

Community-based organisations in Tanzania and development theory generation

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Abstract

The paper attempts to respond to the need of theorising on civic organisations in Tanzania as identified in the literature. The analysis of strengths and challenges of People's Organisations (POs) in Mwanza, Tanzania hinges on qualitative research based on 24 individual interviews with leaders and members of POs, one focus group and five expert interviews. Grounded theory method (GTM) informs this study. Its analysis is modelled on the stages described by Alan Bryman. Findings suggest that POs can make a modest but essential contribution towards development despite organisational, institutional, financial and technical challenges, especially lack of appropriate education and training. Whereas some literature romanticises the role of POs in development, other demonises it. Some scholars also point out a paucity of data as well as lack of theory on POs in Tanzania, creating a research gap to be filled. The analysis of theoretical and empirical data leads to the generation of theory as a logical conclusion of GTM. This theory is referred to as 'PO development theory' (PODT). The study recommends quantitative research methods on POs' contribution to development, using a larger random sample to enhance representativeness. Use of surveys to collect data at the national level, for example, would be appropriate. The study also recommends the coordination of POs as well as the formulation of a national PO policy through the involvement of PO members who are largely untouched in the current national NGO policy.

Key words: People's organisations, CBOs, theory generation, rural and community development

Introduction

This paper highlights the insights gained into the discussion of the strengths, challenges and the contribution of community-based organisations (CBOs) to

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development in Mwanza, Tanzania (Mutalemwa, 2015). CBOs are referred to here as people's organisations (POs). This paper advances the contribution to knowledge on civic organisations in four distinct but related areas addressing conceptual, practical and theoretical issues arising from both the theoretical literature and empirical analysis. These four areas comprise the following contributions, namely 'PO evaluation template' (POET), 'PO theory of change' (POTC), 'PO development theory' (PODT) and training programme, namely 'Developing People's Organisations' Sustainable Initiatives in Tanzania' (DePOSIT).

The following sections present each of these contributions and their justification against the backdrop of paucity of data on POs, lack of theorisation thereof (White, 2008; Shivji, 2007; Hyden, 1995) and the burgeoning power of the public-private-partnerships (PPPs) (State of Civil Society Report, 2014) over civic organisations in the context of sustainable development (Browne, 2017; Loha, 2018).

Literature

The research was based on the literature which, on the one hand, revealed a dearth of data regarding POs in Tanzania as well as the absence of theory on the same (White, 2008; Shivji, 2007; Hyden, 1995). On the other hand, the paper investigated the literature which either romanticised the role of POs in development or demonised it (Dill, 2013; Esman and Uphoff, 1988; Mansuri and Rao, 2013). This inadequacy or lack of theoretical and empirical data as well as conflicting intellectual discourses, on how POs contribute to development, necessitated an investigation which employed qualitative methods of data collection. During data collection and analysis, major theoretical ideas were developed, linked and synthesised in order to generate a theory grounded on empirical and theoretical data based on GTM as developed by Bryman (2012) and Strauss and Corbin (2008).

Data and methods

The paper is based on a sample of 24 individual members of CBOs, one focus group and five expert interviews. Findings suggested that organising has helped

to provide members and their families with a social insurance, albeit inadequately. POs focused on addressing immediate concerns confronting members rather than long-term development goals. The reason for this predicament was related to the lack of proper education and financial constraints. The social capital which characterises POs had a potential to spur development. Findings showed that organising brought about substantial socio-economic benefits to the members and some benefits to some non-members, concluding that despite limitations in human and financial resources, organising was significant. This finding concurs with scholars who equate organising with capital, land and technical knowledge, as the following quotation exemplifies:

One of the great challenges for policy analysis is the design of organisational structures which can mobilise local experience and integrate it with improved expertise. In seeking to promote this design function, we therefore emphasise the importance of local organisations for articulating needs and delivering services. We recognise, however, that organisational resources are at least as scarce and valuable as capital, land and technical knowledge (Johnston and Clark, 1982: 34).

Members of the sampled POs demonstrated aspirations for development as well as a commitment and strategies to bring about development. However, POs were likely to continue doing the same thing and develop in the same manner unless they changed or addressed a number of things. First of all POs needed to maximise their strengths and minimise their weaknesses as they cease opportunities and confront weaknesses. Nevertheless, POs cannot do this single-handedly; they need support of other development actors, including researchers, the academia and policy makers, as this paper accentuates.

The findings indicated a modest but essential contribution of POs to development, which is predominantly and practically significant to PO members. The paper also established a relationship between organising and development. Thus, organising was a means to development. The paper further suggested that organising in Mwanza was a response to the socio-economic and political challenges stemming from the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) and post-SAPS, with a concomitant retreat of the state in Tanzania as Hyden (1995) contends.

Strengths of POs

This paper identified and discussed strengths and challenges of POs on the basis of ten data-based analytical codes developed in this research, namely legitimacy, autonomy, cohesion, inclusiveness, internal organisation structure, stability, personal commitment, delivery, contentedness and change. The POs under investigation demonstrated a common prevalence of these properties to all organisations, with strengths outweighing weaknesses, thus further suggesting that PO organising was significant.

The paper compared the above strengths and challenges and observed that there were more strengths than challenges in organising. The strengths consisted of acquisition of emotional, material and financial benefits thus answering the research question: how organising contributes to socio-economic and political development and why it is significant. The paper argued that POs could maximise their strengths and minimise their weaknesses to spur development through training and networking. The strengths are summarised as efficient monitoring practice due to a manageable number of members per organisation, equity and accessibility to equal opportunities for all members, mutual respect, neighbourliness, adherence to social norms, transparency, commonality of needs and goals as well as responsible leadership, which can be equated with good governance.

PO challenges

The challenges included the lack of innovation among some of the members, lack of financial capital and dependency on members' meagre contributions, limited information flow from outside the organisation and particularly the lack of practical and soft skills in initiating or managing income generation projects. Some decisions took an unnecessarily long time to be made because all members had to be consulted. There was also a tendency of some influential members to bulldoze the rest. In addition, the standard amount set to help the sick or bereaved was in some organisations comparatively inadequate. This was explained by the differences in objectives for joining the organisation. On the one hand, for those who joined the organisation in order to give and receive financial support to those in need would try and give a substantial amount to

take care of the financial requirement even if their level of income was comparatively low.

On the other hand those who joined the organisation for socialising and exchange of emotional support and who were at the same time financially well-off, were content to pay an inadequate amount and get in return the same because for them money was not the primary motive for joining the organisation. This discrepancy left the former disenchanted and the latter a group akin to mediocrity. For example, one respondent who happened to be a member of two organisations was baffled by the amount of money she received during her admission to hospital where she had to pay a huge hospital bill. One organisation contributed Tshs 100,000 (about US\$ 60) and the other organisation paid Tshs 15,000 (about US\$ 9). The former had been in existence for two years and all members were women. The income level of the members was comparatively low. The latter, however, had been in existence for more than twenty years and both women and men were members. Their income was, on average, higher than that of the former.

In short, this paper affirms some of the challenges in the literature, for example those put forward by Minishi (2012), namely the lack of adequate facilities and resources. However, the lack of commitment to education and training and lack of competent training personnel as argued by Minishi (ibid) cannot be taken for granted or be accepted as a given. In fact, to the contrary, findings of this paper have shown a great deal of interest in education and training on the part of the members of POs. Indeed, the trainers this paper identified were secondary school teachers and university lecturers. Therefore, both interest and qualification are available. The missing link, however, was the structure to bring the two together, namely trainees and trainers. This paper suggested a structured and long-term plan to offer training to members of POs in the topics of their choice or the ones identified by this paper under DePOSIT.

PO significance for development

This paper showed that the purpose of organising was development and that like development, organising was a process. This process begins with the appreciation of the common needs of the members and the identification of socio-economic challenges facing them. These challenges were typically related

to poverty. Then POs' members apply organising as a method of addressing poverty, particularly income poverty and deprivation. As consistently pointed out in this paper, organising had not been able to bring about the desired transformation amongst the POs in Mwanza. However, the paper pointed out such a limitation and indicated the way forward.

POs could serve as a model of people-centred development at regional, national and international levels. This paper extends the approach employed by Yunus (2009, 2010) which addresses empowerment of the people through their own direct involvement and project ownership. This paper indicated that the failure to promote and implement genuine and sustainable people-centred development may either result in stagnation, underdevelopment or poverty as also argued by Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) or spark off the creation of the precariat as postulated by Standing (2011). Any kind of development which is not people-centred is self-seeking, and therefore absurd and skewed.

PO evaluation template

The paper submits a template of criteria which may be employed in evaluating the strengths and challenges of POs. This template is known as the PO evaluation template (POET). It consists of ten themes or criteria which constitute the conceptualisation a PO as well as the building blocks for theory. These criteria consist of legitimacy, autonomy, cohesion, inclusiveness, structural organisation, voluntarism, stability, delivery, contentedness and change as they have been explained in Mutalemwa (2015).

The above criteria stem from the analysis of empirical data as informed by GTM as well as theoretical data particularly with regard to the need of theorising on POs in Tanzania. The criteria are concepts which are further systematically interrelated through what the literature describes as statements of relationship which denote a theory (Strauss and Corbin, 2008). In other words, once concepts are related through statements of relationship into an explanatory theoretical framework, the research findings move beyond conceptual ordering to theory (Strauss and Corbin, 2008). Similarly, the literature maintains that to explain and predict, a 'theoretical statement' is needed, that is, a connection between two or more concepts (Hage, 1972: 34).

It follows that one may need to see in the current paper the relationship between concepts. For instance, cohesion and stability or delivery and contentedness are connected, whereby the duration of a PO or its members, which is a sign of stability, depends on the cohesion amongst the members. Without cohesion, stability would be compromised, because there would be nothing which unites the members. Similarly, PO members would not express contentedness towards their membership, if the POs were not delivering on objectives to a certain degree of satisfaction.

Therefore, one may conclude that cohesion leads to stability and delivery leads to contentedness just as the former may lead to the latter in both categories as well. This is what the literature explicates as theorising, namely the act of constructing from data an explanatory scheme that systematically integrates various concepts through statements of relationship (Strauss and Corbin, 2008). Besides, a theory helps users to explain and predict events, thereby providing guides to action. This paper envisages the employment of the POET to assess the strengths and challenges of POs in Tanzania and probably elsewhere with a view to improving development outcomes.

PO theory of change

The PO theory of change (POTC) builds on the ten criteria of assessing the performance of POs. It proposes a thesis that change is the goal of organising because PO members found organisations in order to improve their living conditions as empirical data in this paper has shown. In order for change to take place, this paper identifies three factors which need to be taken into account, namely preconditions, strategies and effects. The preconditions of change include legitimacy, autonomy and cohesion. The strategies comprise of internal organisation, inclusiveness and code of conduct. Effects consist of stability, delivery and contentedness.

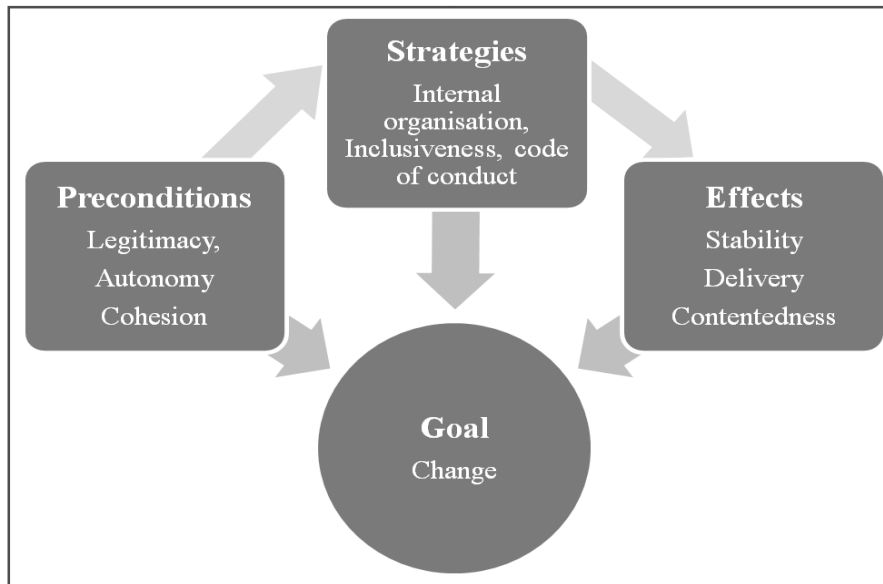
Thus a POTC is the interplay of preconditions, strategies and effects. In other words, POTC equals a sum of preconditions, strategies and effects, which depend on one another. The quality of preconditions, strategies and effects are essential in determining change. In this paper, change is synonymous with development. Figure 1. below shows the contents of POTC. The POTC may not be confined to POs, it may be extended to explain development in the broader

sense of the term at local and national and international levels. This proposition presents an alternative way of conceptualising change which is nonlinear and participatory. A different way of conceptualising change is provided by Rostow (1960).

Figure 1. also summarises the relationship and interconnection of categories by reiterating that the goal of organising is development or change, which may be indicated by the stability of the members and of the organisation, delivery on the objectives and contentedness of members as the effects of organising. These effects depend on certain strategies and values, namely internal organisational structure, inclusiveness and personal commitment. The strategies proceed from preconditions of the strengths of an organisation, namely legitimacy, autonomy and cohesion. In other words, commitment to social and ethical values, namely, but not limited to, co-operation, focus on the common good, financial accountability, democratic leadership, autonomy and functioning internal checks and balances, as identified in the findings of this paper, need to be incorporated in theory construction.

Thus, the discussion of development as the goal or purpose of organising needs to take into account the preconditions under which organising takes place, strategies of meeting organisational objectives as well as the effects or impact of organising. In short, the question of how change can be brought about and under what circumstances, with what effects, determines a POTC, as figure 1 indicates.

Figure 1: PO theory of change



Source: Mutalemwa (2015: 202)

The author establishes a relationship between organising and development and generates a theory of change. This paper refers to this theory as POTC. The theory suggests that organising in POs is a result of a gap in socio-economic and political development plans. It is also a lack of implementation of such plans or programmes, particularly under the PPPs, where POs in particular and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in general are sandwiched between the public and private sectors through privatisation, complementing the analysis by the State of Civil Society Report (2014). This gap creates conditions for an alternative strategy to address common development needs. This strategy entails organising. Therefore organising is a step towards development. It is not an end in itself; it is not a pastime or a socialising event per se: it is a means towards improving individual and societal conditions. The strengths which hold POs together such as stability, cohesion, inclusiveness and delivery, could be optimised to spur PO development and extended to meet broader regional and national development

goals if there is political will to do so. Change or transformation is necessary to avert the status quo towards improved living conditions. This change requires active membership, citizenship and accountability as described by Green (2012: 451).

Whereas POTC shows how development may be conceptualised and brought about, a new theory is needed to show how POs can be strengthened. This is the function of PODT, which is explained in the next section. In other words, POTC provides the content of development while PODT explains the process of development and the two complement each other as they also emerge from the same analysis. Indeed, content and process could, and probably should be merged. However, they remain separate in this paper for the sake of analysis.

PO development theory

The PO development theory suggests that active members are potentially likely to contribute to development through their own commitment and in conjunction with similar active members. Hence this paper argues that organising entails 'active subjectivity', which produces positive effects through collaboration or networking. Active subjectivity presupposes that the development of an organisation predominantly depends on the commitment of individuals. The positive effect or change leads to the well-being of the subject. From the subject the effect extends to other subjects and back to the first original subject. Hence, there is a relationship between subject, effect and networking such that if the subject is active, it would produce an effect that leads not only to change in the original subject but also in other inter-related subjects, which means the other members of the organisation who form a network.

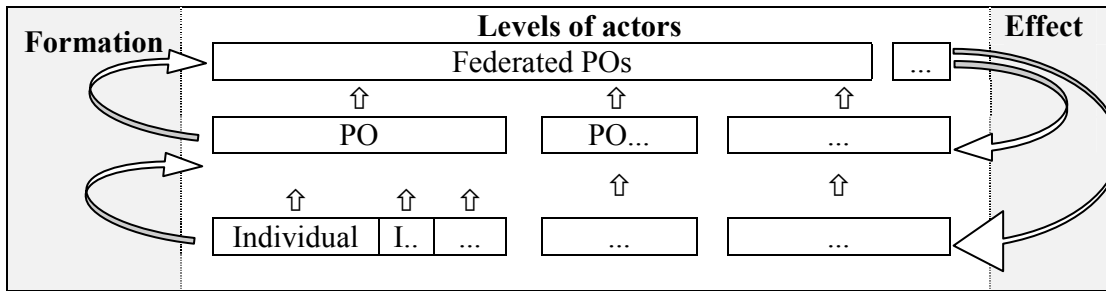
Each new subject may produce a greater change if the subject is pro-active who would produce even a greater effect to the original subject or subjects and the process continues in a spiral unless it is interfered with unforeseen factors or intervening variables. Networking and collaboration in POs do not diminish the effect or the change. They intensify it, unless everyone involved in the network faces hardships which challenge social cohesion (Green, 2012). Active members are likely to contribute towards the achievement of the common good whereas inactive ones are prone to stifle it.

In practice, active subjectivity which is the interplay between subjects who form a PO and an effect which springs from organising and networking means that a PO which is active would bring about a corresponding effect which would in turn benefit members of the organisation in the first place. Moreover, this benefit may have a ripple effect and may work as a springboard to the formation of a new PO or as a catalyst for the development of other existing POs. The new PO is likely to produce a deeper effect because it combines its experience with that of the original or pioneer PO. This combination may help the development of both the emerging and the original PO. The combination further produces an additional effect on the first or original PO. The more active subjects involved, the greater the expected effect. Thus one may conclude that the greater the effect, the broader the network, and the broader the network, the greater the benefits to the subject and to the entire organisation or network. The literature propounds the need for a synergy between individuals and their organisations in attaining their goals as Grusky and Miller (1981) argues.

In addition, the more active the subject, the more ideas or better resources could be generated. The more active the network, the greater the opportunities for effecting change as King and Cruickshank (2012) contends. This is possible if the socio-economic and geo-political conditions are supportive and not 'extractive' as the literature maintains (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2013: 124). Hence, the strength of the POs does not only depend on the 'activeness' of the members as propounded by Olson (1971). It also depends on the socio-economic and geo-political forces around the POs.

Therefore, stronger governance institutions at local and international levels, for example, have a role to play in the provision of an enabling environment for POs. shows the interaction between individual PO members and organisations in a model to which this paper refers to as interactive subjectivity. Interactive subjectivity denotes the active interaction of individual members at various levels which produces an essential effect towards the development of individuals as well as POs. These levels entail individual members, POs and coordinated or federated POs.

Figure 2: Interactive-subjectivity model



Source: Mutalemwa (2015: 204)

POs may be an effective force for change if they are mobilised and connected with other development actors. They may serve as an exemplary model of development from below as they constitute the most basic social organisation besides the family. The response model whereby government collaborates with communities to propel development, may inform the implementation of PODT. The response model seems to be working in other communities, for example in New Zealand (CRM Forum Report, 2013). This might equally work in Tanzania if the government resolves to positively intervene. However, the challenge ahead is how to make the government responsive to the needs of the people. Particularly, if the ‘organisational gap’ between central government agencies and the rural communities they are supposed to assist remains intact, as Esman and Uphoff (1988: 50) caution, then little can be expected to change.

In evaluating the veracity and utility of a scientific theory, the literature advances six criteria in evaluating theory (Cramer, 2013). For the purpose of this paper, these criteria may be useful in assessing PODT. The criteria are comprehensiveness, precision and testability, parsimony, empirical validity, and both heuristic and applied value. First, comprehensive theories encompass a greater scope or range of explanation for various phenomena.

Thus a comprehensive theory should describe, explain, predict and control phenomena and behaviour. For the sake of this paper, for example, PODT can be expected to be able to explain the process of development as well as the outcome of engaging in such a process. This means that the relationship between

active subjectivity and change should be established. Similarly, the relationship between PO formation and delivery should be linked.

Second, the criterion, precision and testability, demands that a good theory consist of constructs that are clearly defined, tightly inter-related, and readily open to reliable and valid measurement through falsifiable hypotheses, particularly in quantitative research. A theory is parsimonious if it is simple: with neither an abundance nor paucity of component parts and theoretical concepts. Empirical validity consists in its ability to correctly predict and control phenomena. Empirical prowess may also reflect the extent to which a theory manages disconfirming evidence, since studies with negative results carry more weight than those with positive results.

A theory's heuristic value involves its ability to generate unique thoughts and perspectives and directions in other fields. The use of description and explanation in qualitative research is advanced by Bendassolli (2013: 12). PODT is an attempt to describe and explain how PO development might be brought about. Finally, a theory's applied value can be measured by the extent to which it offers effective solutions to life's problems (Cramer, *op. cit.*). In this paper, issues such as income poverty, marginalisation and the lack of education come to the fore in the current paper. In the context of the PPP and community-driven development (CDD), the need for collaboration and trust, amongst various public, private and civic institutions, is necessary, as Bebbington and Kopp (1996) suggest.

The literature indicates some attempts at institutionalising pluralistic approaches to rural development, which have been successful producing stronger links and more equal interactions between government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and Rural POs (RPOs). However, the majority of these programmes have been characterised by inefficiency and conflict as Bebbington and Kopp (1996) put it. Typical problems have included competition between theoretically co-operating organisations, and jeopardised NGO autonomy, as governments contracted them to simply implement government programmes.

Social capital between organisations seems to be the central element of successful pluralistic collaboration, particularly trust and networks that span across institutional boundaries. Trust, however, may at times be problematic where it has been broken by one of the involved parties, during periods of

authoritarian rule for instance, as Bebbington and Kopp (1996) show. Indeed, the argument for involving various actors in development is also advanced in Hyden and Bratton (1992).

The literature on theory generation provides stages through which POs could be strengthened. For example Bebbington, Kopp and Rubinoff (1997) propose developing theoretical frameworks in academia in order to link institutions to the analysis of economic and political development. Such frameworks could be the work of institutions and economic performance, associated with North (1990) and the work on social capital and economic development associated with Putnam (1993). Besides, one may assess the relationship between macroeconomic strategies and institutions and lastly one may bring field realities to bear on pluralistic strategies. A discussion on the relationship between and amongst such variables is necessary for theory building and in so doing a researcher is in a position to explain, in particular, the role of POs in socio-economic and political development within such pluralistic environments. PODT shows that organising is both a process and product, which begins and is attained through four steps. The first step is by individuals identifying some socio-economic challenges. This identification is followed by devising common strategies to address these challenges. So far, POs in Mwanza have been able to reach these steps. However, the following stage which consists in networking has not yet been realised despite its advantages as advanced in the literature (Bebbington and Kopp, 1996; Satterthwaite, 2004; Esman and Uphoff, 1988).

It is at this stage that a conversation between various development actors can take place and models such as PPP and CDD could be reconciled. The aim of organising and networking is to strengthen POs by increasing the capacity of the members to solve their problems or improve their living conditions. This is a process of ongoing transformation for sustainable and holistic development. The process consists of problem identification, organising, networking and transformation as explained in the following section.

Step one: problem identification

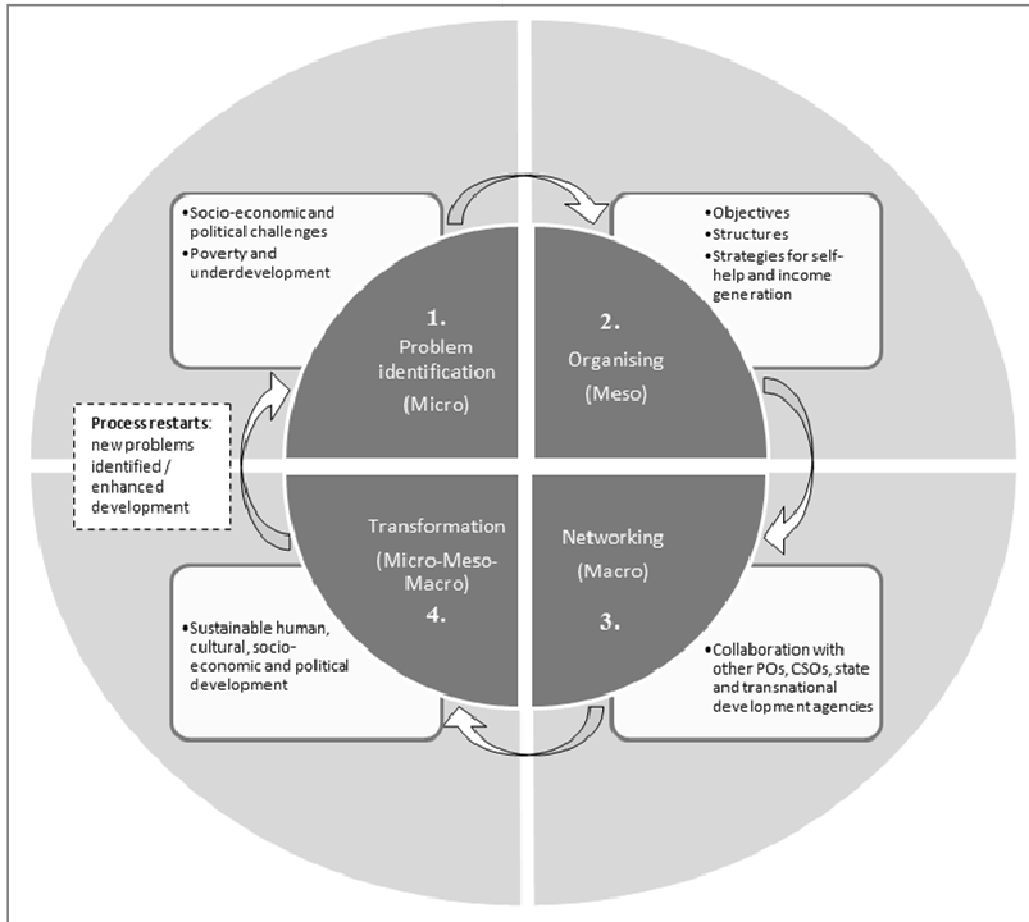
The starting point of PODT is at the micro level. At this level, individuals who are potential PO members, identify needs and challenges facing them. This identification of problems originates from the members' lived experiences. The

individuals realise that they cannot solve the problems single-handedly. Therefore, they decide to form an organisation or join an existing organisation. This brings them to the second level, which is the meso one.

The procedure of starting the development process at the micro level contributes to the extant literature. For example, Servaes (1999) argues that initiatives of development must begin with grass-roots communities and organisations, which is a social structuralist approach. Similarly, White (2004) concludes that top-down approaches to development are misguided as they exclude people's initiatives. That is the theoretical basis upon which the current paper builds on, as summarised in the quotation below:

There is increasing agreement that the fundamental flaw in development theory and practice is the logic which has initiatives of the development process emanating from government or NGO programmes being controlled by urban technical elites in alliance with international development agencies (White, 2004: 7).

Figure 3: PO development theoretical model: analytical framework



Source: Mutalemwa (2015: 208)

Step two: organising

This paper refers to the second step in the PO development process as organising. In the context of this paper, organising means the formation and management of a PO. A comprehensive explanation of the concept is provided by Speer and Perkins (2002). At the organising level, individuals discuss their goals in a meeting with other individuals. The result of the meeting and negotiations is the formulation of community goals, objectives and strategies. The overall goal is usually socio-economic development. The way to achieve this goal is determined by members at the organisational level. Although individual goals form the basis of PO goals, PO priorities supervene upon individual goals. This is because the potential for disagreement amongst members can be assumed to exist.

So far, there has been an interplay between micro and meso relationships amongst POs in Mwanza. What has been lacking is the interplay over and above the meso level, that is, the networking level. Apart from advantages such as stability and inclusiveness which characterise such POs, the POs may be threatened by dangers such as complacency and exclusion. To counterbalance these dangers, PODT proposes an interaction between and among POs as well as an interaction with other development actors.

Step three: networking

The third step is the macro level, which is referred to in this theory as networking. The idea of networking is to broaden the knowledge and experience within POs in order to maximise organising potential as well as to extend organisational values and the norm of generalised reciprocity to a larger community. The idea is not to subsume POs into wider regional or national bodies, as this may lead to their loss of autonomy or identity and succumbing to power structures, which normally exclude the poor and the weak in society. Doing this in POs would be a contradiction in terms. Some development theorists, for example, Rugumamu (1997) and Green (2012) argue for co-operation based on research, development and flexible networking rather than lethal aid and trade. This argument is relevant to PODT because such

organisations are stronger in terms of social capital than economic capital through which trade and political power reign supreme.

The need to co-operate with other POs was expressed by respondents as an opportunity to learn from each other's success. This means POs are increasingly becoming aware that there is need to change their *modus operandi* and that their future depends on broadening networks. Collaboration with other POs is useful because there would be an exchange of experience and knowledge sharing opportunities. Although this collaboration is desirable, it should not end here. There is a need to reach out to other civil society organisations in order to make their voices known and get involved in national and international development agendas. Strengthening POs can contribute to the transformation of political power and a method of doing so is suggested in the literature.

For example, White (2004) indicates that POs need to develop into large-scale organisations aiming to transform the power structures around them. The question of collaboration of development actors proposed in this paper expands the literature which argues that local and international development actors should work together and develop positive relationships (Dinbabo, 2014). Furthermore, the literature shows that networking has been successful in some countries such as India and Sri Lanka due to the notion of ownership and autonomy (Hyden, 1995). Therefore, networking could be embarked upon in Tanzania as well.

Step four: transformation

The fourth step is transformation which, in this paper, is synonymous with change or development. It is a completion of the first cycle of the organisational development process, as it brings together the micro, meso and macro levels in the assessment of individual, organisational and networking goals. Since PODT advances a holistic method, the assessment of transformation takes cognizance of human, social, cultural, economic as well as political development as Burkey(1993) maintains.

However, since development is an on-going process, PODT anticipates a discovery of other areas for improvement as well as an identification of new challenges, as the process proceeds in a spiral. This being the case, it follows that a new circle of development, through problem identification commences

and the process continues. This theory envisages the end-result as the strengthening of POs and improvement of societal conditions through maximisation of human and social capital as Green (2012) maintains. However, although the process is a continuous one, it does not exclude possibilities of retrogression or stagnation because of potential intervening variables. The strength of this theory is probably the versatility of the process, richness in values, content and objective.

Whereas theories such as modernisation (Rostow, 1960) and dependency (Rodney, 1972), as well as concomitant developments such as colonisation, nationalisation, and neo-liberalisation which gave rise to PPPs, assume a linear way of bringing about development. PODT assumes a cyclical trajectory. This is because PODT views development as a process which entails the interaction of various actors who are heterogeneous, dynamic and interdependent. PODT endorses self-criticism of development professionals who unquestioningly and unanimously follow neo-Newtonian paradigms as if they were the only feasible paradigms possible, as Chambers (2012) puts it. For this reason, PODT assumes the participation of a diversity of actors and plurality of methods of bringing about people-centred development within a CDD model. The following quotation makes an invaluable insight relevant to the proposed theory in this paper, by distinguishing between development paradigms:

We are all trapped in our mindsets and our ways of seeing and doing things. **Development paradigms: neo-Newtonian and adaptive pluralism** delineates two contrasting paradigms. The neo-Newtonian has elements that are linear, ordered, uniform, controlling and predictable. Adaptive pluralism has elements that are non-linear, diverse, complex, empowering and unpredictable (Chambers, 2012: 147) [Emphasis in original].

In a bottom-up and participatory approach to development, PODT postulates that inasmuch as various development actors may be involved in the process of change; local organisations and their members should take charge in determining the course of their development because as pointed out in this paper, autonomy and ownership are crucial for development, particularly where there is capacity and commitment to deliver (White, 2004). It is through

networking that internal and especially external capability building resources can boost the PO commitment for change and better livelihood.

One of the issues in facilitating learning and negotiated action is the variety of stakeholders at different organisational levels required in the process. This requires knowledge exchange mechanisms operating between and within organisations. Networks have the potential to be fast-acting mechanisms, to provide non-hierarchical inter (ra)-organisational knowledge exchange and create synergy. Kelly (1995) cited in King and Cruickshank (2012) introduces the concept of 0-1-3 to describe the process of network forming in community building where the community worker acts as a facilitator who promotes relationships between people with common problems and issues in the community.

As more people are added to the network, the number of relationships possible increases exponentially. The goal of networking remains that of development. Engel (1995 cited in King and Cruickshank, *ibid.*) describes the networking process as the process resulting from the conscious efforts to certain social actors to build relationships with each other in order to enhance sustainable development.

Networking as promoted by PODT has been practised in some development projects. An example of such networks could be the agribusiness links as pointed out in the literature which indicates that in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda field school networks bring members into commodity or producer associations to forge new agribusiness links. In the same vein, Mali groups of field schools have formed apex organisations structured around value chains as UNDP (2012) shows.

Research further indicates that networking helps to strengthen the capability of POs. The partnering between a Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) and Twaweza in Mwanza and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania on an immersion programme is an example of the possible benefits that networking can provide. Both organisations share an appreciation of the limitations of the current development orthodoxies and the conviction that fresh and new approaches are required to create energies from below (van Klinken, 2012: 922). The current paper intends to broaden such networks to include more organisations and development actors.

The analysis of POs and other organisations can provide a theoretical framework to compare various kinds of organisation both formal and informal ones and let organisations learn from each other. As the literature shows, the theoretical and analytical framework of formal organisations can be transposed for the paper of apparently less structured and formalised fields of action (Friedberg, 2011). This is because formal organisations are a subset on a continuum of orderly patterns of interaction. For the same reason, one can argue that informal organisations, such as POs, are also part of this continuum whose analysis can inform formal organisations as well.

Transformation builds on learning which has the potential to create positive change to an individual learner but also to the learning organisations. Since PO members have a disposition to learn as the results in this paper show, the potential for transformation seems even more imminent and feasible. As the literature shows, learning is a process of transformation, in the sense that it not only transforms those subjects of development, namely those communities of so-called ‘beneficiaries’, but also transforms the development organisation that engages in the process (Dagron, 2006: 596).

In addition, some scholars posit that organisations learn only through individuals who learn. However, individual learning does not guarantee organisational learning (Senge, 2006). Indeed, without individual learning no organisational learning occurs. This paper builds on the literature, which sums up the goal and content of transformation as emancipation from all forms of bondage: political, economic and cultural, as the following quotation elucidates:

How can our work as intellectuals and activists assist in the transformation of society, to develop human potential for self-emancipation from all forms of bondage and restrictions – mental, racial, economic, gender, social and cultural? This is the essence of an understanding of transformation, a tremendous change in social organisation, modes of thinking, as well as cultural and gendered practices. In this sense, transformation involves far more than legal changes, such as political independence or the transition from one mode of production to the next. Transformation involves a thorough change in society from top to bottom (Campbell, 2013: 35).

This paper suggests that one of the ways through which PO members can bring about self-emancipation and transformation is through education and training. In short, PODT postulates that confronted with development challenges, individuals tend to seek common solutions through organising and that active members and their organisations may succeed in improving societal conditions through broadening networks.

The following section addresses the content, processes and actors involved in bringing about change in a rather concrete training programme.

Discussion and conclusions

This paper presented both theoretical and practical contributions to knowledge. The researcher reconceptualised POs, extending the academic debate on the strengths, challenges and contribution to development theory and practice. In this paper, the researcher proposed a programme through which theory could be put into practice. The re-conceptualisation consisted also in the presentation of POET which might assist in assessing the performance of POs and probably the performance of similar organisations.

In addition, the paper presented POTC in which analytical codes form the content of the three pillars of change, namely preconditions, strategies and effects. These were the building blocks on which PODT emerged as a logical requirement in engaging GTM. PODT consisted of four steps, namely identification of the development need, issue or problem, organising to address the need, networking to strengthen capabilities to address the need and transformation as a process of improving societal conditions by involving various development actors.

A supportive political environment, which extends PPPs to involve CDD models as well as the commitment of PO members through the interactive subjectivity model were presented as necessary conditions for change. Without strengthening POs and CSOs, the encroachment of the private sector into many aspects of the public life and the privileging of big business in governance as well as the issue of privatisation of the post 2015 development agenda may continue to cause concern for many CSOs, as the State of Civil Society Report (2014) exemplifies. This paper contends that real investment is not in minerals, oil and gas (Muhongo, 2014) but rather in education and training.

By way of responding to the need of education and training from this paper's empirical data, as well as similar findings in the literature, for example Alinsky (1946), Freire (1970), Maluka (2008), Shao and Msoka (2008), this paper proposes a training programme (DePOSIT). The aim of this programme is to establish an educational training network for supporting PO development initiatives in Tanzania. DePOSIT responds to the educational needs of PO members, namely.

With education and training POs may deliver more and better towards development since they have so far been unable to do so as Dill (2013) put it, with or without external support as Mansuri and Rao (2013) claimed. The integration of the POs in the learning society as well as the involvement of the academia amongst other actors might help reduce the lack of interest amongst researchers or academia to engage POs as Hyden (1995), White (2008) and Shivji (2007) argued.

Regarding the integration of POs in national development, the paper found out that there were no concrete structures or even policy geared towards PO development. Despite the call of the state for formalisation, there was little implementation of the process and as such POs remained predominantly informal. There was a discrepancy between the government and POs because the political structure did not seem to take into account the needs and initiatives of the citizenry as a mark of good governance as White (2004) and Servaes (2008) argue. In addition, the paper shows that POs were often conflated with civil society or its main actors which are NGOs as Hyden (1995) and Shivji (2007) contend.

This paper establishes a general lack of co-operation between POs and the NGO sector. The discussion of the relationship between POs and NGOs identifies a fallacy to assume that an NGO policy or rather civil society policy would automatically reflect the needs of POs or cater for them. That is why this paper argues for the formulation of PO-focused policy framework, followed by its implementation. In short, the paper shows that there are both strengths and challenges in organising amongst the POs in Mwanza. The former could and should be maximised and the latter could and should be minimised by increasing the capacity of the members to organise effectively and efficiently through education, training and networking programmes, such as DePOSIT.

Recommendations

This paper presents six recommendations, in order to strengthen POs and integrate them effectively and efficiently into regional and national development. The recommendations are based on the findings of this paper as well as the need for building capabilities of POs discussed in the literature. These recommendations entail changes in policy, networking, sampling methods, theory application, database creation and a training programme. CBOs should have a separate entity as they differ from NGOs. They should form networks rather than operate in isolation.

Quantitative methods should be employed to gather a large representative sample. This method would succeed if there were a database of all CBOs in Tanzania. An effort should be made to test the PO development theory and gauge its application. In addition to all the recommendations, special emphasis should be placed on the education and training of members of the CBOs as a necessary condition for development.

Organising and development are both processes and as such both take time and other resources to mature. They entail empowerment of the masses, freedom to think and act autonomously and collectively in order to improve societal conditions. Organising for development is an ongoing process like liberation and as such it is a historical process. Literature outlines stages of liberation which might be helpful in appreciating the process of organising in POs, particularly when organising is about eradicating poverty and increasing freedom and choices, as the following quotation amplifies.

It [liberation] is not a single action which can be completed and have that completion celebrated annually. And, for Africa, liberation has four aspects or stages. First, is freedom from colonialism and racial minority rule. Second, is freedom from external economic domination. Third, is freedom from poverty, injustice and oppression, imposed upon Africans by Africans. And fourth, is mental freedom – and end to mental subjugation which makes Africans look upon other peoples, or other nations, as inherently superior, and their experiences as being automatically transferrable to African needs and aspirations (Nyerere, 2011: 104).

In short, this paper attempted to bring to light PO strengths and challenges such as the lack of capability building as well as financial, technical and institutional support. The paper identified and discussed the internal organisational processes, structures and operations vis-à-vis external responses or lack thereof. It presented a critique of some of the dominant development discourses, approaches and theories, particularly modernisation and dependency and their influence to current PPPs. The paper indicated that, if left unchecked PPP may thwart the initiatives of local organisation. Secondly, this paper endeavoured to provide an analysis of POs in a comprehensive way as well as to develop the criteria for conceptualising POs. Besides, the paper pioneered a theory, namely PODT. This theory is expected to raise more questions regarding organising and development as well as the relationship between the two. In the final analysis, the current paper could lead to more effective and efficient organisation, and thus contribute substantially to local and national development.

PODT could be applied in Tanzania and its neighbouring countries where similar PO arrangements are in practice in order to strengthen participatory approaches to development. Besides social capital as the strength which held POs together (Esman, 2003 and Putnam, 1994), the current paper indicated that the success of POs would depend on the coordination of various development actors, practitioners, theorists and decision makers through strengthening other capitals, namely economic, cultural and political (Bourdieu, 1986) and human (Burkey, 1993). The literature provides an important philosophical input to keep the PO development debate in focus through research. The main aim is to deepen knowledge which can lead to the improvement of societal conditions, based upon people's priorities, as summarised in this quotation:

All one can hope is that the effort of trying to find out, of asking again and again, and doubting the outcomes, which check some of the worse effects..., and the more the priorities of the poor are known, the easier it will be to see what it is best to do (Chambers, 1983: 142).

Having discussed the strengths, challenges and implications of POs in development, the paper proposes two relevant steps. The first step consists in developing a method of operationalising PODT in Tanzania and second, applying the theory through a gradual establishment of PO networks in Tanzania in co-operation with the state, private sector, civil society and the academia

through DePOSIT. The publication and dissemination of the research findings of this paper are a step in engaging scholars in reflecting on and debating the future of POs in Tanzania with a particular focus on their significance to human, social, economic and political development. This paper further complements the literature which accentuates the need for strengthening POs:

This then is the job ahead. It is the job of building broad, deep People's Organisations which are all-inclusive of both the people and their many organisations (Alinsky, 1946: 219).

As far as the current paper is concerned, the first step of identifying and discussing PO strengths and challenges has been attempted. The next step is strengthening legitimate, legal and inclusive POs through further research, critical reflection and open communication amongst various development actors. The integration of CDD with PPP is probably more likely to enhance the improvement of POs and general societal conditions. The public, the private and the civic sphere need consolidate their efforts to spur development.

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