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NGENANI

THE ZIMBABWE EZEKIEL GUTI UNIVERSITY JOURNAL
OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIETAL TRANSFORMATION

ISSN 2957-8558 (Print)

Vol. 2 Issues (1&2), 2023

Published by the Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University Press
Stand No. 1901 Barrassie Rd,
Off Shamva Road
Box 350
Bindura, Zimbabwe

Typeset by Divine Graphics
Printed by Divine Graphics

SUBSCRIPTION AND RATES
Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University Press Office

Stand No. 1901 Barrassie Rd,
Off Shamva Road
Box 350, Bindura, Zimbabwe
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E-mail: zegupress@admin.uz.ac.zw http://www.zegu.ac.zw/press

About the Journal

JOURNAL PURPOSE

The purpose of the *Ngenani - Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University Journal of Community Engagement and Societal Transformation Review and Advancement* is to provide a forum for community engagement and outreach.

CONTRIBUTION AND READERSHIP

Sociologists, demographers, psychologists, development experts, planners, social workers, social engineers, and economists, among others whose focus is on community development.

JOURNAL SPECIFICATIONS

Ngenani - Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University Journal of Community Engagement and Societal Transformation Review and Advancement

ISSN 2957-8558(Print)

SCOPE AND FOCUS

The journal is a forum for the discussion of ideas, scholarly opinions and case studies of community outreach and engagement. Communities are both defined in terms of people found in a given locale and defined cohorts, like the children, the youth, the elderly and those living with a disability. The strongest view is that getting to know each community or subcommunity is a function of their deliberate participation in

matters affecting them by the community itself. The journal is produced bi-annually.

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Articles must be original contributions, not previously published and should not be under consideration for publishing elsewhere.

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A total number of words: 5000-7000 words and set in 12-point font size width with 1.5 line spacing.
Language: British/UK English
Title: must capture the gist and scope of the article
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COLLECTIVE ACTION FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT: INSIGHTS FROM CHIMANIMANI RURAL DISTRICT OF ZIMBABWE

TIMOTHY MARANGO[1], LEONARD CHITONGO[2], HAPPWELL MUSARANDEGA[3]

Abstract

Despite considerable financial investments made since independence in 1980 to achieve rural development, there is not much tangible improvement in the lives and livelihoods of individuals, families and communities in Zimbabwe. The crux of the matter is lack of collective community action. Community collective action is a crucial social capital that can stir rural development. We argue that collective action has a huge potential to achieve sustainable people-centred development. The study adopts a case study approach, analysing the role played by community collective action in rural development in Chimanimani Rural District (CRD), Zimbabwe. A sample of 220 respondents were conveniently selected. Likert scale data was randomly collected from five out of 23 wards of the CRD. A descriptive data analysis was done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19.0. Emerging from the study, failure to invest appropriately in efforts designed to strengthen community collective action appears to be the missing link in rural development in African communities, including the CDR. The study concluded that community collective action is the major factor influencing rural development. It is a resilience builder that promotes trust among inhabitants of a

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community. The study recommends that development planners, scholars and policy-makers should go back to the drawing board and consider community collective action as a resilience strategy in development.

Keywords: *human factor, social capital.*

INTRODUCTION

Community collective action is a social capital and a contemporary global phenomenon. In sociological terms, and borrowing from enlightenment philosophers such as Rousseau, Locke and Hobbes, collective action is viewed as a social contract. Collective action is not an easy concept to define due to its fluidity and intangibility nature. Its applicability is evident in the tangible results of community action. It places grassroots community people at the centre of their own development processes (DFID, 2000; Macchi, 2011). People are considered as the primary resource or development stakeholders, not recipients or objects of development. Collective action is defined as an action taken by a group in pursuit of members perceived shared interests (Marshall, 1988). Meinzen-Dick and diGregorio (2004) regard collective action as the pursuit of a goal(s) by more than one person (either directly or on its behalf through an organisation). Ostrom (2004) contends that collective action occurs when more than one individual is required to contribute to an effort to achieve an outcome. Social capital refers to the sum of trust, social solidarity, knowledge and information-sharing, mutual support, empowerment, leadership, encouragement and networking (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1993). Ostrom (1999) defines social capital as the shared knowledge, understandings, norms, rules and expectations about patterns of interactions that groups of individuals bring to a recurrent activity. It is from the idea of the word ―shared‖ where collective action comes in as social capital.

Community action, on the other hand, refers to a wide range of organised human activities and social actions. In simpler terms, it refers to community engagements or involvements. Dumbase (2018) argues that the purpose community action is to build community and social

capacity. This implies helping the community to share knowledge, skills and ideas. Community action inculcates community resilience, meaning assisting the community to support itself. Furthermore, community action enables the community to maintain and create wealth for itself. Dumbase (*ibid.*) gives examples of helping people to create employment for themselves or developing community enterprises for improved community livelihoods.

Community collective action is a tested concept. In some western societies, it has been tried and found to be an effective method for stimulating community development and a solution to some community social challenges, such as alcoholism. The following examples are the evidence of the importance of community collective action. Canada and the United States implemented a successful alcohol preventive community programme in the 1970s (Giesbrecht and Douglas, 1990; Greenfield and Zimmerman, 1993). Around the same years and a decade later, some few other European countries did the same (Holmila, 1997; WHO Regional Office for Europe, 1999). The Malmö community-based research, done in the 1970s in Sweden, was the pilot European community collective action project. The results of the study clearly demonstrated that under the right conditions, the positive effects on health can be dramatic (Allamani, 2015). The study revealed that an intervention for heavy drinkers, including early identification and brief information, together with periodic control of blood gamma-GT, leads to half the number of deaths among the control group (Kristenson *et al.*, 1983). While studies on community collective action have been conducted in Eurocentric setups, little, if any, has been done in Africa, and specifically in Chimanimani District of Zimbabwe, although the concept is not new in Africa.

Community collective action is one strength among African communities, although no scientific studies have been conducted on the subject. It is right at the core of *ubuntu/unhu*. *Ubuntu* in Africa is premised on a collective sense of ‗being' and responsibility (Bangura *et al*., 2007). Arguably, it can be seen as a smart version of the Marxist collectivism, in the European sense. From the Afrocentric viewpoint,

Turaki (2006) argues that people are not individuals, living in a state of independence, but part of a community. They live in a relationship and interdependence. Indeed, community is the cornerstone in African thought and life (Mbigi, 2005). Despite this sense of oneness, community does not remove individuality completely. This is evident in the idea that, *I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am* (Mbiti, 1969). One remains an individual, but is attached to the whole. Therefore, community collective action is naturally within the African child.

Another example was the *zunde ramambo/isiphala senkosi* (chief's granary) concept. In this, people pooled some resources that would be used to create a community agricultural field where every community member participated. The yield would be used to help the needy members of the community when need arose. This practice was a better method of helping needy members, better than the donor community food handouts. It was better in that even the recipients of the outputs of the *zunde/isiphala* would, at some point, participate in the production of the food. In other words, it was not free food, just like what the donor community does, which may promote laziness and the so-called donor dependence syndrome, but the sense of work to eat. *Zunde/isiphala* was a form of social security with a local preparedness strategy towards drought and famine mitigation. It promoted the spirit of family and food security. The chief's granary (*zunde/isiphala*) and (*humwe/nhimbe/ilima*) were said to be traditional strategies used in coping with the negative effects of climate change in Chimanimani District (Marango, 2017). Brazier (2015), in a comparative study, gives practical examples of coping strategies that were being practised in Muzarabani. These include social safety nets such as *zunde/isiphala*and *humwe/nhimbe/ilima* in which the community contributes grain and store to help the needy families during times of hardship. In all these, it is collective action in action.

Community collective action is an important social capital for any normal community. Furstenberg (1998) sees a positive relationship between social capital and community socio-economic success. McQuillan (1998) argues that relationships within the family and the

community are critical to the success of its posterity. Observe that collective action is all about relationships. Relationships of love, support, encouragement, knowledge and information are a prerequisite to development of the community. Therefore, collective action is the crux of community transformation. Willer (2014) sees collective action contributions earning individuals improved status in community by signalling their concern for the group's welfare, relative to their own.

Collective action promotes trust among the inhabitants of the community. While trust is a loaded and fluid term, Mcknight and Chervany (1996) argue that trust makes cooperative endeavours happen, because it is key to positive interpersonal relationships. During the organisational restructuring crisis in the 1990s, trust was found to be an asset, a social capital for organisations (Mayer *et al*., 1995; Mishra, 1996). Ortiz-Ospina and Roser (2015), did research on a world survey on trust. In the report, it was concluded that trust is a fundamental social capital and a key contributor to sustaining wellbeing outcomes, including economic development. Gould and Hijzen (2017) argue that trust is a key component of the social capital. They noted that trust enables participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives (Putnam 1995). From this, collective action is the crux of development. Collective action is, therefore, a rural development propeller.

Currently, there is inadequate research or literature that highlight the benefits of investments directed at strengthening collective action as a strategy for promoting rural development. This study, therefore, sought to assess the levels of collective action for rural development in some communities within the CRD of Zimbabwe. The aim of the study was to identify opportunities that could enhance the effectiveness of rural development initiatives. Specifically, it sought to build an understanding of the extent to which collective action, as a social capital, can serve as a vehicle for rural development. The results of this study revealed that failure to invest appropriately in efforts designed to strengthen social capital specifically collective action, appears to be the

missing link in rural development work carried out in African communities, including Chimanimani District.

It is noted that Zimbabwe, from 1980, when political independence was attained, considerable amounts of financial, technological and human resources, with the aim to propel rural development and reduce rural poverty, enhance the social, political and economic status of the people, was invested, but the country remain trapped in poverty (Marango, Francis and Adjibolosso, 2016). This reality is confirmed by the Rural Livelihoods Assessment of 2011, especially Chimanimani District (Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Council (ZimVac), 2011). This is despite the fact that the district has a sound resource base. It is this paradox that requires unlocking. The situation articulated above might have its roots in the application of Eurocentric approaches that ignored local realities (Koopman, 1991; Khoza, 1994; Mararike, 1999).

As alluded to in the examples above, community collective action is at the centre of thought and life in African settings. Modern day African development is Eurocentric. Parameters of development are defined in a European perspective. It shuns the Afrocentric perspectives, viewing them as primitive and barbaric. The only major challenge is that western mainstream theories of development have rarely tried to build on this pillar of African community vitality. It can be argued further that Africa's strength still lies in those areas where the wealth of the west is weakest.

COLLECTIVE ACTION THEORY AND CONCEPTS

Theories of collective action trace their origins from Olson (1965). Olson focused on behavioural traits the assumptions and methodological issues borrow from neo-classical economics. Poteete and Ostrom (2003) argue that policies and programmes should be in the public interest. However, politics and power dynamics determine development policies and trajectories. Therefore, the participation of people in policy identification, design implementation and evaluation require participation of various pressure groups (McLean, 2000). The classical behaviouralist view is that groups are formed because of a common

interest which individual members seeks to pursue. Groups of common interests are expected to act on behalf of their common interests in as much as individuals also act on their personal interests (Olson, 1965) Olson's major assumption is that individuals are rational beings. Since society is riddled with people with different beliefs, cultures norms and values, it makes the whole concept of rationality highly idealised. Economists argue that rationale people will not mobilise resources to pay pubic goods, especially when they feel that they will not benefit directly. This is why governments coerce the public to pay tax. In Zimbabwe, the government introduced a controversial 2% tax for all money transfers to fund government activities and programmes as the economic meltdown bit Zimbabwe.

There are several concepts that have evolved from the collective action theory since its inception. One of the most useful characterisations of Olson's model is the N-person prisoner's dilemma. The prisoners' dilemma, perhaps the most famous of all games, has been studied extensively by many authors (McCarty and Meirowitz, 2007). It has been used to explain how disputes in communities can be resolved. In order to achieve collective action, it encourages some form of shared responsibilities. Another prominent concept is the free-rider concept. A free rider is a person who benefits or utilises resources and services without contributing to their sustainability (Oliver and Marwell, 1988). The free-rider problem is one of the simplest ways to understand how communities fail to formulate sustainable collective action strategies, even when everyone will benefit (Hardin, 1971). Thus, the greatest challenge faced by planners is on how to overcome this problem. Public institutions should formulate social welfare programmes for the vulnerable groups within communities, for instance, women, children, the sick and elderly people. At the same time, they should develop innovative strategies to motivate the able bodied to enhance production systems.

METHODOLOGY

Chimanimani Rural District is the study site. It is located in the Eastern Highlands province of Manicaland, Zimbabwe. Chimanimani is bordered by Mozambique in the east, to the South is Chipinge District,

Buhera District in West and Mutare District to the North. The population of the district is approximately 133 810 people (Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT), 2012). Of these, 52% are females. The district has a highly rugged terrain marked by the Chimanimani Mountain range. The district altitude ranges between 6 000 m and 600 m in the East and in the West, respectively. The annual rainfall ranges between 200 mm and 1 000 mm depending on the natural geographical region of the district.

The district is rich in natural resources. These resources include natural and commercial forests, fertile soils and precious minerals such as gold, diamonds, lime and copper. Chimanimani boasts spectacular tourist sites, namely the Bridal Veil Falls, Pera Falls, Tessa's Pool, Vhimba Botanical Reserves, Hot Springs resort near Nyanyadzi and Chimanimani Mountains, locally known as Mawenje. These and others make the district a viable tourist destination. The survey design was employed using a Likert-scale as used as a data collection tool for community perceptions on the level of collective action. Nonprobability sampling methods (i.e., convenience and judgmental sampling) were employed. This was done because the Chimanimani Rural District Council did not have clear records of its residents. Secondly, there were certain respondents with valuable information who could only be sampled purposively.
NB: SOME WARD NUMBERS SEEM TO HAVE MORE THAN NAME (E.G. MHANDARUME (WARD 2); WENGEZI (WARD 2 again)

Five out of 23 wards in the district, namely Mhandarume (Ward 2), Mhakwe (18), Chikwakwa (19), Chakohwa (3) and Chimanimani Urban (15) participated in the study. Mhandarume has a population of 2 938, Chakohwa, 4 492, Mhakwe, 2 457, Chikwakwa, 3 573 and Chimanimani urban, 3 647. From each ward, 44 respondents participated to represent various households. A total of 220 local residents participated in the study. Data was collected using a questionnaire and were entered into the computer using the Microsoft Excel software package. They were then imported into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19.0 for Windows (SPSS Inc). Frequencies of the scores of the

dimension social networking were calculated. The Kruskal-Wallis test for k-independent samples was used to determine if there were any differences in perceptions relating to the social capital dimensions among the wards. Post-hoc tests for effects that were found to be significantly different were then carried out using the independent samples Mann-Whitney test.

Ethical clearance was sought from the University of Venda Ethics Committee (Project No: SARDF/17/IRD/03/2802) and the Chimanimani Rural District Council, the local authority, to interview its residents and to get access to its records. Meetings with key stakeholders, i.e. District Administrator, local community, and political leadership, were carried out. Respondents' consent was sought before data collection. Those who participated understood what it meant to either participate or not. Personal details such as the names of respondents were not included on the questionnaire to protect them from possible reprisals. The researchers made it clear to the participants as to the way to the publication of the findings ensuring honesty and justice.

FINDINGS

LEVEL OF COLLECTIVE ACTION IN CHIMANIMANI DISTRICT

A large proportion (85%) of the respondents opposed their readiness to contribute in some way to projects initiated by the community without direct benefit to their individual capacity. Along the same lines, almost two thirds (59%) of the respondents expressed their disagreement with the fact that they participated in development programmes in their respective wards. Almost a third only (30%) were willing to cooperate and implement community-initiated development projects. On stakeholder's willingness to cooperate with the community, a smaller proportion (21 %) agreed that council was willing to cooperate and accept community-initiated development proposals. On the same tenet, only 20% of the respondents said that NGOs in their respective wards were willing to cooperate and implement development projects that originated from them. The level of collective action was low as

demonstrated by a large proportion of respondents (77%) expressing a sentiment that they were not willing to cooperate and assisting their fellow community member who would have befallen in an unfortunate event.

Table 1: Respondents' perception of level of collective action in Chimanimani District

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
I am ready to contribute in some way in a development project initiated in my ward even if it does not benefit me directly.	5.1	7.6	2.5	39.9	44.9
I am participating actively in development programmes and projects in our ward.	16.2	16.3	8.1	29.7	29.7
Everyone is willing to cooperate and implement community-initiated development activities, e.g. repairing schools or roads without payment in my community.	13.3	17.1	17.7	23.4	28.5
If an unfortunate event befalls one member of my community, for example attachment of property because of debt or non-payment of fees for a child, our community members are willing to cooperate and assist.	5.1	8.9	9.5	42.4	34.2
The NGOs in our community are willing to cooperate and implement communityinitiated development programmes (that are not initiated by them).	1.3	7.0	12.7	47.5	31.6
Chimanimani Rural District Council is willing to cooperate and accept community-initiated development proposals.	7.0	13.9	20.3	36.1	22.8
I personally find sense in paying rates due to Council.	8.2	9.5	8.2	32.3	41.8

The Kruskal Wallis test and Mann Whitney U score were then used to establish whether there were any differences in the extent to which the perceptions of the respondents ranked the level of social capital in the

wards of the district. It was discovered that there was general disagreement on almost all the responses. There was significant difference on the perception that, ―Everyone is willing to cooperate and implement community-initiated development activities such as repairing schools or roads without expecting payment in return‖ ($p < 0.05$). Significant differences were also found on the perception that, ―The Rural District Council is willing to cooperate and accept proposals that originate from communities under its jurisdiction‖ ($p < 0.01$).

The potential to utilise collective action to drive the development agenda manifests in numerous ways in Chimanimani. This prevails even amongst the broad diversity of maginalised population groups, despite their lack of recognition in local development planning. Such underrated yet socially valuable groups include women, unemployed youths and elderly people. Typical focal points noted from the sampled wards where informal gatherings were found to be common are Wengezi (Ward 2), Chakohwa (Ward 3), Ngangu (Ward 15) Mhakwe (Ward 18) and Chikwakwa (Ward 19). With the escalating unemployment and poverty in Zimbabwe, large groups of youths were often spotted at growth points and rural service centres where they informally gather to share life challenges and possible livelihood options. At marketplaces across the district, women also share marketing and other livelihood sustenance strategies. It was widely noted from the study that the more the rural people were strained by socio-economic challenges in the district, the more they pooled their minds to evade various challenges by collectively sharing possible livelihood options. During the study, many elderly people in the district revealed that they form a rich but undervalued hub of local area knowledge. The elderly fraternity widely echoed the potential of their knowledge to be mainstreamed in various community development programmes.

Approximately 74% of the respondents did not get the sense in paying rates due to the local authority. The negative attitude follows the local people's grieving attitude towards the purpose for which funds are set aside. Disadvantaged people, situated deep in poor communities like

Chitimani (Ward 3) and Makandwa (Ward 19), lamented the poor state of their roads which hampers the movement of goods and people. The sick and elderly members of the community expressed disgruntlement with the long distances they travel to access healthcare services. This explains why only a smaller proportion (21%) agreed that Council was willing to cooperate and accept community-initiated development proposals.

DISCUSSION

The fact that only 13% of the 220 respondents were ready to contribute in some way in a development project initiated in their ward, even if it did not benefit them directly, is a sign of a severely low level of collective action. This is demonstration of the individualistic agenda, which could be a result of social exclusion within the development programmes and projects implemented in communities. In other words, it is an indirect indication of lack of trust that their efforts will benefit them as individuals. This implies that those facilitating rural development, namely Chimanimani Rural District Council and the District Development Coordinator's Office, are not harnessing the existing potential for participatory decision-making methods for community collective action. The general lack of trust amongst community members in Chimanimani mirrors the countrywide scenario in which many people dissociate themselves from development programmes that they believe are biased towards the interests of governing political heavyweights in Zimbabwe (Makumbe, 2010; Manase, 2016). This is a common socio-political misnomer that negates the community development agenda. Nevertheless, global comparisons of trust attitudes around the world today suggest that, indeed, trust among community people is possible (Gould and Hijzen, 2017).

The Chimanimani scenario is against the *ubuntu/unhu* principle. While the district is endowed with diverse knowledgeable population groups, including disadvantaged people, such social capital is not effectively harnessed for developmental purpose. Mbigi (1997) argues that at the heart of *ubuntuunhu* is the idea of unity, working together and having love for each other. Unfortunately, the rich hub of knowledge, such as

the elderly within community settings, is not fully capitalised by community development agencies including the Chimanimani Rural District Council. A case in point is indigenous climate knowledge, which is now widely understood to be an effective livelihood sustenance strategy (Chanza and de Wit, 2015; Musarandega and Chingombe, 2018) in the backdrop of climate change phenomena. This militates against the African tenets of social giving, was used by Africans to combat poverty (Chipkin and Ngqulunga, 2008). The fact that most rural development projects come as blueprints, already packaged for communities, remove community members from buying in and develop the sense of community membership. Willer (2014), however, notes that, low levels of contribution leave the entire community worse off than if all had contributed.

Studies on the contribution of collective action to economic development are clear that investing in social capital, community collective action being one, correlates with economic development of community. Gupta *et al*. (201) confirms a continued positive role of social capital effects on economic performance of any society. The results of this article revealed a sense of dissociation of individuals from community activities, with only a small number (32%) of community members willing to participate actively in development programmes and projects within their wards. Women and girls have their roles underplayed, yet the United Nations recognises them as key players in various community development programmes (Brazier, 2015; Ray, 2016). However, the tendency to exclude disadvantaged members of the society has often proved to bear very negative impacts on the individual community members and community development in general.

Hobbes (1991) described the condition of an individual in the absence of civil society (collective action) as ―solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short‖ . We remember when we were at school, singing this song in primary school and church Sunday school; ―The more we are togethertogether, the happier we would be, your friends are my friends-my friends are your friends, the happier we would be‖ . Thus, the song lyrics highlight the essence of collective action. This was a preparation

of what educational philosophers called young adults, who would be ready to stir future community development. The results, thus, give insights on the need for community empowerment, meaning empowering of individuals who, together, make up the community. This is done through participatory decision making. Chikerema (2013) sees citizen participation as a desired and integral part of community development, which should be present in policy-making, implementation and evaluation processes.

This study revealed that only 30% of community members were willing to cooperate and implement community-initiated development activities such as repairing schools or roads without payment in their community. This indicates low level of trust among members that their contribution would be recognised. This also results in very low level of collective action. The World Value Survey alludes that people can be trusted basing on the results in countries such as Norway, Sweden and Finland. In these countries, more than 60% of respondents indicated that trust among community members is possible (Gould and Hijzen, 2017). In the absence of traditional collective action, platforms such as the *dare/inkundla*, individuals are not assured of any benefit out of their effort. *Dare/Inkundla* (singular tense), *matare/inkundla* (plural) (Shona/Ndebele) or *imbizo (SiSwati)* means a gathering of a family or community to examine and resolve issues of mutual interest. It is an institution of leadership and sets out rules that are binding on all. *Dare/Inkundla* is all-encompassing. It can be viewed as a platform for counselling and developing persons, families and communities. Also noteworthy is that it is a vehicle through which cultural norms and values are transmitted from one generation to another (Haruperi, 2003). As a platform for dialogue, *dare/inkundla* provides opportunities for effective communication. A *dare/inkundla* gives recognition as a positive incentive for good contributions made, and reprimand as a negative incentive to lazy and non-cooperating members.

From the theories of collective action, the best-known solution offered to the collective action problem is the administration of selective incentives (Olson, 1965). Olson notes that selective incentives encourage

contributions to collective action, while, on the other hand, discourages free riding. This implies that selective incentives are a form of payments (or negative rewards) to motivate individuals to contribute towards public goods. This is supported by one collective action theory, the Status Characteristics Theory (SCT) (Berger *et al.,* 1966; 1989). Berger *et al.* (1972) argue that SCT portrays status as an individual's relative standing in a group, based on prestige, honour and deference. The SCT then describes how the individual in the group becomes differentiated based on status. This then makes accurate predictions for the levels of influence one has as a result from differently configured status hierarchies (Berger *et al.*, 1992).

The study revealed an astronomically low level (14%) of collective action based on the statement that, ―If an unfortunate event befalls one member of my community, for example attachment of property because of debt or non-payment of fees for a child, our community members are willing to cooperate and assist‖ . This is a dangerous state of collective action in which the whole community can perish without anyone willing to act. It is a one man for himself and God for us all game. A good example is when there was a general folding of arms following typhoid outbreak in Harare in 2017. Some international organisations, such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), came in and helped the government of Zimbabwe (WHO, 2017). Most locals maintained a wait-and-see attitude. Unfortunately, many people died due to the cholera. Later around mid-August 2018, the cholera spread to other parts of the country. It was only then that the government pleaded with various stakeholders to create a crowd fund in a bid to contain the outbreak. The general observation was that Zimbabwe, as a community of citizens, were ready to collectively contribute to the collective action initiative. This affirms the outcome of the World Value Survey (Gould and Hijzen, 2017), which asserts that collective action yields positive results. Several corporates and individuals contributed to the noble cause to contain the cholera pandemic. However, some stakeholders were sceptical that the funds were going to be misappropriated or diverted to individual people's pockets. The implication of the Chimanimani study on

collective action can as well be discussed in the realm of a global pandemic such as the deadly
Coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The WHO has affirmed that such deadly pandemics as COVID-19 require all parties to shun individualistic tendencies and come together to map viable ways of dealing decisively with the pandemics.

From a pessimistic view, one may say that the quick reaction may not have been the collective action spirit, but individualistic, since Zimbabwe had just experienced a highly disputed election. It could have been a strategy by the newly elected government to save itself from a political backlash. However, a good collective platform was set in the mobilisation of stakeholders to raise the much-needed funds. The concept of traditional *dare/inkundla* came into place, though it unfolded in a more modernised manner. This is when local companies and individuals came in to fight cholera collectively. Rukuni (2006), sees *dare/inkundla* as a relevant concept in development, the judiciary, conflict resolution and various ceremonies. It is important in the African context because it allows for democratic participation. *Dare/Inkundla* provides a platform for checks and balances, thereby allowing total participation by all members in arriving at consensus on a common issue. All over the world, the *dareinkundla* concept exists in a myriad of circumstances such as the family, community, business platforms, government gazettes, civic symposia and various global fora. *DareInkundla,* as places for arbitrary and frank discussion involving members of families and communities in Zimbabwe, has not received enough attention in development programmes and projects.

It was from the crowd funding *dare/inkundla*, that one telecommunications company went out of its way to ask for donations through its communications platforms. Due to the *ubuntu/unhu* spirit, many potential funders in the country eventually participated in the raising of cholera abatement funds. Key lessons were drawn from the cholera outbreak experience. When people sit down and discuss, the platform allows everyone to participate, giving rise to the realisation of huge benefits. While a number rose to the occasion, the social standing

of the telecommunications' company stood out. Hence, the second solution from the theory of collective action. The theory is called the Status Theory of Collective Action (STOCA) (Willer, 2014). In this theory, status serves as a selective incentive motivating contribution to the group. Taking the example of the telecommunications organisation, the status could have been positively impacted by increased demand for its products. This argument suggests that strengthening social capital and, in particular, collective action, would help reverse development regression in communities and re-engineer African societies.

In the specifically studied case of Chimanimani, community empowerment is the cornerstone to collective actions. Nongovernment organisations, as noted earlier, do not completely include the locals in project priorities despite the rich social capital that the local people are endowed with. Apparently, a wealth of citizen knowledge exists within local people, including the traditional leadership fraternity in Chimanimani, though not fully harnessed (Musarandega and Chingombe, 2018). This was evidently revealed by the constricted 20% willingness of NGOs to cooperate and implement community-initiated development programmes. The same applied to the local authority, the Chimanimani Rural District Council, which scored a 21% level of willingness to cooperate and accept communityinitiated development proposals. This is why community members did not find any justification in paying rates to Council as shown by a limited 18% willingness to pay by community members.

CONCLUSION

Putting maximum effort in investing in collective action has a huge potential to achieve sustainable people-centred development. This can lead to the enhancement of capacities of individuals, families and communities to play more significant roles in amalgamated rural transformation. Social capital, which manifests through collective action, is not a natural phenomenon. Rather, it emerges and progresses on an on-going basis. Investing in community collective action is important to ensure that trust amongst members of the community is enhanced. Eurocentric western value systems based on positivist

paradigms, are crucial starting points for development initiatives. However, these should not supersede Afrocentric initiatives that are more contextual to local community settings. This article demonstrated that individualistic development theories alone fail to suffice within communities. Communities encompass a variety of interest groups that include disadvantaged population groups such as women, children, people with disabilities and the elderly. Redistributive development amongst vulnerable groups calls for a humanistic collective action approach. Accordingly, it is possible to bring back the African tenets of working together to strengthen the sense of oneness and accountability within the community. It is therefore, not disgraceful to reclaim the traditional virtues of *ubuntu/unhu*, which promotes collective action. It is this clarion call we make to policy-makers and scholars to re-consider the traditional *dare/inkundla* concept, since it is not only a platform for collective action, but a platform for self-actualisation. This is so because the *dare/inkundla* has the effect of conferring status to those who participate more for the public good. Resultantly, rural development is propelled.

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