

***Social Capital and Community Participation:
Experiences of crime prevention in informal settlements
of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania***

by

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This article is an attempt to identify some of the existing relations between the (in) existence of social capital and levels of community participation in crime prevention initiatives, with a focus on low income informal settlements. It draws mainly from a case study on the role of community participation in crime prevention, conducted in informal settlements of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Governance, Community Participation and Social Capital

Karl Marx, in his Communist Manifesto, proposed a governance system run by the people -where economic activities and governments were managed by local communities - as the appropriate tool to substitute the marketplace and the processes of production driven by capitalistic competition. Discussions about community participation in governance activities are not a recent phenomenon, as illustrated by the example above, although in recent years issues related to urban governance and, more specifically, good urban governance have been occupying a central place in the arena of the urban debate.

A widely discussed concept, governance can be defined as “*The exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in the management of a country’s affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions, through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences*” UNDP (1997). Systems of governance are present not only in a complex society but also in small communities, comprising all the processes through which collective affairs are managed. Governance activities are diffused through the multiplicity of existing social relations and may take many forms. Therefore, the way responsibilities are distributed between formally-recognised government agencies and other arenas of governance depends on specific geographic and historical contexts (Healey 1997).

UN-Habitat (2000), notes that “*Good urban governance is a situation where citizens are provided with the platform which will allow them to use their talents to the full to improve their social and economic conditions*”. According to the UNESCAP (undated) good governance has 8 major characteristics. It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. Therefore, good urban governance is not just about providing a range of local services, but also about preserving the life and

liberty of residents, creating space for democratic participation and civic dialogue and facilitating outcomes that enrich the quality of life of residents (Shah 2007). Among all the characteristics of good governance aforementioned, the three most relevant for urban violence and crime prevention are participation, consensus orientation and the rule of law.

Although the concept of social capital is not a new one and was already present in the ideas of Durkheim and Marx, the first systematic contemporary analysis of social capital was produced by Pierre Bourdieu, who defined the concept as *'the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition'* (Bourdieu 1985, cited in Portes 1998). Another important definition of social capital comes from Coleman, who defined social capital according to its function as *'a variety of entities with two elements in common: They all consist of some aspect of social structures, and they facilitate certain action of actors - whether persons or corporate actors - within the structure'* (Coleman 1988, cited in Portes 1998). According to Portes (1998:6), *'social capital stands for the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures'*. Whilst economic capital is kept in people's bank accounts and human capital can be found inside their heads, social capital exists in the structure of their relationships.

Narayan (1997) defines social capital as *'the set of rules, norms, obligations, reciprocity and trust embedded in social relations, social structures and society's institutional arrangements, that enables members to achieve their individual and community objectives'*. Social capital refers to the norms and networks that enable people to act collectively. It is thus related to social networks, to levels of trust, civil engagement, levels of community participation and organisational membership (Woolcock and Narayan 2000). This definition presents the community - and not individuals, households, or the state - as the primary unit of analysis, but recognizes that individuals and households (as members of a given community) can, however, appropriate social capital, and that the way communities are structured depends largely on their relationship with the state. Weak or indifferent governments have an extremely different effect on community life and development than do governments which respect civil liberties, defend the rule of law and fight corruption. Social capital thus cannot exist in a political vacuum, and the nature and extent of the interactions between communities and institutions, are the key to understanding the possibilities for development in a given society.

There is a tendency of law enforcement in those communities where people are connected by dense networks of engagement and reciprocity, probably because residents tend to be also more confident that others will behave on the same way and do not want to be 'outsiders' in the system. Communities where a diverse stock of social networks and civic organisations can be found are better equipped to confront poverty

and vulnerability, solve conflicts and benefit from new opportunities, and present less economic and civic inequality (Putnam undated). Conversely, the lack of social ties can have an adverse impact. One of the defining features of poverty is the exclusion of certain social networks that could be used to create bridging social capital. When managing risk and vulnerability, social networks are one of the primary resources the poor possess.

Social capital has different dimensions and communities can have more or less access to these dimensions. Poor communities normally present a high level of ‘bonding’ social capital, which can be used by residents to cope with difficult situations. However, the same communities often lack the more diffuse and extensive “bridging” social capital used by the non-poor to succeed in life. Bonding capital refers to the necessary social support and cohesion within a community that provides the basis for an individual or group to be able to access other resources, known as bridging capital (Woolcock and Narayan 2000).

Social capital is not acquired and does not benefit directly those who abide by laws and regulations or trust their fellows. Social capital is not *what* you know, but *who* you know (ibid). Strengthening social networks, especially in poor communities can help to establish social control which in turn may have an influence in the results of development initiatives that can increase incomes and self-esteem, contributing to reduce the causes of crime and violence. Within communities with high levels of social capital, trust tends to exist because obligations are enforceable, not through recourse to law or violence but through the power of the community. Stocks of social capital, such as trust, norms, and networks, tend to be self-reinforcing and cumulative (Putnam 1993). One of the most positive aspects of social capital, when created by tight community networks, is the maintenance of discipline and promotion of compliance among those under the charge of local authorities and institutions. The main result is that formal or overt controls are made unnecessary (Woolcock and Narayan 2000). According to a World Bank study on urban poverty, crime and violence are most prevalent in areas of rapidly increasing population density, and weak or non-existent social and civic networks, such as the periphery of large cities and metropolitan regions (World Bank 2002).

In some cases, social capital is also equated with the quality of a society’s political, legal, and economic institutions. Studies show that items such as “generalized trust,” “rule of law,” “civil liberties,” and “bureaucratic quality” are positively associated with economic growth. The so-called ‘macro-level social capital’ (Grootaert 1998) refers to the social and political environment that enables norms to develop and shapes social structure. In addition to largely informal, local, horizontal and hierarchical relationships, it includes the more formalized institutional relationships and structures, such as government, the political regime, the rule of law, the court system, and civil and political liberties. The importance of macro-level social capital is illustrated dra-

matically in some of the transition economies of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. The sudden disappearance of government from many social and economic functions has led to a collapse of trust and forced people to rely on local networks and informal associations (Grootaert 1998).

Social capital has three basic functions, applicable in a variety of contexts: (a) as a source of social control; (b) as a source of family support; (c) as a source of benefits through extra-familial networks (Portes 1998). If, as Robert Putnam (1993) defines, social capital are *'those features of social organisation, such as trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating co-ordinated actions'*, it becomes clear that community participation is intrinsically linked to the existence of social capital. Therefore, participatory or collaborative planning is not possible, or at least will not produce the best results, where there is lack of social capital. If social capital relates also to rules and regulations of the market place, political institutions and civil society, the trust (or lack of it) in the existing institutions, e.g. the police and local governments can have a direct influence in the existing social capital.

Moser and Shrader (1998) argue that violence can erode social capital in several ways, e.g. it prevents communities from meeting locally and prevents individuals (especially those belonging to vulnerable groups) from going to work and therefore extending their social network. Contrary, crime is strongly negatively impacted by social capital. This is true at the state, community and neighbourhood levels. According to Lederman et al. (2002), there are two basic arguments related to how social capital can reduce the incidence of violent crimes. Firstly, social capital decreases the costs of social transactions, allowing for peaceful resolution of conflicts, both interpersonal and societal. Secondly, communities with stronger ties among its members are better equipped to organize themselves to overcome the problems of collective action, reducing the possibilities for individual opportunistic behaviour, thus diminishing the potential for social conflict. Civic engagement and social trust are thus expected to reduce crime, since they increase formal and informal social control, and strengthen the effectiveness of social norms (Rosenfeld et al. 2001, cited in Buonanno et al. 2006).

While originally the concept of social capital was limited to associations having positive effects on development, recently it has been relaxed to include groups that may have undesirable outcomes as well, such as associations with rent-seeking behaviour (for example, the Mafia in southern Italy) and even militia. The key feature of social capital in this definition is that it facilitates coordination and cooperation for the mutual benefit of the members of the association (Putnam 1993, cited in Grootaert 1998). Social capital has a beneficial impact in crime reduction when the relationships that form social capital involve all society members. Interestingly, social capital can induce more crime and violence when it is concentrated in particular groups, such as gangs, ethnic clans, and closed neighbourhoods, and is not disseminated throughout society. While society-wide social capital reduces crime and violence, group-specific social capital may promote them (Lederman et al. 2002).

There is consensus that social capital within a community can be examined using several indicators. These include the number of members actively involved in matters of common interest; the intensity or extent of networks and social interactions; the trust that members have in acting as a collective entity and the impacts of social capital in form of mutual agreements and collective activities. Poor communities are more likely to opt for and rely on social capital because they have lower opportunity costs of time and lower stock of financial and physical capital than the affluent (van Bastelaer and Grootaert 2002, cited in Kombe and Kreibich 2006).

Communities are usually defined as groups of people who share a geographical territory or place, as well as an overall culture and institutions. This may include remote or rural indigenous communities, wealthy suburban estates, gated communities, poorer inner-city housing estates, informal settlements and slums (ICPC 2006), and therefore the term community has social and spatial dimensions, as pointed by Hamdi (1997). The concept of a community is based on the belief that a group of people will normally have advantage over a single individual in getting his or her voice heard, especially in the case of poor citizens and communities. A community can also be seen as an entity which derives its mandate and power from collective interests of inhabitants and from roles assigned to it by government organs. It operates according to social relations and interactions and by norms, collective values and functions which it discharges. Furthermore, the connection a community has or can forge with external institutions or actors (bridging capital) is fundamental in activating and mobilising support (Kombe and Kreibich 2006).

Hamdi (1997) defines community participation as a powerful idea which “*refers to the process by which professionals, families, community groups, government officials, and others get together to work something out, preferably in a formal or informal partnership*”. The advocates of community participation believe that it brings many lasting benefits to people instead of only a means of getting things done. Participation can either represent assigning certain decisive roles to the users, where decision-making responsibilities are shared among community members and the traditional power holders, or a process where only the opinion of the user may be considered while making decisions. This is the critical difference between what Arnstein (1969) calls “*the empty ritual of participation*” and what she defines as “*the real power needed to effect the outcome of the process*”.

Contacts among community members are crucial as they promote shared values, increase mutual awareness of common needs and resources, encourage reciprocal assistance and facilitate delivery of assistance. The formation of social networks is time consuming and demands willingness from the part of community members to first recognise and be aware of issues of common concern. Only after that they can contribute with their individual ideas and potentials together and act as a group. This sequence has to be followed if norms and regulations created and action taken by a

community are to reflect shared concerns and decisions (Kombe and Kreibich 2006).

Community participation is a potential generator of social capital, which in turn can largely contribute to the creation of common trust and to law enforcement, therefore potentially reducing urban violence and crime. It is the functioning of an organised community, the nurturing of networks formed, the respect of norms and values and the trust community members have for one another that constitute the social capital required for collective action. Social capital becomes both an input and an output to collective action when it accumulates as a result of its use (van Bastelaer and Grootaert 2002, cited in Kombe and Kreibich 2006).

Violence promotes poverty through the dilapidation of the physical and social capital in affected areas. Although poverty is no longer considered a root cause of urban crime and violence, coupled with inequality it can shape attitudes and perceptions of urban dwellers that may adopt crime as a survival strategy. Some theories try to explain violence through the concepts of deprivation and frustration. They support the idea that deprived citizens' recognition of their less-favoured situation and their consequent frustration due to their incapacity to achieve their final goals would play a major role in the increase of violence and crime (Klineberg 1981).

The pace of urbanization and the size and density of cities are also related to levels of crime and violence. Rapid urban population growth, closely associated with overcrowding, inadequate housing and basic infrastructure provision, has important violence-related consequences, particularly in areas where planning systems are not prepared to deal with this pace of urbanization (Moser and Rodgers 2005). The rate of urbanization is also related to the speed at which people change households which is strongly associated with crime. Rapidly growing urban centres are typically places where there is a high influx of people and where social unity is less stable and 'protective' as in informal social control for criminal behaviour (UN-Habitat 2007; Moser and Rodgers 2005; Klineberg 1981).

Global change processes have also led to two major transformations of political institutions, namely, weakening of the state and the rise of alternative forms of social governance. Many states are increasingly incapable to exercise coherent control over territories and peoples. At the same time, state institutions are increasingly challenged by local-level non-state forms of social governance. Informal institutions such as gangs, vigilantes and unofficial justice systems can emerge to bring order within localised 'governance voids'. As a result of these challenges, states are more and more trying to 'dominate rather than control and survey' (Moser and Rodgers 2005). This is particularly experienced by poor populations which tend to be perceived as primary sources of danger and violence. As a result, these groups tend to be more afraid of the police than to trust them, since the latter are seen as brutal and many times biased.

Community involvement has become an essential factor in all kind of partnerships that seek to prevent crime, which should also involve municipalities, the police, public services and the private sector (ICPC 2006). There has been an emphasis on the role of community participation in ensuring urban security and safety but it is important to understand that this can be done in wide range of possible ways and circumstances (UN-Habitat 2007).

The way urban societies and contexts are seen nowadays differs quite sharply from the perception which existed in the beginning of the 20th Century or even after the Second World War. The idea that societies are a uniform group of people and norms with shared interests and common goals, has been challenged and the intellectual tools used to understand people and their social context have shifted from a scientific rationalistic approach to a phenomenological and interpretive approach (Healey 1997). Castells (1977: 77-8) identifies anonymity, superficiality, the transitory character of urban social relations, anomie and lack of participation as the distinctive features of a system of behaviour which is typical from big cities, where a wider range of individual variation and social differentiation are found. This leads to the loosening of community ties, which are replaced by the mechanisms of formal control and by social competition. Moreover, cohabitation without the possibility of real expansion leads to individual savagery (in order to avoid social control) and, consequently, to aggressiveness.

The diversity, inequality and exclusion generally present in urban environments, being some of the main generators of conflicts, violence and crime in these areas, require the formulation of policies and strategies which include the participation of the multiple stakeholders present in the urban context so that their different perceptions and needs are taken into account. The role of community participation in crime prevention is thus an issue of collaborative planning and social inclusion. The notion of collaborative governance is based on the idea that the formal institutions of government have a role in providing a hard infrastructure of rules and norms to constrain and modify dominant centres of power, and a soft infrastructure of relational-building through which sufficient consensus building and mutual learning can occur to develop social, intellectual and political capital (Healey 1997).

Social capital, collaborative planning and good governance are intrinsically related, for there is no effective and successful participation where social networks and trust do not exist. It is not possible to engage citizens in decision-making processes where there is no trust in local governments and the sense of community and mutual respect and help is absent. Therefore, to analyse the role of community participation in crime prevention (or in any other planning related issue), it is necessary to understand these concepts and identify to what extent they permeate the daily lives of the studied communities and relations between these communities and the existing local and national institutions. The cycle of community participation in crime prevention is depicted in

Figure 1.

Figure 1 – The cycle of community participation in crime prevention



Source: Barbosa 2008

Social Capital and Community Participation in Crime Prevention in Poor Settlements of Dar es Salaam: The Case of Mnazi Mmoja

Tanzania is one of the rapidly urbanizing countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and this rapid urbanization has been attributed both to rural-urban migration and to natural growth, leading to the rapid growth of low-income peri-urban and informal settlements. A lack of job opportunities, non-existent infrastructure and a social system in flux in the rural areas, are the main causes of the exodus of people from rural areas to urban centres or urban satellite towns (Stavrou and O’Riordan 2003).

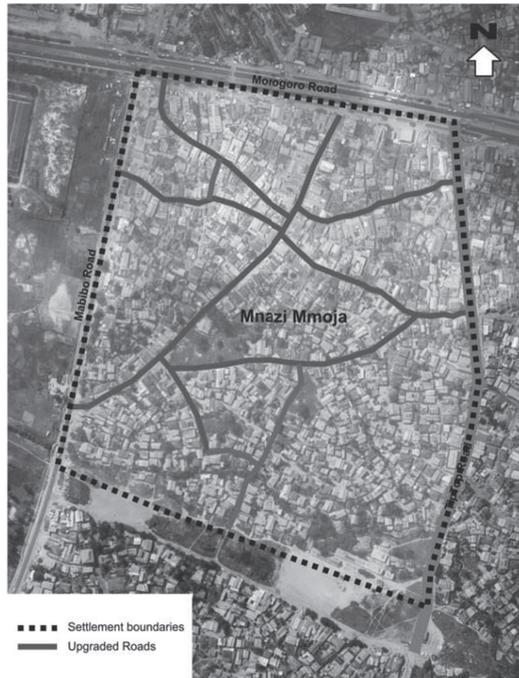
Currently, it is estimated that Dar es Salaam accommodates nearly 30% of the national urban population and so far every ten years the population of Dar es Salaam has doubled (Kombe and Kreibich, cited in Ramadhani 2007). The city is growing at a rate of 8% per annum and it is estimated that approximately 70% of the population is living in informal settlements (URT 1996, cited in Kyessi 2002). At present, informal settlements form the major land use in Dar es Salaam (Kyessi 2002). A particular characteristic of Dar es Salaam informal settlements is the fact that unlike many developing countries, they accommodate a wide range of social and economic groups. In most of these settlements the affluent and poor live side by side and there is neither social nor physical alienation among the informal dwellers and the rest of the city urbanities (Ramadhani 2007).

Mnazi Mmoja is one of the six sub-wards of Manzese Ward, located in Kinondoni Municipality, approximately 7 kilometres from the city centre and 4 kilometres from the Municipal headquarters. Manzese is known to be the largest squatter area in Dar es Salaam city in terms of population and area and, although keeping the same characteristics of different social classes being accommodated side by side, Manzese is predominantly a low-income area. During the 1970s it was notorious for its lawlessness and thus earned itself the name of 'Soweto', reflecting the image of the South African black township, where violence was rife (Kironde 1995, cited in Ramadhani 2007).

Mnazi Mmoja was established around the year 1945 and has since then experienced rapid urbanisation. The total population in the settlement in the year 2002 was 9,189 inhabitants, approximately equally distributed between men and women (NBS 2002). This provides a population density of 353 people per ha. Housing density in the sub-ward in the year 2004 was on average 30 houses per hectare while the average number of households per house was 2.8 (URT 2004). Residential land uses account for about 92% of the total area. Other land uses, mainly three cemeteries and religious buildings, account for only 7.7% and no open spaces of significance are found in the area (URT 2004). The informal sector employs approximately 70% of the local population (Ramadhani 2007).

In the year 2004, the Community Upgrading Infrastructure Programme for the city of Dar es Salaam (CIUP) selected the settlement as one of the areas to be upgraded during its first phase. Through a participatory process, residents were asked to identify their needs and to rank them in order of priority, resulting in the following ranking of priorities: (i) improve drainage to prevent road deterioration; (ii) establish and sustain an adequate solid waste collection service; (iii) improve the local road network to improve accessibility; (iv) improve the sanitation services; (v) provide street lights. Fig. 2 shows the settlement boundaries and the roads recently upgraded.

Figure 2 - Mnazi Mmoja boundaries and the roads recently upgraded



Source: Adapted from URT 2004

Due to the network of upgraded roads, residents do not have to walk more than approximately 200m to reach a road accessible by motorized vehicles. Accessibility in the inner parts of the settlement is, however, still a problem. Due to lack of land use development control, many footpaths have been encroached upon, making transit of pedestrians difficult and creating propitious areas for illegal activities and crime, especially when it is dark at night.

The social infrastructure of the settlement is extremely poor. The area has no primary or secondary schools and students have to use the public schools in the neighbouring sub-wards. There is one private health centre but no public health facilities are available. There is one political institution, the Mtaa Office but no CBOs or NGOs. There are only four community members' groups: two women groups, a youth group and an Arts and Crafts group. Apart from that, the closest to a voluntary organization existing in the area is a *Sungusungu*¹ group, responsible for community policing activities.

¹ Sungusungu is a Kiswahili word used to designate groups of community members who practice self-

After infrastructure improvements the area has been subject to massive investments in property development, especially along the main roads. Many of the former traditional Swahili houses² have been substituted by multi-storey buildings or converted into bars and guest houses. This 'verticalization' has brought about a gentrification process leading to increases in population density and to the over utilization of the available infrastructure services. Moreover, traditional inhabitants have been expelled from the area by real state speculation, with a high turn over of residents as the main result of it. The new buildings are used mainly as hotels, guest houses and shops, which coupled with the increasing number of pubs and local breweries has been faced by residents as one of the main causes of the increase in prostitution and crime in the settlement.

Research Methodology and Key Findings

The case study was conducted in the area of Mnazi Mmoja during the first semester of 2008 and had as its main objective to identify how community participation could contribute to the prevention of crime in poor settlements. Semi-structured interviews and focused group discussions were conducted with 30 key informants, selected among local government representatives, local leaders and common residents. The questions used to guide the interviews and discussions aimed at checking how community members perceived their role in crime prevention, as well as the role of the police and local government. The existence of social capital is one of the prerequisites for effective community participation in local initiatives. Thus, the research tried to check to what extent at least bonding social capital existed in the studied area and if the same type of social capital that leads community members in Tanzania to actively join infrastructure upgrading initiatives could be used to enhance community participation in crime prevention.

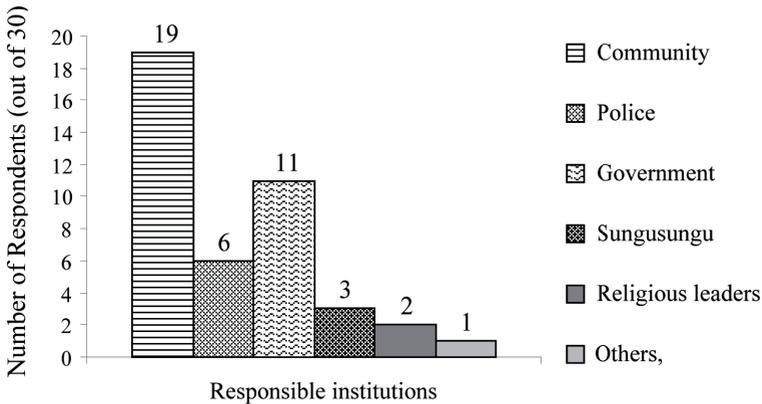
More than 60% of the respondents identified the community as the main institution responsible for crime and violence prevention. The easiness to identify criminals residing in the settlement and the fact that residents are their main victims were the main reasons given to justify the choice. These were also the arguments given by respondents to explain the efficiency of the sungusungu group in preventing crime. The government and the police as well are seen as important actors in preventing crime and urban violence, having been mentioned by 36% and 20% of people respectively. Sungusungu are seen by almost 80% of the respondents as a product of community members' initiative. Since they are formed by local residents, the group would be implicit when people cited the community as the main responsible for issues of safety and security. This would explain why only 3 out of 30 respondents mentioned these groups as being directly responsible for crime and violence prevention. Figure 3 depicts the

policing / community policing.

² The traditional Swahili house is composed of several rooms linked by a central corridor, with a veranda in the frontal part and a backyard where some other service rooms are located. The rooms are normally rented out to different people, leading to the co-existence of many households within a single house

main institutions responsible for crime prevention, according to residents' perceptions.

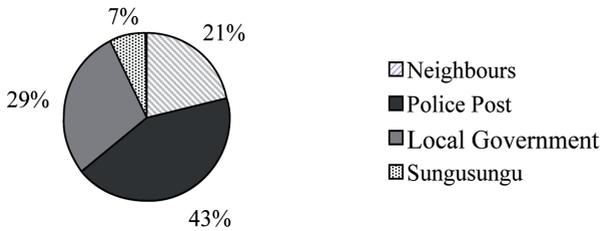
Figure 3 - Institutions responsible for crime prevention



The overall relationship between the police and community members is not considered good by more than 90% of the people interviewed. The differences in the levels of community satisfaction with the work of the police and sungusungu are remarkable. Whilst 91% of the people are not satisfied with the performance of the police, 80% of them considered the work of sungusungu satisfactory. The local government is generally perceived as efficient and most residents attend the meetings related to community development issues, organized by Local Government. Interviews conducted with Municipal, Ward and Sub-ward officials revealed a close collaboration between the various levels of local government.

Macro-level social capital could be found in the area, with 75% of respondents saying they trust local government. When in need of help on matters of crime and violence, 43% of the people said they look for the nearest police post, despite the poor relationship between residents and the police. Approximately 30% of respondents mentioned local government representatives, while only 21% of them said they would seek help from their neighbours. Sungusungu groups are not perceived as an institution, but as a common group of community members. Existing distrust among residents may explain why very few interviewees (7%) said they would look for the sungusungu groups when in trouble, as shown in Fig. 4.

Figure 4 - Seeking help on matters of crime and violence



However, the degree of micro-level social capital found in Mnazi Mmoja was lower than expected. Although, according to local authorities, there was active community involvement during the recent infrastructure improvement project, it was found that levels of trust among community members are quite low, with 59% of respondents stating that local people do not trust each other. Locals attribute the situation to high crime rates in the past, with most criminals being community members. This has been worsened by the high population turn over which has happened during recent years, as a result of increases in land price values. Residents are selling their plots and moving out of the settlement, breaking existing social networks and eroding even more social capital.

Another indicator used to measure levels of social capital in Mnazi Mmoja was the number of existing local associations, which was found to be very limited. A women group called *Amani* was formed in 2003 as an income generation alternative for women working with local brew production and selling, which exposed them to dangerous and crime prone situations, since they were working mainly at night, dealing with possible criminals and drunken men. There are also a CCM³ Women group, a Youth group and an Arts and Crafts group. The only person interviewed who mentioned the last three groups was the Mtaa Chairman, while all the other respondents were not aware of any local association existing in the settlement.

Conclusions

Although community participation in crime prevention exists in poor settlements in Dar es Salaam, initiatives are mainly limited to the creation of sungusungu groups and financial support to it. Community members perceive themselves as responsible for prevention of crime and violence in their communities but lack the knowledge on how to do it. Low levels of social capital, expressed by common distrust, contribute to hinder more effective community participation in crime prevention initiatives, as well as in other local associations.

³ CCM = Chama Cha Mapinduzi Party. This has been the dominant political party since Tanzanian independence.

The few income generating existing initiatives are ceasing due to lack of capacity and trust, pointing out the extent to what social capital has been eroded and the importance of it in bringing communities into local initiatives. In the specific case of Mnazi Mmoja, social capital has been eroded by previous events of crime, undermining the trust among residents. The existing social capital which leads community members to engage in infrastructure upgrading projects is not the same required to bring residents into crime prevention initiatives. The perception that basic services are fundamental to improve quality of life within an area has not been extended to aspects of safety and security. The referred lack of trust among residents keeps people away from community initiatives which have no clear physical outputs.

The resulting increase in land values in an area which is highly envisaged for commercial uses is promoting a gradual shift in land uses and a gentrification process, causing ‘market driven evictions’, with locals selling their plots and moving out of the settlement. This has largely contributed to erode even more the already weak social capital in the area, since it brings about a high turnover of residents and social networks are disrupted. Although it can be considered that increases in land values can provide good opportunities for land owners by making some good money of their plots, in many cases instead of improving their lives these people are trapped into a vicious cycle of poverty by selling their plots and moving to other informal settlements where they lack the necessary bonding social capital to survive.

No matter the higher degree of macro-level social capital found in the area, local governments have not made use of it as a tool to increase residents’ involvement in crime prevention initiatives. Likewise, education, which should be one of the tools used by local authorities to strengthen social capital among residents and enhance their involvement in local initiatives, is still perceived as being not directly related to social networks creation. The existence of participatory planning tools has proved to be not enough to secure community participation in local initiatives, when social capital is still very low or absent.

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