

Reimagining the Role of Traditional Leadership in Conflict Resolution in Zimbabwe: The Case of Umguza District from 2010 to 2020

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Abstract: This study was grounded on the determination of the role of traditional leaders in conflict resolution in Umguza district. This study aimed to explore the factors determining the role of traditional leaders in Umguza district. The study followed a qualitative case study approach where semi-structured face-to-face interviews were used for data gathering. Stratified random and convenience sampling was used to select 205 participants from *Mbembesi* and *Ntabazinduna*. Data presentation was done with emphasis on the determinants of the role of traditional leaders in conflict resolution. Traditional leaders have various determinants of their role in resolving conflicts such as their capacities, challenges, regulatory frame work and the existent structures for their institution. These factors were further explained in relation to modernisation and Ubuntu models as guiding theoretical frameworks.

Keywords: Traditional leadership. Conflict, conflict resolution, Umguza and peacebuilding.

INTRODUCTION

Conflict is a reality of social life and exists at all levels of society. Conflicts are as old as the world itself. Individuals, villages, tribes, political parties, nations, and other types of groupings engage in conflicts. Conflict is a normal, and even healthy, part of relationships. Kombo and Moyana (2000) posits that, before the introduction of white colonial systems Zimbabwean societies were administered under a traditional system centred on a king who administered the nation through a system of cascading leadership levels going down to individual family patriarchal headship and these systems were not only used for governance but, to resolve conflicts if they arose. Dodo (2016) argues that white settlers through their western system tried to subsume the African system but ended up politicising it so that the system functioned in their favour. Things that formed the core of African conflict resolution such as their values of peace, tolerance, solidarity and respect for, and of, one another were diluted by imposition of different religion and cultures which rendered the role of traditional leaders to be inept. Africans had structures which were responsible for “peace education, confidence-building, peacemaking, peace building, conflict monitoring, conflict prevention, conflict management, and conflict resolution like the Dare in Zimbabwe (Musingafi et al 2015). However, these were dismantled by the colonizers who replaced them with systems which favoured them. Dodo (2016) opines that the mechanisms established to resolve conflict by the colonizers were not effective in handling and managing conflicts among the people and this was largely because they reflected the socio-political orientation of the colonizers not the African

people. It did not address most of the Africans the social, political and economic conflicts among a people who lived a communal way of life. Therefor where it was customary as well as common currency to happen upon people sitting down informally to discuss and agree on important issues suddenly became rare as it was replaced by District Commissioners and Magistrates who were now presiding over conflicts, hence, rendering the African conflict resolution system with traditional leadership at its helm in-effective (Samkange 1980). For example, in Zimbabwe Shona culture, when one committed a crime of murder whether he/she were sentenced to death by the settler’s system the issue was not considered to have been resolved unless certain rituals are performed by the families of both the victim and perpetrator.

At independence, the new government introduced rural development Councils which seemed to completely disregard the traditional leaders. Ndlovu (2010) argues that this created a parallel structure and the ZANU government only relooked at the structures after having lost elections in the urban area in 1984 and tried to include the traditional leadership in its administrative system. This saw the creation of the Traditional Leadership Act and the Chief’s Council. However, on the ground the actual role of the traditional leaders continues to conflict with other structures such as the Rural Local Authorities (RDC), the judicial system and other governance administrative systems (Musingafi 2016). Chief Charumbira (President of Traditional leaders National Council) addressing the first traditional leadership national council held in Bulawayo 2015 mentions, that in a traditional Zimbabwean society conflicts existed

and were managed through the institution of the traditional leadership.

Moreover, in modern Zimbabwe traditional leadership institutions continue to exist. The question is whether these structures are still functioning in a way that foster conflict resolution. The premise of this research was on the understanding that, despite modernisation and globalisation the Zimbabwean person remains African in thought and overall social disposition. As such all conflict that exist at all levels of society happen within this African context (Dodo 2014). The focus on the role of traditional leadership in conflict resolution was prompted by the need to seek its relevance and compatibility to the modern society. The study sought to determine and make an appraisal of the roles of traditional leadership in conflict resolution in Zimbabwean context in Matabeleland North, Umguza District in particular. The main concern of the study was to determine the role of traditional leadership, in light of globalisation and mounting modernisation, in sustainable conflict resolution and how, these roles are being or can be exploited and enhanced in fostering conflict resolution in Zimbabwe.

Theoretical Framework

Modernisation Theory

Modernisation theory is used to explain the process of modernization that a nation goes through as it transitions from a traditional society to a modern one (Wolfgang 2003). The study sort to determine if the role of traditional leaders in conflict resolution is relevant in Zimbabwe considering the former assertion which Sternberg et al (2000) elaborates in his argument that modernisation theory cannot be attributed to any one person; instead, its development has been linked to American social scientists in the 1950s. This puts into question its generalisability to African communities particularly Zimbabwean. Before the coming of the Whiteman the Ndebele (Zimbabwean tribe found in its midlands and Matabeleland) community was basically into cattle rearing and lived a communal type of life and the coming of the Whiteman upset this status quo hence, the reason why modernization in Africa is viewed by some as a product of the West aimed to eradicating our traditions which in turn form the basis of any societies in harmonious existence (Palmer & Birch 1992).

Ubuntu Philosophy

It is a Nguni Bantu term meaning "humanity". It is often translated as "I am because we are", or

"humanity towards others", or in Zulu "umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu" or in Xhosa, "umntu ngumntu ngabantu" but is often used in a more philosophical sense to mean "the belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity This over 2000-year-old philosophy, is found in every country of Africa south of the Sahara, using different cognate terms in the local Bantu language. The term "bantu" it is related to "Ubuntu" (Dodo 2016). He further asserts that Over 2000 years ago, the people of Africa developed a collective meaning for life to describe the kind of relationship an individual person is expected to have with their family, community, society, environment and their spiritual world. As the Africans migrated mostly from the west part of the continent to the east, central and south, and beyond the continent, they carried with them this meaning to life. As they travelled, they developed new languages and subcultures, and in the process, they came up with specific names for this collective meaning. The study asserts that as the theory of Ubuntu still deeply determines the African individual and, the determination of the role the traditional leaders may hold the answer to everlasting solutions to the African problems. The Ubuntu philosophy is expressed in most bantu languages that is in Angola, it is known as gimuntu, Botswana (Muthu), Burundi (ubuntu), Cameroon (bato), Congo (bantu), Congo Democratic Republic (bomoto/bantu), Kenya (utu/munto/mondo), Malawi (umunthu), Mozambique (vumuntu), Namibia (omundu), Nigeria (mutunchi), Rwanda (bantu), South Africa (ubuntu/botho), Tanzania (utu/obuntu/bumuntu), Uganda (obuntu), Zambia (umunthu/ubuntu) and Zimbabwe (Ubuntu, unhu or hunhu). It is also found in other Bantu countries not mentioned here (Mabvurira 2020).

Furthermore, Samkange (1980) augments the above assertion when he highlights the three maxims of Hunhuism or Ubuntuism that shape this philosophy: The first maxim asserts that 'To be human is to affirm one's humanity by recognizing the humanity of others and, on that basis, establish respectful human relations with them.' And 'the second maxim means that if and when one is faced with a decisive choice between wealth and the preservation of the life of another human being, then one should opt for the preservation of life'. The third 'maxim' as a 'principle deeply embedded in traditional African political philosophy' says 'that the king owed his status, including all the powers associated with it, to the will of the people

under him'. Ubuntu, regardless of the extent to which it actually exists in modern Africa, has traction among the people of Africa. This is true also for most white people who have been raised in Africa. It is, arguably, a value system that has the potential to cut across and unify races and ethnicities, class and gender (van Breda 2019).

Modernization theorists study the social, political, and cultural consequences of economic growth and the conditions that are important for industrialization and economic growth to occur. Indeed, a degree of circularity often characterizes discussions of social and economic change involved in modernization processes because of the notion, embedded in most modernization theories, of the functional compatibility of component parts. Whereas Ubuntu is mainly concerned with oneness, it's not individualised but looks at life as interconnected hence, the existence of all things is dependent on each other. At the center of the practice of Ubuntu are the traditional leaders who act in various capacities. Wolfgang (2003) notes, that modernisation theory is used to explain the process of modernization that a nation goes through as it transitions from a traditional society to a modern one. One should note, though that this modernity is not only in form of technology and economic advancement but affect the fabric of social lives in communities, destabilising systems and structures that create a stable environment for existence such as the roles traditional leaders play in maintaining order through conflict resolution. Ubuntu on the other hand is defined by Samkange (1980) as a Nguni Bantu term meaning "humanity". It is often translated as "I am because we are", or "humanity towards others", or in Zulu "umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu" or in Xhosa, "umntu ngumntu ngabantu" but is often used in a more

philosophical sense to mean "the belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity.

METHODOLOGY

The approach followed in this study is qualitative descriptive research methodology as it enabled the narration and interpretation of nature/extent of the role of traditional leaders in conflicts resolution in Umguza district. This approach was appropriate to this study as it enabled to establish the nature and even the extent of the conflicts through studying the context/setting in which people talk and also the voices of the participants as emotions can be observed through peeped voices to show anger which cannot be heard in quantitative descriptive research methodology, (Creswell, 2014). The study was carried out with 205 respondents and it was carried out in Ntabazinduna and Mbembesi communities because of the three Chiefs in Umguza district, two cover those areas and the diversities of their traditions, where one is of Guni origins and the other is Xhosa. Their proximity to each other was also strategic for the research. The findings from the 205 qualitative in-depth interviews conducted and questionnaires and also included in the total of the respondents 30 for focused groups.

RESULTS

The data presented here is a triangulation of views obtained from key informants and other respondents coupled with focused group discussions review with the objective of obtaining a balanced technical argument. The findings are presented in a descriptive form and in some instances assisted by pie charts, graphs and summary tables in endeavour to paint a clear picture of the findings.

Demographics Tables Showing Respondents by Age and Gender

Category	Age	Total	Number of male Respondents	% of total sample	Female	% of total sample
VIDCO Members	18-25	34	16	9	19	11
	26-35	35	18	11	18	11
	36-54	42	22	15	22	16
	54+	44	23	14	19	13
	Total	155	77	49	78	51

From a total of 155 nearly half of the respondents were constituted by the females and the other were man. In the age group of 18 – 35, 6% were male

and 11% female and all in all there were 17%. Those in the 26 to 35 were equal in number for both male and females and made up of 22%. The

age group of 35 to 54 constituted the largest number of respondents which was 22 and these 64 respondents made up 32% and again there was an equal gender respondent's number. The last group was the 54 + which had a total of 19 respondents of these 14% were man and 13% were females making up 27% making it the second largest group of respondents. The gender balance is not indicative of the actual composition of the VIDCO members but was a deliberate effort by the research to include females as the Statutory Instrument for RDC Act Chapter 29; 13 of 2000 makes it compulsory for VIDCOS to have at least

one women representative as a member. The research felt it was critical to have their opinion as there are the most populace in the Rural Areas. The research indicates majority of the women representative members often occupy the post of Secretary or Treasurer in this committee. However, indications are these women are usually some of the most educated in the committees and this gives them a greater understanding of the traditional leader's role. It is important to note, the difference of 25 in the respondents is due the fact there were from the focused group discussions and their findings are presented separately in summary.

Distribution Table Village Heads and Headman by Age and Gender

Category	Age	Total	Number of male Respondents	% of total sample	Female	% of total sample
Village heads and headman	18-25	-	-	-	-	-
	26-35	-	-	-	-	-
	36-54	4	3	30	1	10
	54+	6	6	60	-	0
	Total	10	9	90	1	10

The table indicates that in the first two age groups there were no respondents and in the 35-54 there were only 4 constituting of 3 males and 1 female

making a total of 40%. The last group of 54+ had 6 respondents and all of them were males who were 60 %.

Distribution Table Key Stakeholders by Age and Gender

Category	Age	Total	Number of male Respondents	% of total sample	Female	% of total sample
Key stakeholders	18-25	-	-	-	-	-
	26-35	2	-	-	2	20
	36-54	5	2	20	3	30
	54+	3	3	30	0	0
	Total	10	5	50	5	50

The key stakeholders were composed of the District Administrator, Two Chiefs, Chief Executive Officer of Local Authority, Provincial Environment Officer, Provincial Magistrate, National Reconciliation Officer and Councillors. In the age group of 18-25 there was no respondents

and in 26 – 35 there were only 2 males who constituted 20% of the total respondents. 35 to 54 category there were 2 males and 3 females with a total % of 30 and 20 % respectively. The 54+ category had the greatest number of respondents who were 30% and all males.

Tables Indicating Educational Levels of Respondents

Vidcos Level of Education Table

Category	Level of Education	Number of Respondents
VIDCOS	Tertiary	27
	Secondary	60
	Primary	68
	None	0
	Total	155

From a total number of 155 respondents only 27 attained a level of tertiary education, 60 went as far as secondary education and 68 had primary education. The table indicates that at least all 66

respondents had a basic level of education this maybe the reason there were basically conversant with the traditional leaders' roles.

Village heads and Headman level of Education Table

Category	Level of Education	Number of Respondents
Headman	Tertiary	1
	Secondary	3
	Primary	6
	None	0
	Total	10

6 of the respondents went only as far as primary education, 3 attained a secondary education and at list one had tertiary education. The table indicates

that all had at least the basic educational qualifications hence, they are able to read and write though the majority is at basic literacy level.

Key Stakeholders Level of Education Table

Category	Level of Education	Number of Respondents
Headman	Tertiary	10
	Secondary	0
	Primary	0
	None	0
	Total	10

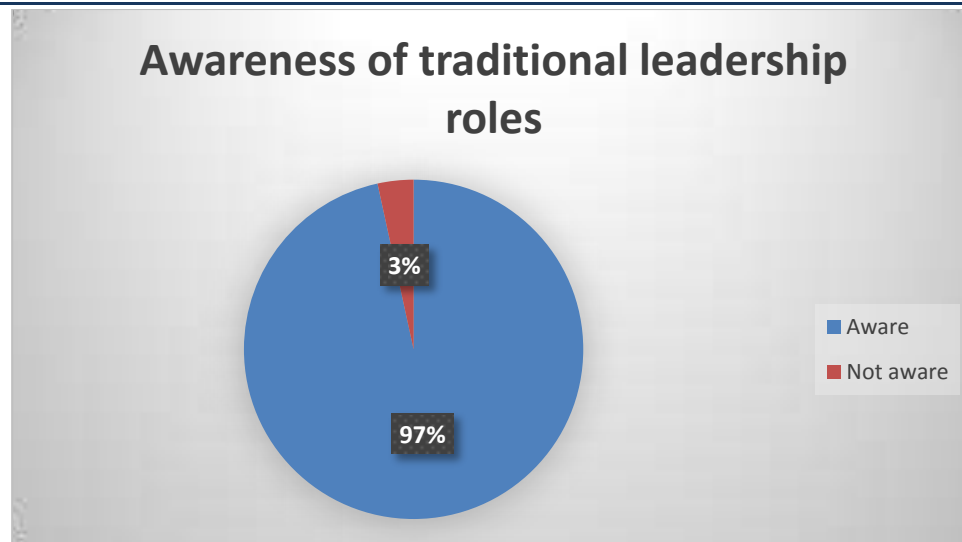
All key stake holders hold a tertiary education qualification and this indicates their capacity to understand and interpret legislature, policies and regulations that that guide the roles of traditional leaders in conflict resolution.

Role Traditional Leaders

From a total of 205 respondents about 198 were aware and able to list at three roles which the traditional leaders do in conflict resolution. 105 of them listed domestic and land disputes as the ones which the Traditional leaders mainly deal with. All

205 respondents acknowledge that there is a form of female participation when traditional leaders exercise their roles. However, it is essential to note that, participation is not balanced as the Inkundla or Dare (traditional court) is not friendly /conducive for women to partake meaningfully as the majority of communities' members constituting it are males. Hence, so often the resolutions made under traditional leaders are not gender sensitive as they lack feminine lens of the situations.

The Chart Below Represents Number of Respondents in Term of Awareness of Traditional Leaders' Roles



One of the female respondents said that:

“Abadala batshona bencedisa amajaha lezintombi kuhlanguanisela lalabo abasemendweni abatshona besilwa”. (The traditional leaders are always dealing with people who are physically fighting especially boyfriends and girlfriends including married couples as well)

Whilst another said, *“Osobhuku baqakathekile ngoba kungasikho ukungenela kwabo abantu babezabulalana ngenxa zendaba zomhlabathi. Izolo nje kufika abantu abahlanu abahlaliswe phansi ngusobhuku wesigaba sesithathu wayanelisa ukuthi labobantu babelesivumelwano”* (the village heads are very important if it was not for their interventions people would surely kill each over land issues. Just yesterday there were close to 5 individuals whom the village head for village three managed to sit down and, made them come to an understanding).

How involved is The Community in Conflict Resolution?

The majority of the respondents from the Village heads and VIDCO members numbering 140 felt that the community participated more when they go to traditional leaders for assistance. Of the 140 there were only 42 females who agreed with this perception whereas 23 females and 7 men making a total of 30 were of the view that, the traditional system was highly authoritarian and often, it is closed to the women to fully take part. All 10 key stakeholders to some extent agreed with the later that although conflict resolution was more open for participation by the communities it was more biased towards the man. There also thought the

women opinion was not considered to a greater extent than when they sort help from the formal legal systems of the country.

One of the Key stakeholders mentioned that, *“Ebantwini ikakhulu kulabo ababehlukumeziwe babayinxenye yokulungiswa kwenkokhelo yesintu kodwa inkinga kuyikuthi indlela ithatha icele labesilisa kusenxa ukuxazulula inkinga kubenzima nxa kulabesilisa”* (of people especially the victims took part more in the traditional leadership set up but its main disadvantage is that the system is highly patriarchal hence making conflict resolution more biased towards the men).

One woman from Mbembesi said that, *“Njengabantu besifazane kunzima ukuhambisa abayeni bethu kumapholisa kumbe enkantolo ngenxa yokuthi umphakathi uyacina subazonda ngenxa yokuthatha isiqu mo esinjalo”* (as women it was difficult to take their husbands to the police or court as the community will become hostile towards them for taking such kind of action).

Whilst another said:

“Nomasingahamba kubafundisi or kubakhokheli besintu nxa inkinga yakhona ingeyomendo abayanelisi ukukhuluma nxa abayeni babo bekhona kumbe ukukhuluma labanye abesilisa ngaphandle umyeni wakhe engavuma ukuthi akhulume”. (even if we go to the Pastors or the traditional leaders if that conflict is matrimonial or any other for that matter we cannot freely discuss issues in the presence of our husbands or speak to anyone who is of opposite sex unless the husband permits me to engage).

Have you ever been in Conflict?

Respondents' Age	Number Involved in conflict	Number not involved in conflict	Total
18-25	21	13	34
26-35	28	15	43
36-54	85	16	101
54+	22	5	27

The table above indicates that 21 respondents have been involved in some sort of conflict at a particular period and 13 have in the 18 to 25 age group. In the second age category of 26 to 35, 28 have been in some form of conflict and 15 have not. The 35 to 54 age categories has the greatest number of participants and of those 101 have been involved in conflict as compared to 16 who have not. The last group of 54+ only 5 out of 27 have not taken part in any conflict. Majority of the study population admitted that they have been involved conflict at some point in their life. However, perceptions regarding conflict resolution differed amongst populations especially across gender, hence it has to be understood subjectively based on interpretations one has on the roles of traditional leaders in conflict resolution. Understanding how individuals perceive their wellbeing helps in understanding factors that influences men's and women behaviours in conflict. It is imperative to state that most respondents who are above the age 36 thought conflict is unavoidable in their

communities hence, the need for traditional leaders. For instance, those in the rural communities thought traditional leaders had a very big role in conflict resolution whereas those in urban areas begrudgingly admitted they had a role though it was limited.

One women said that:

"yebo ngiyake ngibe kunxabano mfowethu kodwa into ezibangela inxabano phakathi kwethu abantu bezifazane zitshiyane lento ezibangela inxabano kubantu besilisa njoba abantu besilisa inxabano zabo ngezoku" (Of course I has been in conflict my brother but surely the things that causes conflicts between us as women are different from men as men surely are always fighting to appease their egos. I am married outside my tribe and members from my family especially the men are always against each other's throats with the man from my in-laws' side and we find these conflicts to be pet and funny as women).

In Your Opinion are Traditional Leaders Necessary in the Community?

The table below represents the opinions of the respondents on whether traditional leader's roles are necessary in conflict resolution.

Type of Respondent	Male/necessary	Female/necessary	Male not necessary	Female not necessary
VIDCO	50	60	25	20
Village heads	10	-	-	-
Key stakeholders	4	2	4	-
Total	64	62	29	20

The table above indicates that a total of 50 male respondents thought that traditional leaders were necessary in conflict resolution whereas nearly the same number of women (60) thought the same. 25 males and 20 females were of the view that there are not necessary. It is important to note, that the majority of those man who thought traditional leaders were not necessary came from the VIDCO members who constituted 20 of the total of 45. From the 15, 9 of them are in the 35 to 54 age group and zero was from the 54+ age group. Perhaps this was influenced by modernity. From the 66 who thought traditional leaders were necessary there is a relatively balanced opinion from across all categories. However, the key stakeholders 6 of them, thought they were necessary but with reservations and 4 were of the

opinion that there was an outdated system which had no much place in the modern world which was fast becoming a global village. It is interesting to note, that all the village heads and headman thought traditional leaders were a necessary. This is perhaps a subjective opinion since they were talking about themselves and probably their livelihoods.

One of the Key stakeholders said:

"lababantu (abakhokheli besintu) yibo imbangelo yenxabano njoba bekholelwa kuzinto zakudala eziphikisana lokholo lwethu lweSichristu njalo kwezinja izikhathi bangena endabeni ezingaba ingananga njoba omunye wasihlawulisa imbuzi ngenxa yokuthi sasingalandelanga isintu sincwaba omunye wenxenywe yemuli yethu owayebulewe"

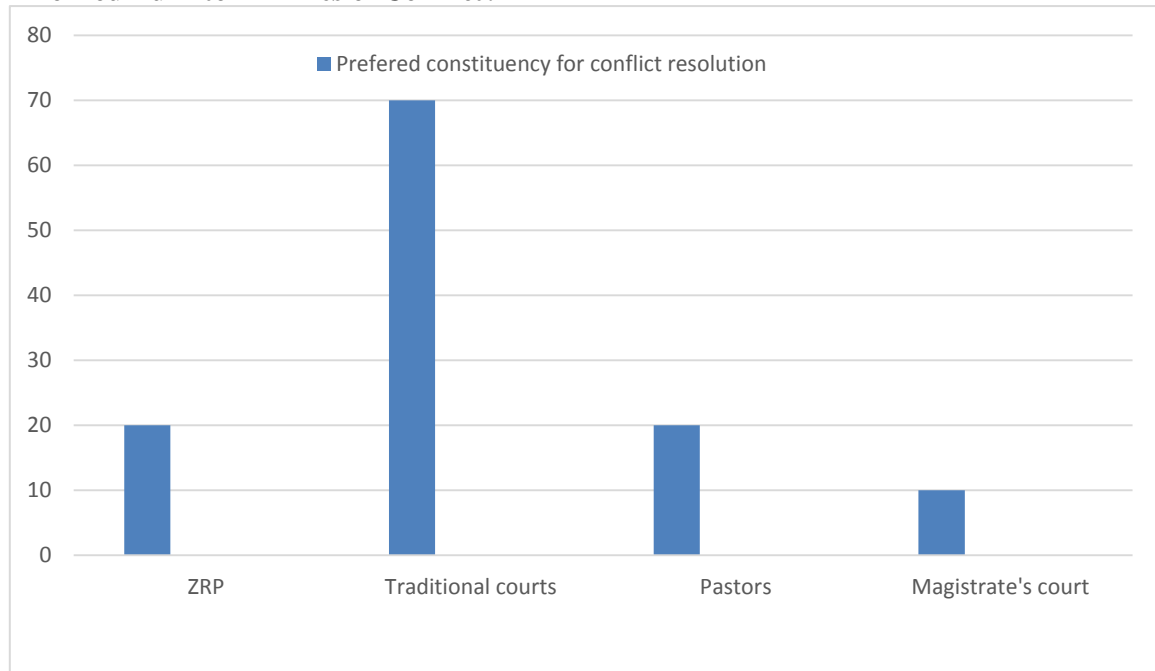
yisifo seCovid 19 njalo ngakuthola kungumsebenzi omunengi ongabalulenga ngikhangele isimo esasikiso” (these people (traditional leaders) are a source of conflict as they try to stick to outdated things which tended to go against our Christian faith and at times I really find that they poke their noses in business that does really concern for instance recently one fined our family a goat because he said we had not followed tradition when burying a relative who had succumbed to

Covid 19 and I found it to be unnecessarily cumbersome considering the urgency of the issue).

Whereas one VIDCO member said:

“umphakathi lo wawuzabungela mithetho njalo wonke umuntu wazabe sesenza umathanda kodwa kungasibo abakhokheli besintu abenza abantu balandele imithetho” (this community will be lawless and with everyone doing what they want if it was not for the traditional leaders who enforce a social code of conduct amongst them).

Whom Do You Turn to in Times of Conflict?



The graph above represents the preferred constituency when communities of Ntabazinduna and Mbembesi, turn to in times of conflict for assistance to resolve it. 20 of the total respondents prefer to seek assistances from the Zimbabwe Republic Police in times of conflict and 70 who are in the majority indicated they would rather seek assistance from the traditional leaders. This is perhaps because the traditional leaders are the ones who are closer to the communities as most respondents in these areas live less than 5km from the traditional leaders compared to the other 3 institutions who are at least 12 km away from them on average. 21 of the respondents mentioned there would rather be assisted by the pastors and amongst them 18 said they seek assistance from both the Pastors and traditional leaders. Only nine mentioned that they preferred to seek help from the Courts and all of these were from the key stakeholders and 7 of them also said they also used the police. This is also perhaps because of diluted culture on their part or urbanisation as well as the

literacy levels. The factors affecting respondent's choice of help constituency are as follows. A large number of respondents considered the good services provided the traditional leaders and the type of resolutions proffered by them as both victim and offender centred unlike the other alternatives as the most important reason for their patronage of this institution. This was followed by proximity, affordability of services, prompt attention and readily available personnel to assist in times of conflict. Politeness and courtesy was one of the most considered factors in selecting an institution to assist resolve conflict. Affordability was also one of the important reasons for selecting a constituency among the respondents who completed only basic education who are in the majority. On the contrary, affordability was the second least popular reason for key stakeholder respondents who all had a tertiary education.

One respondent said that:

“ngingangcono ngihambe kubakhokheli besintu ukuyadinga uncedo njoba bezwisisa inkinga

ikakhulu nxa zingezomphakathi, batshiyene lamapholisa abathanda imali beqeda besitshiye silenkinga ezinengi" (I will rather go to the traditional leaders to seek for assistance as they understand our issues especially if there are domestic the Police are only interested in money are leave us with many problems)

Another said:

"oMagistrates lamapholisa bakhatshana kulapho esihlala khona kunjalo mgingangcono ngihambe kumlisa kumbe umfundisi njoba bahlala bekhona futhi bahlala duze lalo engihlala kho (the Magistrates and the Police are far from our homes so I rather go to the headman or the Pastors as there are the ones who are readily available and closer to my place of residence).

Traditional Leaders' Governance Structure

Category	Men yes	Female yes	Total	Men no	Female no	Total
VIDCOS	67	47	114	22	29	51
Key stakeholders	5	5	10	0	0	10
Village heads/headman	10	0	10	0	0	10
Total	82	52	134	22	29	71

From total respondents of 205, 134 answered positively that there is some form of formal traditional leader's structures in Umguzu and 71 answered that there were no structures. A total of 114 VIDCO Members constituted the majority of those who answered yes and amongst them were 67 men and 47 females. Those who said no were 51 and 29 females, 22 men constituted this category. All the key stakeholders and Village heads / headman answered yes to the existence of structures of traditional leaders making a total of 20. However, from the 20 only 5 were females.

Moreover, 8 of the Village heads who are in the majority listed the Village Development Committees (VIDCOs) but only 2 were aware of who chairs these committees. They also listed the Village Assembly, the Ward Development Committee (WARDCO) and they were relatively aware what their mandates are. They however, were not aware of the relationship between these ward structures and the Districts up to the Province. All the 10 key stakeholders listed the VIDCO, WARDCO, Rural District Development Committees (RDDC) and the Provincial Development Committees (PDC) but Only 3 were able to explain the relationship between these structures from the lowest to the highest. Out of a total of 90 VIDCO members, 45 of them who were women only managed to list two structures which were the VIDCO and the WARDCO and 20 men also mentioned only two structures bringing the number to a total of 65.

DISCUSSION

From a total of 205 respondents about three quarters were aware and able to list at three roles which the traditional leaders do in conflict resolution. This indicated a high level of awareness of the role of traditional leaders

amongst the respondents. It is perhaps because most community members at least have a place they call home in the rural areas where the traditional leaders are mainly active. This high level of awareness of traditional leader's role validated Haydan (2015) argument that in African societies, conflict is habitually dealt with according to laid down traditional ways. This is because the re-establishment of peace, its sustainability and social concord uniting force' which continues to be significant in the procedure to be followed when resolving of conflicts and peace building. 105 of the respondents identified domestic and land disputes as the ones which the Traditional leaders mainly deal with, this is possibly due issue of inheritance and boundaries on land and at times because of unclear jurisdictional areas between the local authorities, central government and the institution of traditional leaders. All 205 respondents acknowledge that there is a form of female participation when traditional leaders exercise their roles. However, it is critical to note that, participation is not balanced as the iNkundla or Dare (traditional court) is not friendly /conducive for women to partake meaningfully as the majority of community's members constituting it are males. Hence, so often the resolutions made under traditional leaders are not gender sensitive as the lack feminine lens of the situations. Genger (2015) contends with this notion when he posits that the topics of security, peace and equally conflict are communal issues in Africa, unlike in the West.

Moreover, the majority of the respondents from the Village heads and VIDCO members numbering 140 felt that the community participated more when they go to traditional leaders for assistance. Of the 140 there were only

42 females who agreed with this perception whereas 23 females and 7 men making a total of 30 were of the view that, the traditional system was highly authoritarian and often, it is closed to the women to fully take part. This is perhaps because of the patriarchal nature of the two communities of Mbembesi and Ntabazinduna. This is in line with Hobbes, (2012) when he noted, the role of traditional leaders in socio-cultural models and principles rooted in traditional institutions continue to be an essential component of every ordered society in Africa. Apart from being the powerful human tool for continued way of life, they characterise cultural rules and ethics which form the base of life of every refined society. Whilst all 10 key stakeholders to some extent agreed with the later that although conflict resolution was more open for participation by the communities it was more biased towards the man. There also thought the women opinion was not considered to a greater extent than when they sort help from the formal legal systems of the country. They hold this perception perhaps because of the level of interaction and education which exposes them more to the urban communities and formal systems of conflict resolution. This is aptly put by Hashemi (2009) in his conclusion that empirically, modernization ignores external sources of change in societies and the binary between traditional and modern is unhelpful, as the two are linked and often interdependent, and 'modernization' does not come as a whole.

Furthermore, most of the respondents who thought traditional leaders were not necessary were in their mid-30's going down and perhaps these were influenced by modernity. However, from the 10 the key stakeholders 6 thought they were necessary but with reservations and 4 were of the opinion that they were an outdated system which had no much place in the modern world which was fast becoming a global village. This is supported by Kendell (2007) who postulated that the role of traditional systems in modern society will develop as they adopt more modern practices there by extinguishing the traditional leader's role. It is interesting to note, that all the village heads and headman thought traditional leaders were a necessary. This is perhaps a subjective opinion since they were talking about themselves and probably their livelihoods. Haydn (2015) validates this notion when he argues traditional leadership forms a 'social uniting force' which continues to be significant in the procedure to be followed when resolving of conflicts and peace building

This elaborates the Ubuntuism and that, in as much people of Ntabazinduna and Mbembesi are affected by modernisation they remain deeply entrenched in their socialisation and uniqueness as communal creatures.

Additionally, the research presented the preferred constituency when communities of Ntabazinduna and Mbembesi, turn to in times of conflict for assistance to resolve it. It showed that the most preferred institution respondents turned to was that of Traditional leaders followed by Pastors and the least preferred were the Police. This is perhaps because the traditional leaders are the ones who are closer to the communities as most respondents in these areas live less than 5km from the traditional leaders compared to the other 3 institutions who are at least 12 km away from them on average. 21 of the respondents mentioned there would rather be assisted by the Pastors and amongst them 18 said their sort assistance from both the Pastors and traditional leaders. This is also perhaps because of diluted culture on their part or urbanisation as well as the literacy levels. A large of number of respondents thought that traditional leaders provided good services and the type of resolutions they proffered were balanced between both victim and offender unlike the other alternatives. Hence, it was the most important reason for their patronage of this institution. This is as observed by Dodo (2017) when he notes Zimbabweans still remain deeply embedded in their culture and the question to whom they turn to in times of conflict in times needs no prophet.

The research established that proximity, affordability of services, prompt attention and readily available personnel to assist in times of conflict were the factors most considered in selecting an institution to assist resolve conflict. Affordability was also one of the important reasons for selecting a constituency among the respondents who completed only basic education who are in the majority. On the contrary, affordability was the second least popular reason for key stakeholder respondents who all had a tertiary education. This clearly aligned to the assertion that by Nwoye (2006) that African methods of conflict resolution consist of social issues, economic matters, cultural issues and religious matters in accordance to the traditional values and as well as the worldviews of a community within the varied spheres of communal life. Msengana (2006) augments the later in his assertion that the techniques engross alternative conflict resolution techniques and reconciliation

based on the understanding, traditions and the history of the concerned society.

The findings of this research indicated that, when asked on the traditional leaders' effectiveness in resolving conflicts 110 respondents, thought that the traditional leaders were effective because most conflict issues are settled by them and are often brought to their finality than any other method. Whilst 70 thought they were moderate because the majority had basic education which made them not quite effective and at the same they thought that even though they lacked higher education because the majority of the traditional leaders were above the 34 – 45 age group hence, what they lacked in formal education they compensated in life experiences, the pastors were ranked 2nd, 3rd were the police and last were the magistrates because the majority of people thought it was a harsh system and lacked Ubuntu. Avolio and Locke (2002) position that Traditional leaders are ineffectiveness in arbitration/mediation can be attributed to the inadequate knowledge of state law, poor mediation skills and poor public relation skills is disproved by this research when it indicated that more than three quarters of the respondents have sort help from traditional leaders have received it and the same number also classified the nature of assistance as either excellent or good. And only 47 of the total number who sort assistance from the Traditional leaders felt there did not receive it at one time or another. The table indicates a total of 132 respondents sought the assistance of the Traditional leaders. The women were in the majority constituting a total of 87. 82 man and 57 females totalling 139 at a particular point sought the assistance of village heads/headman and they received it. Whereas a total of 66 felt there were not assisted and of these women constitute the majority which was 45.

The Study validates Rasheed and Rasheed, (2011) observation that Ubuntu, regardless of the extent to which it actually exists in modern Africa, has traction among the people of Africa, when it indicated that a total of 150 respondents sort assistance from the Pastors at one time and of these 127 were assisted and 23 were not. This is consolidated by the research findings which showed that, from 205 respondents 80 in the age group of 54+ mentioned that they will rather go to traditional leaders and Pastors to resolve their issues in times of conflict and of these, women were in the majority constituting 46 of the total number. 106 in the age group of 35 to 54+ opted to use traditional leaders and 22 women preferred to

use both traditional leaders and Pastors. 15 man in all the age groups, 7 of them were in the 26 to 35 and 8 in the 54+ group and 7 of them were males which opted to use the Police and courts. And of these respondents who preferred using the courts and Police were from the Key stake holders. The remaining 4 from the age group of 18 to 25 indicated that there were comfortable using all the systems for conflict resolution though three indicated their first options will be the Police and Courts. This was perhaps due to their age and educational qualification combined by their exposure to modern systems of conflict resolution. This research confirms the statement by Mamdani, (1999) that Traditional leaders and customary governance institutions remain important, especially at the local level, in many low-income countries.

CONCLUSION

The study has revealed that that despite modernity the Traditional leaders in Umguza have continued to have a big role in resolution of conflicts in their areas and command a lot of respect. Evidence has proved that there are pluralistic methods of conflict resolution in Umguza District whereby different avenues are used in seeking to resolve conflict the traditional Institution being the most popular. Perceptions that Communities have about the Traditional leadership institution and causes of conflict influences conflict resolution choice of institution for assistance. It is imperative to note, that the different avenues communities resort to satisfy conflicts in some way at times they do not offer the same opportunities for resolving conflict nonetheless one has to note that in Mbembesi and Ntabazinduna the institution of Traditional leaders is a key component in conflict resolution. It is without a doubt that despite some challenges in legislature, social and political challenges the traditional institution is critical for conflict resolution in Umguza. Though structures of traditional leadership are existent there are not gender sensitive hence, exclude women to actively participate in resolving conflicts that affect them. The distinctions brought about in this research study are self-explanatory of the datum that there are copious elements that determine traditional leaders' role in conflict resolution. The notion of traditional leaders' roles in conflict resolution is a multifaceted one yet illuminating to the understanding of resolving conflicts in Zimbabwe. As demonstrated in this research, the concept is beneficial in that it does not close down but opens up the inquiry to a variety of practices that in their

various capacities the traditional leaders play for instance Ubuntu does not vary from modernisation but complement each other. This research did not limit itself to one specific condition so as to not lose the finer details of that determine the role traditional leaders play in conflict.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The research makes the following recommendations:

There is a need to clearly distinguish the role of the Traditional Leaders in Conflict Resolution from other institutions so that there are no overlaps and confusion in the exercise of their duties. Hence, any future research evaluating the determinants of the role traditional leaders have in conflict should be expanded to capture the knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs regarding the various options of conflict resolution available. This way, it will be possible to constructively evaluate the knowledge-attitude-behaviours axis as it applies to the roles played by traditional leaders in settling conflict.

There is a need to enhance the capacity of traditional leaders, standardize, interpret and document traditional laws so that everyone would have access to educate themselves on the traditional laws existent within the country. Since these findings of the study itself, go beyond providing appreciable understanding of the factors that affect and influence the role of traditional leaders in conflict resolution.

It has been evident that Umguza community have a lot of faith in traditional leadership institution than any other government institution hence, the need for further research on how traditional ways and modern ways can be integrated and recorded.

There is a need to observe constitution in far as the traditional leaders' roles are concerned especially on gender and strengthening of traditional leadership structures. Gender is often neglected in traditional conflict resolution systems, yet conflicts are not gender neutral. Within Conflict research, gender analysis seeks to understand how gender power relations create inequities in access to resources, the distribution of labour and roles, social norms and values, and decision-making which when not properly attended result in conflict.

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