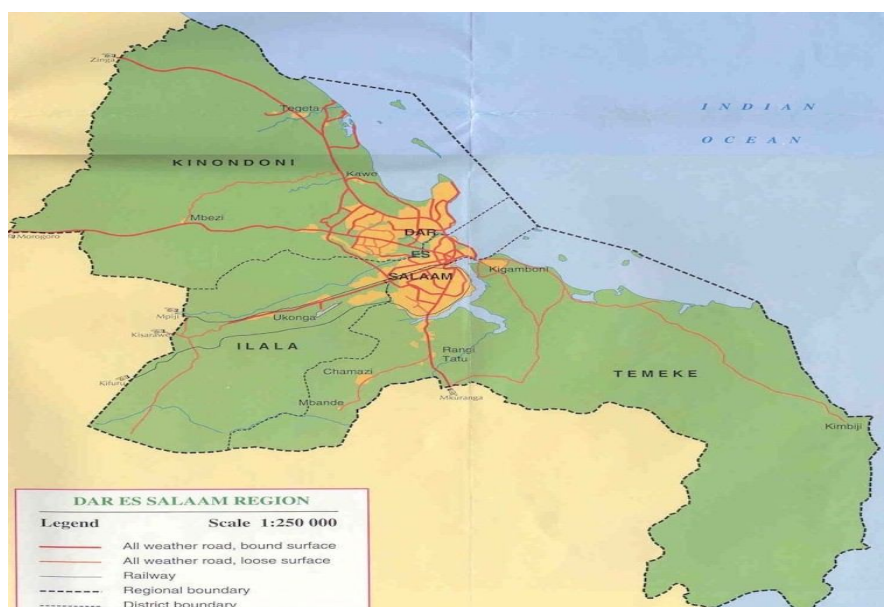


Figure 1: Map showing study police regions

2.2 Data Sources and Collection

The study was conducted from March to May, 2013. The data used were primary data. The sample population covered around 550 respondents. The main tool of data collection was field research survey using Paper and Pen Interviewing approach to fill in questionnaires by the aid of researchers.

2.3 Data Processing and Analysis

The study used quantitative research method of data analysis. Then data was coded by assigning code numbers to questionnaires. Researchers edited all the questionnaires received from the field by checking the correctness and filling in the respective codes. On completion of data entry, the data was cleaned before starting data entry in the computer software. The raw data were analysed through the aid of Computer software- Microsoft Excel and Statistical Packages for Social Scientist (SPSS) IBM version 20 since the researchers are literate in these software and interpretation was done through table.

3. Results and Discussion

This impact of CP in reducing fear of crime examined the perceptions in fear of crime in the communities. Fear of crime is an important social factor with real consequences for individuals, neighborhoods and communities as a whole. In this light, the finding of a substantial decline in fear nodes well for the future of the societies. Crime is a multi-dimensional issue; in this regard actions on crime, particularly of a preventive measure can only be inferred rather than directly intended. They virtually have trickle down effects to all the sectors of the different individuals, communities, institutions and different government ministries.

In trying to assess the impact of community policing in reducing fear of crime, respondents were asked to level the rate of fear of crime. Table 3.1 presents the perception of interviewed communities with respect to fear of crime. These perceptions were collected from a total sample of 550 respondents from the following Tanzania Police Force (TPF) administrative regions namely; Dar es Salaam Special Zone, Ilala, Temeke, and Kinondoni. The perceptions were recorded in frequencies and percentages as well as levels whereas very poor is the lowest and very good is the highest while the intermediate perception was recorded as satisfactory.

Table: 3.1 Impact of Community policing in Reducing Fear of Crime

Level	Frequency	Percent
Very Poor	15	2.7
Poor	44	8.0
Satisfactory	219	39.8
Good	200	36.4
Very Good	72	13.1
Total	550	100.0

Source: Community policing baseline survey, 2013

Study findings in table 3.1 indicates that on the average the perception on impact of CP in reducing fear of crime is 49.5 percent good. Few interviewed people 10.7 percent were of the view that there is low impact of CP in reducing crime and fear. Whereby, 39.8 percent were of the view that the impact of CP reducing fear of crime is satisfactory. Generally, the study revealed that there are perceived improvement of CP in reducing fear of crime in Dar es Salaam City.

Moreover, the consulted people during the field survey said that the reasons for this good impact is improved relationship between the TPF and communities and cooperation among community themselves by forming different groups of neighborhood watch for patrol, environment conservation, security, incidence crime and criminal reporting as well as different CP programs that gave them great awareness of the program. The overall impact is increased peace and tranquility in the societies which allow people to do their daily activities without fear of crime of their lives and properties.

However, consultations suggested that there is variation in decline of crime depending on geographical location. It is contented that, there is no uniformity in types of crime reduced; it depends on the nature of crime and people's perception. Skogan *et al.*, (2004) asserted that fear of crime represents more than just the level of officially recorded crime and it does not merely reflect people's objective risk of being victimized. Instead, their expressions of fear reflect a range of beliefs and experiences. These include people's views of the actual risks they face, the threats they potentially might face, the likelihood that someone will come to their aid if they encounter trouble and their chances of remaining in one piece if they do get in trouble. Fear is also linked to people's views of the effectiveness of the police and the capacity of their neighbors to control crime (Skogan, *et al.*, 2004).

The study of Skogan *et al.*, (2004) is supported by the study United Republic of Tanzania-URT, (2000) which sought the perception of the respondents about which crime types they feared most in the area where they live, respondents expressions of fear were house breaking and theft (37%), followed by mugging (23%). Since these are the two crimes also identified as most prevalent, people probably fear those crimes they believe to have the greatest chance of becoming a victim of it. It is however important to note the role of other factors such as anxiety about the consequences of crime: 9% of the people said the crime they feared most was murder and 5% said it was rape. Although the actual risk of victimisation of murder is very low in Dar es Salaam (only 1% of the people reported a murder in their immediate family in the past five years) nearly one in ten people fear this crime more than any other. Although anxiety about crime does not always match the actual risk of crime, fears should not be regarded as irrational. Rather than accusing people of "worrying too much", fears should be addressed where they occur (URT, 2000). The study indicated that there was good improvement in crime reduction with remarkable success in terms of crime prevention, reduction and control through arresting, and exposing culprits involved in crimes committed or about to be committed.

According to Skogan, *et al.*, (2004) in their study conducted in Chicago indicated factors such as improving neighborhood conditions, decreasing gun availability, changes in drug markets, changes in police effectiveness, and the growing capacity of the city's neighborhoods to defend themselves, are linked to the declining level of violence in the city (Skogan, *et al.*, 2004).

According to the study of URT, (2000) revealed that the vast majority of the people (94%) in the city of Dar es Salaam feel safe walking in their areas during the day. Nearly two thirds of the people (61%), however, felt unsafe walking in their areas during the night. Women, young people aged between 15-25 years old, those with the least education and those living in 'new suburbs' and 'established suburbs' felt least safe after dark in their areas of residence. Fear of crime is higher among women than among men: they are the ones who think that they have the greatest chance of victimisation or worry most about the consequences of crime, whether psychological, social, physical or economic (URT, 2000).

In implementing the efforts enshrined by CP in reducing fear of crime, the police and other safety and security stakeholders should give support to CP groups by providing equipment, training and technological system as well as financial resources. Also TPF should continue mobilizing and sensitizing community to form more workable and affordable groups especially in congested and marginalized areas who are mostly affected by the consequences of crime and criminality in their communities. Additionally, there should be a knowledge disseminated about crime prevention and risk avoidance behaviour.

Moreover, initiative have to be devolved by delegating power to the lower level of community both in central and local government so as to enable leaders such as Ward Executive Officers through their Ward Development Committees (WDC's) to initiate proposals for by-laws, to ensure the welfare and wellbeing of residents for suppression of crime and maintenance of peace and order, by facilitating smooth and effectual operations of CP and other security groups in the communities performing the same activity (URT, 2000). Notably, through CP implementation there was increasing perceptions of safety and decreasing fear of crime: anecdotal evidence suggests that CP can increase perceptions of safety and decrease the fear of crime, equally so, reducing crime, disorder and anti-social behavior (Coquilhat, J. 2008)

4.0 Conclusion

4.1 Major Findings

The study indicated that the perception on impact of CP in reducing fear of crime is good, or and satisfactory. Generally, the study revealed that there are perceived an improvement of CP in reducing fear of crime in Dar es Salaam City since its inauguration.

However, if we want to maintain safety in the City, CP alone cannot solve all these problems of fears and disorders. Different stakeholders should be involved in this program in playing their part. Community safety has to get to the heart of the problem by planning, learning and investing in security matters. Involvement of different stakeholders and institutions, private security companies, education should join to the programme to ensure solutions are found to long running problems of safety and security in communities by using local problem-solving techniques for petty offences. Community members in Dar es Salaam city need to enhance community wellbeing and quality of life through the use of proactive, problem-solving approaches for reduction of fear of crime and facilitation of crime prevention; create CP forums as a means to facilitate partnership between the police and the community as well as to engage in joint problem identification and consultative problem solving. Interestingly, police and the community should work together in partnership and consultation with particular reference to the role police and the public play in resolving issues and problems.

4.2 Policy Recommendations

The sustainability of CP in Tanzania depends on improved policy environment, skilled, knowledgeable and motivated human resource, sustainable financial systems, equipment and technological systems. There is a need for the government to develop national policy on CP that will guide on better police practice, build trust of people to the police, enhancing community engagement and improvement of police as well as local government agencies hence reducing fear of crime. There was need also of determining types of people who will be hired, the way they will be managed, how they were going to be integrated into organizational framework and general operations that will enforce the success of CP initiatives.

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