

Research Paper

Policy Communities and Natural Disasters: Cyclone Eline and Idai in Zimbabwe

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Abstract: Zimbabwe is vulnerable to natural disaster of various kinds including earthquakes but the most common and destructive have been cyclones which appear to be more frequent and aggressive in recent years. This paper seeks to explore the heuristic value of the concept of policy community in understanding how cyclones are dealt with throughout the natural disaster cyclone. As such, the paper's ambition is not so much to understand cyclones as natural disasters - admittedly an important subject on its own - but to dissect how policy stakeholders i.e those who are affected and want to affect the policy problem respond to cyclones that ravage Zimbabwe, especially the eastern part of the country.

Keywords: Cyclones, Natural Disasters, Policy Communities, Policy Networks.



1. Introduction

Across the global spectrum, disasters – both natural and man-made – have threatened humanity. The World Risk Report [1] says that, global statistics, both from the past and future, show an increase in natural disasters. The calamities that have threatened humanity include floods, earthquakes, tornados, cyclones to mention but a few [1]. These disasters had grave and devastating impact on human life, infrastructure, and the environment [2]. Zimbabwe being part of the globe has not been spared. The far-reaching impact and effects of natural disasters are felt in every part of the country and corridors of administration. Nonetheless, this paper primarily focuses on Cyclone Eline of 2000 and Cyclone Idai of 2019 which ravaged mainly the Eastern Highlands. The study seeks to understand how cyclones are dealt with throughout the natural disaster cyclone.

The Cyclone Eline floods of February 2000 left approximately over 250, 000 people affected, 90 people dead and the destruction of about US\$ 7.5 million worth of goods [3]. Mutizwa [4] reports 136 deaths not 90 deaths, 538 schools, 54 clinics, 59 184 houses as well as huts were destroyed. Approximately 230 dams burst and 20 000 herd of livestock went missing. World Food Programme Zimbabwe (WFPZ) [5] noted that, infrastructure in Mutare and Chipinge was destroyed e.g. granaries, bridges, schools, telecommunications lines, roads clinics. However, Cyclone Idai was travelling at “177km/h”, by mid-March 2019 an approximation of 250 000 people had been affected; 120 000 children, 154 deaths and 189 missing with an estimation cost of US \$ 612 million [6], [7]. Mavhunga [8] noted that by the end of March 2019, the death toll had reached 181 with more than 40 000 in need of food assistance and 7 000 had their houses destroyed. According to UNICEF Zimbabwe Report: 7 [9] “as of 14 April, 334 people had been reported dead and over 257 people were reported missing due to the cyclone”, more than 270,000 people were affected, including 129,600 children. In this regard, the study noted that the statistics of Cyclone Eline in terms of fatality rate is less with 198 deaths, the people affected are less with 20 000 and reconstruction cost is less with over US\$ 500 million [4]. To this end, the study acknowledges the destructive capacity of Cyclones and explores how Cyclones are dealt with in Zimbabwe under the prism of the concept of policy community to dissect how policy stakeholders, those who are affected and want to affect the policy problem respond to cyclones. The study utilised policy communities with the intention of not only want to comprehend how national disaster management is done, but also to understand the rationale for why it proceeds as it does. The researches ambition is to understand who makes decisions and why decisions have the content they do. It seeks to determine the relationship between the sub-government and attentive public in national disaster management.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Natural Disasters

A natural disaster denotes an atmospheric, hydrological or geophysical event for example windstorm, earthquake, tsunami, landslide, drought or flood that has the potent to cause distraction [10], [11]. It is a manifestation of an extreme precarious and hazardous event that affects communities inducing causalities, disruption of services and damage of properties leaving affected areas unable to operate normally without intervention from outside [12]. Kawara [13] established that, natural disasters “exert an enormous toll on development.” Thus, in Zimbabwe they pose a momentous danger to prospects for achieving vision 2030 (establishing an upper middle-class economy). This is because global annual economic impact allied with disasters were estimated at around US\$ 75.5 billion in the 1960s, US\$ 138.4 billion in the 1970s, US\$ 213.9 billion in the 1980s, US\$ 659.9 billion in the 1990s, US\$ 374 billion in 2011, US\$ 117 billion in 2016 and US\$ 75 billion in 2020 [4].

Losses induced by natural disasters can be categorised in three dimensions that is indirect losses which affect communities by damaging or disrupting local businesses and utility services [14]. Direct losses entail physical impact like damage or destruction and unpredictable changes that limit structure or individual functionality. This could be death or injury vehicle and building destruction [15]. The last one is intangible losses which encompasses psychological impairments. To this end, natural disasters are a threat to humanity, globalisation and development in general. Although it might be hard to establish robust curative measures, it is possible to establish viable preventive structures and institutions to curtail the impact of these disasters [10].

2.2. Policy Communities

Pross [16] stated that a “policy community is that part of a political system that has acquired a dominant voice in determining government decisions in a field of public policy.” For Pross [16] the

media, pressure groups, individuals and government agencies who are interested or involved in the policy area entails the policy community. Howlett [17] reinforce the above view by noting that, policy community entails actors who have a stake or interests in and try to influence policies formulated in a particular sector. The policy community is on two dimensions; the sub-government and the attentive public. The sub-government is a protected, smaller and more institutionalised accessed by ministers and senior bureaucrats. Howlett [18] is of the view that, a small group of individuals who intimately connect with the fundamental processes of policy formulation and implementation and hold top positions in their organisations shapes the sub-government. These individuals include ministers, senior bureaucrats such as chairpersons, secretaries and directors of government departments as well as key stakeholders for interest groups. A key unique feature of the sub-government is not only that, it represents the inner most circle of the policy community, rather the policy community is driven towards cooperation and consensus in a manner it operates.

The attentive public on the other hand is loosely defined and can also be said to be less cohesive, interested individuals and groups make up the majority of the attentive public. Pross [16] propounded that, the attentive public includes all those stakeholders who maintains a watching brief on policy developments whereas the sub-government, involves those who are actively engaged in policy design or implementation. Thus the attentive public encompasses consultants, individuals, government agencies and media who are affected by government's policies and attempts to influence policy direction but do not participate in policy formulation on a regular basis [18]. The attentive public is an integral component of public policy, it influences policy processes through conferences where they interact, share ideas and research findings [16]. These forums create a vital opportunity for members of the sub-government to dialogue and converse with representative from the grassroots, vulnerable and marginalised groups for the purpose of coming up with an inclusive policy consultation and formulation [16]. It is equally important to note that, members of the sub-government can come in the attentive public and go as they wish but members from the attentive public cannot penetrate into the sub-government.

2.3. Policy Networks

Pross [16] wrote “the chief distinction between a network and a policy community lies in the fact that the community exists because a policy field exists, whereas a network exists because those in it share an approach to policy”. The policy network is activated by issues and policies whereas the policy community is drawn together by a policy field [17]. Thus a policy network is established by actors who share an interest in a policy issue. Policy communities can split into numerous networks based on the method to the policy issue [18]. Policy networks are open-ended thus, people can come and go. This has an impact on the resolution of a policy issue. The policy network concept is driven by the belief that; the approach brings to light the empirical description of the policy-making process. Howlett [17] argued that, policy network “are crucial political structures through which we are governed or ruled.” Henry [19] declares that, policy networks tell us “‘Who rules?’, ‘How do they rule?’ and ‘In whose interest do they rule?’ Policy networks are “one, if not the, predominant mode of governance in modern societies” [19]. Accordingly, the study of policy networks is driven by the belief that uncovering them will identify who makes decisions and why decisions have the content they do. The word policy network covers power relation between actors in the sub-government of a policy community [20].

2.4. Policy Subsystems

Defining policy subsystem is problematic, as definitions differs across the literature with a myriad of variants including sub-governments, issue networks, whirlpools and iron triangles [21]. Policy subsystem are a common feature in the American model of governance and they take many forms and names for example intermediary politics, power triads, cozy little triangles, iron triangle, power clusters, policy coalition, power networks and policy whirlpools [22]. Weible [23] borrowing from the advocacy coalition framework defined policy subsystems as semi-autonomous networks of decision making of policy stakeholders and participants that focuses on a particular policy issue within a geographic scope. Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith [24] noted that, a “policy subsystem is defined by a substantive issue and geographic scope and composed of a set of stakeholders including officials from all levels of government, representatives from multiple interest groups and scientists/researchers.” Cairnet and Weible [25] reinforce the above assertion by stating that, policy subsystems entail a “topical area, a geographical territory, and the policy actors involved. Policy subsystems can occur at

any level of government from local to national and can occur cross-nationally. Policy subsystems are also nested and overlapping and semi-autonomous. They may involve officials from any level of government and non-government policy actors including those from the private sector, non-profits, academia, consulting firms, the news media, engaged citizens and possible others.”

A distinctive and idiosyncratic feature of the conception of policy subsystems encompasses observing them as being made of two subsets of all stakeholders in the “policy universe” [17]. The bigger set of actors is made of those who have an understanding of the policy issue in question, who mutually and collectively construct a policy discourse within a “policy community” [26]. Wilks and Wright [27] established that, a subsection within bigger policy communities which are knowledge-based comprises actors who actively engage each other to further their interests. Journalists, researchers, academics as well as other actors in policy communities maybe “excluded from policy networks in which a small set of actors-such as business and government-may interact on a regular basis affecting day-to-day policymaking” [17].

Thurber [22] established that, the policy subsystem model has two predominated images of the policy making process which are issue networks and iron triangle. The former is open, disjointed and complex system not ideal for conflict resolution and reaching timely decisions. The later projects a relatively stable environment, with limited participants and sophisticated structures tailor-made to reach timely decisions. The iron triangle allegory linking the executive, government agencies, bureaus and interested groups is also known as the cozy triangles or power triads, used primarily to project a closed and fixed an autonomous system for policy making. Helco [28] dismisses the iron-triangle allegory and advocates for open issue networks which have disaggregated power coupled with a myriad of participants flowing out and in of the policy making process.

3. Methodology

The section describes the research methodology which encapsulates the research approach, the research design, target population, sampling techniques, data collection methods, data presentation and analysis methods as well as the ethical considerations upheld in this study. This research uses the methods qualitative. First, the qualitative research methodology allowed the researchers to get more information about the issue of concept of policy community in understanding how cyclones are dealt with throughout the natural disaster cyclone.

4. Finding and Discussion

The policy communities in Cyclone Eline of 2000 and Cyclone Idai of 2020 have striking similarities. This is mainly projected in the sub-government where similar institutions play the same role. The attentive public has different players in regard to community members and similar in terms of pressure groups.

4.1. The Sub-Government

4.1.1. The Office of the President and Cabinet

The Office of the President and Cabinet (OPC) is at the apex of the sub-government, giving directives, regulating, monitoring and overseeing the operations of all ministries. The OPC liaises with regional, continental and international bodies as well as other key stakeholders who might be individuals or organisations. It is responsible for the signing and ratifying regional, continental and international frameworks on disaster management. This can be evidenced by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Disaster Risk Reduction Unit (DRRU) which Zimbabwe ratified. The SADC DRRU encourages member states to have robust organisations that handle national disasters. The OPC on the 25th of February 2000 declared Cyclone Eline a national disaster and all disaster management protocols were activated [5]. On the 29th of February the OPC chaired a meeting with the heads of United Nations (UN) agencies to determine the damages caused by the Cyclone and to come up with robust disaster management policy interventions to lessen the impact. An assessment team was sent on the 1st of March 2000 up to the 4th this was complemented by the United Nations Disaster Management Team (UNDMT) which also went to assess the damage from the 7th to the 21st of March [5]. The involvement of the UN agencies in the meeting brings to light the other dimension of the sub-government, its interactive and learning capacity. The views and experts from UN agencies would later inform the disaster response strategy.

However, just like Cyclone Eline, during the Cyclone Idai the OPC functioned as a meta-governance institution and was the strategic apex, providing leadership and national emergence

management coordination. On the 8th of October 2020, President Mnangagwa visited Nhedziwa in Chimanimani where a West End housing project is being carried out for the survivors of cyclone Idai. A total of 720 housing units will be constructed. The president reaffirmed government's total commitment to rehabilitation and reconstruction of the district [29]. Therefore, from a public policy evaluation perspective the OPC can be said to be the rehabilitation and reconstruction policy driver. It is also imperative to note that, this was the second visit by the President since March 2019 when Zimbabwe was hit by Cyclone Idai. Thus, the first visit by the President can be classified as formative evaluation which laid down the feasibility study and the last one summative evaluation which intended to examine the outcomes of the adopted project and policy goals.

4.1.2. Ministry of Local Government and Public Works

The Ministry of Local Government and Public Works provided a link between the OPC and DCP formerly known as the Civil Protection Unit (CPU). This is because the DCP is housed in the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works. The minister and deputy minister are responsible for crafting, driving and overseeing the implementation of the disaster management policy by the DCP. This is where bureaucrats and experts of disaster management are located in the sub-government. WPF [5] articulated that, during Cyclone Eline the ministry through the DCP was in charge of information gathering in the government and aid distribution. It was responsible for identifying marginalised and vulnerable areas so as to come up with comprehensive and viable resilience response mechanisms to curtail the effects of the disaster. The Ministry of Local Government and Public Works also worked with the local UN Inter- Agency Disaster Management Team (UNADMT) to strengthen disaster recovery and rehabilitation process. The platform created by the ministry to interact with other organisations such as UNADMT brings to light the dimension of policy network were actors work together to attain a common goal.

During Cyclone Idai, the Public Works department in the Ministry of Local Government was responsible for the reconstruction of both temporary and permanent homes. The department of public works moved swiftly to put temporary tent structures for the survivors of the cyclone. This was done in order to advance and execute the strategic disaster management reconstruction process that had been adopted by the sub-government. In this regard, the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works can be considered to be the executor of government programs in as far as disaster management is concerned. The ministry will be advancing the government's policy interest.

As part of the sub-government, the Ministry of Local Government is spearheading the crafting of the Disaster Risk Management Bill which seeks to strengthen disaster management framework by repealing the Civil Protection Act Chapter (10:06) of 1996. In March 2020 to further strengthen disaster management the ministry, launched Community Based Disaster Risk Management Training Program. Consultations with key stakeholders were done. The notion behind was to build resilience communities, that are empowered and capacitated to handle natural disasters. This shows that the ministry learned something and forget nothing during Cyclone Idai. Public hearing and consultative forums are a broader part of inclusive policy formulation process.

4.1.3. The Department of Civil Protection

The Department of Civil Protection (DCP) was established by the Civil Protection Act (Chapter 10:06) of 1986 which repealed the Civil Defence Act of 1982 [3]. The legal instrument gave room for the operations of the DCP (Mavhura 2016:606). According to the DCP E-Service Charter, the primary responsibility of the Department is to curb, mitigate and if possible, prevent national disaster [30]. Central to the mission of DCP is the coordination and promotion of strategic planning for disasters at the community, local authority and national level in a bid to promote "optimal emergency preparedness and disaster prevention in Zimbabwe". This is also in line with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Disaster Risk Reduction Unit (DRRU) which encourages member states to have robust organisations that handles national disasters.

The DCP is headed by the Director in terms of section 3 of the Civil Protection Act (Chapter 10:06) who is responsible for directing and controlling services, materials and personnel in terms of section 3(2) (b) as well as coordinating the training of organisational staff in terms of section 3(2) (d). According to the Civil Protection Act (Chapter 10:06) section 4(2) (a) the Director is the Chairman of the National Civil Protection Committee (NCPC) which is the strategic apex of the Department. The Civil Protection Act (Chapter 10:06) section 4(2) (a-i) noted that the NCPC comprises the Health Secretary, Police Commissioner, Commanders of different branches of the Defence Forces, Prisons

Director, Zimbabwe Red Cross Society Secretary-General, Civil Aviation Director, three members appointed for their expertise by the minister and representatives of fire brigades of local authorities. All these actors advance their interest in times of national disasters and policy networks and coalition are formed. The DCP operations are supported by various expertise from different government departments. This also brings to light government's dominance in the formulation of the recovery, reconstruction and rehabilitation policy, nonetheless, the interactive dimension of policy community and establishment of policy coalitions and networks is brought to light.

The Department has a management structure of seven staff at its Head Office which is made up of the Director, Executive Assistant, Deputy Director and four Administration Officers. The Administration Officers have equal responsibilities in different fields which are Liaison, Training, and Research. The Driver and Accountant form the supporting staff. The Provincial and District Development Coordinators formerly known as the Provincial and District Administrators head the DCP committees in their respective areas. During and after Cyclone Eline the Manicaland Provincial Administrator (PA) was at the helm of disaster management in the province, safeguarding the interest of the government and overseeing the implementation of the rehabilitation policy as prescribed by the government. The PA was the gatekeeper of the province, the PA's office was the one which allowed various Nongovernmental Organisations to operate and gave them specific areas to cover. This can be evidenced by the distribution of Chimanimani District to different humanitarian organisations such as Plan International, Chipinge World Vision, Christian Care and Red Cross. The organisations negotiated for the areas according to the disaster impact, their regular working areas and accessibility [5]. The same can be said of Cyclone Idai, were the DCP through the office of the Provincial Development Coordinator oversaw the emergence management operations.

In addition, the Department has officials and committees at provincial and district level to enable organisational coordination and swift response in times of national disaster management. This can be supported by the organisational chart as shows in Figure 1.

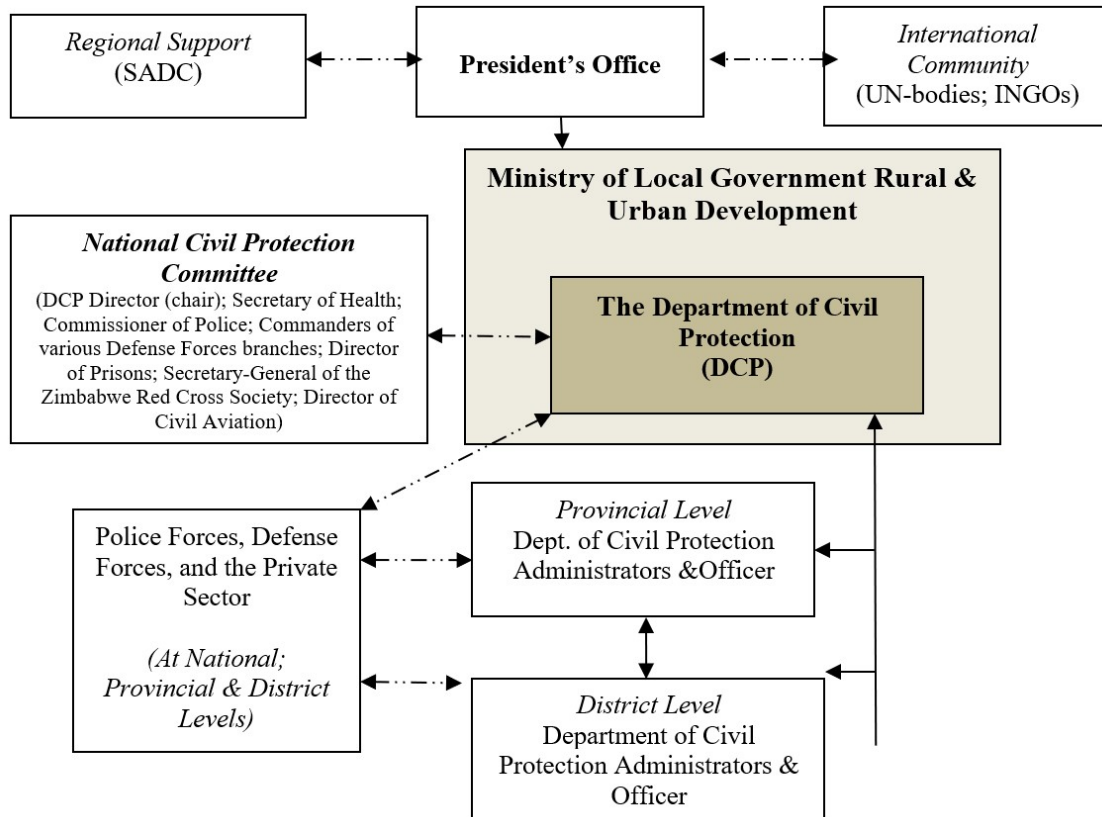


Figure 1. DCP's Organisational Chart (Source: Chikoto 2004:9)

4.2. Attentive Public

4.2.1. Community Members

Community members are an integral component of the attentive public. There are the principal beneficiaries of an intended policy. The study learnt that community members in Cyclone Eline just like the ones in Cyclone Idai views` were neglected in the reconstruction, recovery and rehabilitation disaster management process. The community members of Ngangu, Kurwaisimba, Rosscommon and Risutu Valley Kopa played a significant role in expressing their opinions and aspirations during various community engagement held by the government and civil societies. They submitted their grievances, although not exhaustive, which are the need for a viable robust disaster management framework, impartial and non-partisan distribution of food aid, broadening of social safety nets and a robust community reconstruction and rehabilitation process. It is equally important to note that, in as far as there was some level of engagement, the community members did not have the power and capacity to implement their views. As such they only expressed their grievances to the government which remained at the mercy of the sub-government on whether to implement them or neglect.

Nevertheless, some community members establish that when officials from the government came, they were excluded in every process nonetheless; they acknowledged that from time to time they were called by the chief and councillors to be updated on the way forward. The community members also attested to the fact that, members of the civil societies such as Plan International Red Cross and UN would from time to time meet with them and provide psychological aid complemented by food and other humanitarian aid. To this end, what is evident is that, when the community member's talks of exclusion it is from the governments side. However, the fact that the councillor and chief met with them waters down their argument -although it is sound and valid admittedly- it projects a scenario of democratic representation as the councillors are also part of the government and involved in the rehabilitation process by virtue of their working relationship with the local authority.

4.2.2. Civil Society Organisations, International Organisations and Private Players

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and International Organisations (IOs) played a positive role in lobbying and advocacy through their vast resources. CSOs and IOs reach a wider audience and influence them on policy direction and goals. The duo played a humanitarian role as well through; educational awareness campaigns, food, money, cloths and shelter distribution to alleviate the impact of Cyclone Idai. The government benefited from CSOs and IOs` statistics, policy briefs and situational reports in determining their policy response and other interventions. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) during and after the cyclone has been working with various communities and civil societies to educate survivors on how to prevent waterborne diseases [9]. UNICEF [9] has also rehabilitated water system, provide water purification tablets, soap and hygiene kits. UNICEF in partnership with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Ministry of Health and Child Care carried out vaccination campaign against cholera targeting more than 480 000 people. Thereby promoting the policy goal of optimum inclusive health.

World Vision, Africa Ahead, Goal, Action Aid Zimbabwe, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JAIC), International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Care International, Red Cross and Plan International were on the forefront of spearheading awareness campaigns and building community resilience capacity. This was done to enable the community members to be vibrant in case of community consultation processes by the government. For CSOs, IOs and private players this was not only a moment of showing a humanitarian gesture but also advocate and lobby for a robust disaster management policy through various policy briefs aimed at not only give policy directions but projecting anomalies in existing policies and offering policy alternatives. Private players such as Econet Wireless, Tongaat Hullets, Mukandi Estate to mention but a few supported and influenced disaster responsive policy through their donations, expertise and services.

4.2.3. The Media

The media played an integral role in putting pressure on the government and advocate for a better disaster management policy. This was done through newspapers, radios and television all this was to project the impact, scale and magnitude of the cyclone (Eline and Idai) on communities and human life. The media was also a tool of transparency and accountability by publishing the donations and money spend by the government. The media monitored government performance during and after the cyclone. It exposed irregularities, discrepancies and government intervention. The media also amplified the concerns and grievances of the marginalised and vulnerable survivors. A good example

is that of a male Ngangu Primary School Teacher who noted that at some time, help was not being given to them fairly as partisan politics took centre stage in the distribution of food and clothes. A Newsday article on the 8th of April, reinforce the above view by questioning in what capacity was Zimbabwe African National Union- Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) members distributing food aid. For a Ngangu Shop owner, ZAOGA Deacon, “Mushikashika” (taxi) driver this brings into dispute DCP’s capacity in national disaster management as the presence of ZANU PF members in the distribution of food aid was meant to instil fear and force those who belong to other parties to join them. All these narratives by survivors made the media to put pressure on the government. Although, the research did not find any direct link between DCP and partisan distribution of food, it’s failure to reprimand the present of political regalia in the distribution of food donations made, it’s independence and apolitical capacity to be questioned. It is this failure that gave the media the impetus to put pressure on the government leading to DCP taking over the distribution process.

4.2.4. Academia

The academia fraternity, community played a significant role in documenting different events and scenarios for various purposes which ranged from examining the organisational capacity of the DCP, interrogating community resilience and government strategic interventions to mention but a few. The large volumes of literature on disaster management and cyclones are a clear testimony to this. The research served as tools in adding value to the body of knowledge and helping in informing the policy making machinery. The academic fraternity also served as the consultants providing the government with expertise in dealing with the malignant effects of the cyclones.

The academia is responsible for building a robust national policy institutional memory. A consortium of researchers from various institutions such as: Zimbabwe State Universities and international and local development partners through the TSURO Trust assessed the impact and effects of Cyclone Idai. These include Midlands State University, University of Zimbabwe, Bindura University of Science and Education, National University of Science and Technology, University of Cape town (South Africa S.A), Postadam Institute of Climate Impact Research (Germany), Development Governance Institute (Zimbabwe) and Universities of Edinburg and Coventry (United Kingdom). The research covered six thematic areas these are: climatic and environment change, humanitarian impact, livelihoods, political and economy governance, disaster risk management agro-ecology and land use management as well as topography, infrastructure and settlements [29]. The purpose of the research was building resilience to natural disasters in populated African mountain ecosystems using Chimanimani as a case study. The findings of the study were presented to the government of Zimbabwe through the Climate Change Management Department. Thus, the government will utilise the report in its future policy interventions and activities.

4.2.5. Indigenous Knowledge

The most controversial cluster of the attentive public. The indigenous knowledge cluster comprises of individuals, chiefs, kings and spirit mediums who believes that calamities such as cyclones do not just happen without a spiritual revelation. The proponents of the indigenous knowledge, claims to have predicted Cyclone Idai and warned the authorities on what they were expected to do. However, the authorities are said to have neglected the advice of spirit mediums culminating into the inimical and malevolent effects of the Cyclone. Therefore, it is prudent for the government to be inclusive in its consultation processes. All the views of the citizens must be respected and honoured despite one’s religious affiliation.

4.2.6. Policy Communities and Understanding of National Disasters

The study of policy communities helps in aiding understanding of national disaster management. The study utilised policy communities with the intention of not only want to comprehend how national disaster management is done, but also to understand the rationale for why it proceeds as it does. Policy communities enabled the study to follow precisely the decision-making process in the policy making machinery. Policy communities helped in identifying who makes decisions and why decisions have the content they have. The research learnt that at the core of national disaster management in Zimbabwe is the sub government which comprises of the OPC, the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works and the DCP. On the other hand, the attentive public include academia, media, community members, private organisations, international organisations and nongovernmental organisations.

To this end, the study of policy communities helps to comprehend how various actors in national disaster management advance their interest. Humanitarian agencies see the catastrophe as an opportunity to establish resilience community and help the government with resources, academia see the need to interrogate present quagmires to come up with a better understanding of the scenario so as to proffer robust measures that shapes a viable disaster reconstruction process. The media fraternity advances their transparency and accountability interest by monitoring government expenditure and expose anomalies. This is because once a disaster has been declared national catastrophe governments tend to override other governance structural requirements which sustains democracy.

Equally important is how policy networks are formed in response to disaster management. Actors put their differences and interests aside and advance a common goal. Although it's not always the case, what is common in policy network is that a group of actors always find a common goal to advance their interests. This can be evidenced by how Africa Ahead, Plan International, Action Aid Zimbabwe, International Rescue Committee to mention but a few worked together to advance humanitarian aid during Cyclone Idai. The above organisations worked together in various humanitarian activities such as temporary shelter construction, psychological relief services with the DPC's psychological relief cluster as well as food and education material distribution. Nevertheless, despite how strong policy networks might be the decision is always made by the sub-government where policy power politics takes precedence.

5. Conclusion

The study of policy communities plays a significant role in national disaster management. Policy communities allow citizens to understand the public policy decision making process and bring to light how organisations and institutions advance their interests. They project how the sub-government and attentive public operates as well as how policy networks enable collaboration among various actors who amalgamate for a common cause. This can be evidence with the government whose relationship with nongovernmental organisations can be said to be antagonistic at times but when it comes to national disaster management, policy networks allow actors to put their difference aside and advance a common cause.

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