



## **Community violence in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: A mixed methods study**

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### **Abstract**

Most homicide deaths in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (DSM) are a result of violence arising from within the community. This type of violence is commonly called, by perpetrators and victims, "mob justice". Unilateral non-state collective violence can take four forms: lynching, vigilantism, rioting, and terrorism. The purpose of this paper is to report what leads to death by such violence in DSM. A cross-sectional mixed methods study design was used. Surveillance data were collected on all 206 victims of "mob justice" in DSM for the year 2005. Fifteen in-depth interviews were conducted with the relatives of deceased victims, a policeman, a journalist, community members, and youths who survived these types of community violence. A focus group discussion was conducted with eight youths at risk of such violence. The deceased were young adult males and differed significantly from assault victims as to age, occupation, weapon causing death, and injury site. Ninety percent were identified as: unemployed, thieves, unknowns, or street vendors. The immediate history of the deceased usually involved theft. The stated desire of community members was to live in peace; they acknowledged that murder is unlawful. Often the victims had been warned; if transgressions continued, male community members punished the individual, which led to death. Family reactions varied from relief, to confusion, and loss. Community level violence in DSM is defensive; the goal is to protect the community. It is focused on individuals, not groups; incidents can be classified along the continuum of lynching and vigilantism in which lynching is a spontaneous reaction to deviance and vigilantism is an organised activity. Decreasing the number of deviant social acts should theoretically decrease cases of lynching and vigilantism. The most humane way to decrease petty theft is through appropriate employment.

**Keywords:** homicide; Africa; Tanzania; vigilantism; lynching; community; mob

### **INTRODUCTION**

"Mob violence" as a response to danger and distress is recorded all over the world. Non-state unilateral collective violence can take the form of lynching, vigilantism, rioting and terrorism (Senechal de la Roche, 1996). Apart from some scientific literature on the topic from a few countries such as South Africa, Tanzania, Nigeria, and Ghana, other countries in the WHO African Region have not systematically investigated violence occurring from within the community (Kobusingye, Bowman, Burrows, Matzopoulos & Butchart, 2010). However, "mob justice" has been reported from many African nations by diverse sources including the United Nations, United States State Department, non-governmental organisations such as Human Rights Watch, and media outlets including British Broadcasting Company, and numerous African newspapers.

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In South Africa, community level violence, especially during apartheid, has been reported in conjunction with industrial disputes, political demonstrations, consumer boycotts, and funerals of residents killed by the police (Bruce & Komane, 1999; Harris, 2001; Winslow, n.d.). Alleged witches, both male and female, have also been targets in many African countries including Burundi (Human Rights Watch, 2010), Cameroon (Tembang, Nyiribugara & Vlam, 2007), Ghana (Adinkrah, 2005), Kenya and Nigeria (Winslow, n.d.), South Africa (Harris, 2001), Uganda (Mugunga, 2005) and Tanzania (Neki et al., 1986). In all these settings, with the possible exception of South Africa, the overwhelming majority of victims were accused of theft.

In Ghana, reporting on cases of “vigilante homicide” between the years 1990–2000, Adinkrah found that victims were predominantly poor, unemployed or menially employed males (2005). They were usually killed in streets, public bus stops and alleys, by men using weapons at hand, including fists, clubs, sticks, stones, bricks, machetes and sometimes fire. The most force was meted out to pick pockets and armed robbers. In all instances, the intent was to apprehend and punish an alleged malefactor. These killings were reported to invariably be the outcome of spontaneous actions taken by “available” bystanders. In most incidents, once a public alarm was raised, a “mob” gathered rapidly. No evidence of prior planning, coordination, or internal organisation of the event was evident in any of the cases examined (Adinkrah, 2005).

It is not known what proportions of Africa’s homicides result from community level violence, but they may vary widely between nations. In East Africa such violence is a well-known phenomenon. In Uganda, the police registered 146 mob killings between January and November 2004 (Mugunga, 2005). Ng’walali and Kitinya (2006) mining mortuary registers found that 1 249 people were killed by “mob justice” in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania between 2000 and 2004.

Violence in this context is a collective community action arising against individuals or small groups. “Mob justice” occurs when a group physically punishes people without trial, without legal procedures, and often without evidence (Mugunga, 2005). As described by an Assistant Commissioner of Police in Tanzania (TZ), “Mob justice is the unlawful act of people punishing suspected offenders collectively without taking them before proper authorities (criminal justice administration). In other words, it is a situation whereby people take the law in their hands by arresting, prosecuting and punishing at the same time” (Lanka, 2011). When injury mortality surveillance was conducted in 2005 and 2010, it was found that about half of all homicide deaths in DSM were a result of community perpetrated violence (Mgalilwa, 2011; Outwater et al., 2008).

Such a high proportion of homicides resulting from these types of communal violence is unusual. The purpose of this paper is to contribute to decreasing community violence by improving understanding of the events immediately surrounding such deaths in DSM.

## **METHODS**

A cross-sectional mixed methods study design was used. Data were collected in 2005 and 2006.

### **Setting**

In 2005, a Tanzanian’s purchasing power parity based on the gross national income was US\$1050 per year per capita, the 22nd lowest in the world (World Bank, 2005). DSM is TZs most prominent region and encompasses rural and urban areas, including a port city on the Indian Ocean. Administratively, DSM is divided into 3 districts and 73 wards (with populations between 4 500 and 90 000). It is a fast growing city with poor infrastructure and a rapidly deteriorating natural resource base, to which people, especially youth, are migrating from all over the country. In 2005 the population was estimated to be 2.84 million.

Some of the highest crime rates in Africa have been reported from TZ where 63% of respondents reported having been victimised in the previous year (Naude, Prinsloo & Ladikos, 2006). In DSM in 2000, the most prevalent crime was

burglary: 43% of respondents said their home had been burgled in the past five years. Simple theft was experienced by 32% of respondents; and 20% had experienced livestock theft in the past five years (Robertshaw, Louw & Mtani, 2001).

More than crime victims in other African countries, Tanzanians perceived such crimes as very serious (Naude, Prinsloo & Ladikos, 2006). Theft was considered a very serious event for 75% of Tanzanian respondents; burglary was perceived as very serious by 84%; and robbery by 85%.

## **Subjects**

The subjects of this paper are those homicide victims who died as a result of community violence in DSM in 2005. The respondents were relatives, a policeman, a journalist, community members, youth who survived such violence, and friends of the deceased.

This type of violence was not originally a code in the homicide surveillance. However, during field-testing and in the first weeks of data collection it was observed that many homicide deaths were distinctive in that they were covered by few clothes, sandy as if rolled in dirt, with multiple wounds from various types of weapons. "Cause of death" entered into the ledger by the mortuary manager or attendants was variously reported as: "*kipigo*" (beating), "*moto*" (fire) "mob justice" or "mob killing" which, after further discussion with members of the research team and mortuary attendants, could all be clearly categorised as mob deaths. The new code was operationalised as being: the result of a medium to large group (roughly, two dozen or more people), using multiple weapons, acting on a continuum from spontaneous to planned action, in concert to kill an individual or a small group (Outwater et al., 2008).

## **Data Collection**

Data were collected at Muhimbili National Hospital (MNH) mortuary, to where all questionable deaths in the DSM region were brought.

Quantitative data on homicides were collected with a surveillance questionnaire (SQ). The variables were: sex, year of birth, date of death, place of residence, place and site of death, occupation, role of human intent in the occurrence of the injury, activity at time of death, cause of death/weapon used, events leading up to the death, and relationship of perpetrator to the deceased. SQ data were collected by three nurses with differing levels of education. Two were master's graduates and one was a diploma graduate. All had previous training and experience collecting research data.

Qualitative data were collected in three ways: through the SQ, in-depth interviews (IDI) and a focus group discussion (FGD). The last question in the SQ was: Is there anything else you would like us to know? Some SQ respondents were also willing to be interviewed in-depth. The research question was: What led up to the death of the deceased? Each respondent was given TZS. 2000 (\$1.75), as a gesture of sympathy. Key informants were selected at first conveniently because (1) they were willing to discuss the phenomenon at length, and then purposively if (2) they were knowledgeable, and (3) represented different points of view. One key informant was a youth who came to the mortuary accompanying the bodies for burial of two of his friends who had been killed while attempting to steal a cell phone (Outwater, Campbell & Mgaya, 2011). After two IDIs he suggested he bring his associates for a discussion. This FGD took place in a public botanic garden; afterwards each participant was given TZS. 5000 (\$4.40) for their time and transport costs; the interviewers and interviewees ate dinner together at a nearby local restaurant, a culturally appropriate way to assure that the interviewees could arrive home without feeling a need to steal that day.

IDI and FGD data were collected by the first author and audio-taped after informed written consent was given by all respondents.

## Data Analysis

Quantitative data were entered into Epi-Info 3.3.2. Data on sex, age, cause of death, district and ward of injury were available on all cases. When case data were missing, the denominator was correspondingly decreased. Frequency distributions, means, standard deviations, proportions, rates, t-tests, and probability tests (Chi<sup>2</sup> and Fisher's Exact) were calculated as appropriate for each variable. Rates were calculated with a denominator based on the mid-year population of DSM in 2002 (United Republic of Tanzania, 2003) and adding the officially estimated population growth rate of 4.3% per year for years 2003, 2004, and 2005.

Qualitative data were transcribed and entered into NVivo 9 computer software package (QSR, 2011). Translation from Swahili to English was conducted within the programme, and both languages were preserved within each transcript paragraph by paragraph. SQ, IDI and FGD data were coded separately. Coding was *in vivo*, tailored to the understanding of the particular data being analysed. When codes were gathered into tree nodes, each fragment included both languages. Memos were written throughout, including around each node. Nodes and memos were explored in NVivo through (1) graphs of source interviews and nodes, (2) cluster analysis of word and coding similarities, and (3) models of the nodal interactions. NVivo tree maps and models assisted further analysis. Then IDI, FGD, and SQ codes were compared.

Ethical approval for this research was granted by Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences, Tanzanian National Institute for Medical Research, and Tanzanian Commission for Science and Technology, as well as by Johns Hopkins University.

## RESULTS

Quantitative data were collected on all 367 homicide deaths in DSM through the SQ. Qualitative data were collected on the SQs for 63% (129) of all deaths categorised as "mob deaths". This paper also draws upon 15 IDIs. Interviews were conducted with adult male relatives of ten of these victims. Two IDIs were centred on one event: a youth about to be set on fire. IDIs were conducted with the television reporter who caught the incident in an unexpected encounter, and the policeman who rescued the youth from underneath plastic bags, a tyre and kindling. Other interviews were conducted with a youth survivor of community violence, a government official and a female community member. There were four key informants: a female community member, a petty thief, the policeman and a victim's uncle. Lastly, a FGD was conducted with eight petty thieves.

### Quantitative

Of 367 homicides, 205 males and 1 female died from what the community called *mob justice* and *sheria mkononi* (the law in/of/by the hand); these victims comprised 56% of all homicide deaths and 65% of adult male homicides, for a rate of 21.2 per 100 000 adult male population). Their mean age was 27.5 years (Std. Deviation 5.98) and their age range 17 to 50 years. No non-Tanzanians were killed in this manner.

Homicide from community violence was distributed evenly through DSM's three districts. However, the mortality rate from such violence ranged from zero in thirty wards, to 34.3 per 100 000 population (69.2 per 100 000 among males) in Jangwani ward. Two wards – Mbagala and Tabata – accounted for 19% of such community perpetrated homicides. In 73% of the incidents, the deceased died in the ward in which he had lived.

City streets and other large public spaces were the site of 154 (75%) community homicides. Thirty such deaths (15%) occurred in residences other than the victims' mostly as a result of failed burglaries. The remaining incidents (10%) occurred in farms/countryside (12), businesses (7), and unknown places (2).

All victims of community perpetrated violence died after being injured with multiple weapons. The primary causes of death for 65 (32%) victims were determined to be due to blunt objects; sharp weapons were the leading cause of 49 (24%) victims; bodily force including fists and feet, caused 37 (18%); fire caused 41 (20%) and gunshot 5 (2%); while for 8 (4%) the primary cause of death was undetermined.

The reasons behind community perpetrated violence were theft and robbery in 149 (72%) cases and burglary in 30 (15%) cases. Three (1%) incidents were against alleged murderers. One woman with epilepsy was killed, suspected of witchcraft. The reasons behind the 22 (11%) remaining deaths were probable misidentification in 9 (4%) cases, quarrels in 2 (1%) cases, and unknown reasons in the rest.

The occupation recorded for 152 (74%) victims of community violence were unemployed (32), thief (62), or unknown (58). Another 32 (16%) were classified as self-employed without an employee including street vendors/petty businessmen (25), and skilled labourers (7). The remaining victims (10%) were farmers (4), a student (1) and employees: house servant (1), drivers (2), and day labourers (13).

As shown in Table 1, victims of community mob death had a narrower age range, and were younger than those who died of assault. Those who died of at the hands of community members were more likely to be unemployed, alleged thieves, or unknown than those who died of assault. The weapons used by community members to kill victims were more likely to be blunt objects such as cement blocks, and fire; the weapons used to kill assault victims were more likely to be guns and asphyxia. Most victims of community violence died in streets or public places whilst victims of assault were more likely to die at a place of business or at home.

**Table 1: DSM, 2005. Characteristics of adult male homicide victims, by type of death**

Type of Death	Assault n (%)	Mob Death n (%)	p-value
Victim Characteristics	108 (33.6) 95% CL 29.3–40.1%	205 (63.9) 95% CL 59.9–70.8	
<b>Age (years)</b>			
Range	15–78	17–50	<0.0001 <sup>a</sup>
M (Mdn)	34.5 (30)	27.5 (26)	
SD	13.13	5.98	
<b>Occupation</b>			<0.0001 <sup>b</sup>
Farmer	3 (3)	4 (2)	
Student	3 (3)	1 (0.5)	
Self-employed with employee	4 (4)	0 (0)	
Self-employed without employee	25 (23)	32 (16)	
Employee	39 (36)	16 (8)	
Unemployed	10 (9)	32 (16)	
Alleged Thief	15 (14)	62 (30)	
Unknown	9 (8)	58 (28)	
<b>Primary cause of death</b>			
Bodily Force	13 (12)	37 (18)	
Asphyxia	10 (9)	0 (0)	
Blunt object	19 (18)	65 (32)	
Sharp object	31 (29)	49 (24)	
Fire	3 (3)	41 (20)	
Gun	29 (27)	5 (2)	
Unknown	3 (3)	8 (4)	
<b>Injury Site</b>			<0.0001 <sup>b</sup>
Home	11 (10)	0 (0)	
Other residential	8 (7)	30 (15)	
Place of business	36 (33)	7 (3)	
Street /public place	30 (28)	154 (75)	
Farm/countryside	5 (5)	12 (6)	
Unknown	18 (17)	2 (1)	

<sup>a</sup> t-statistic; <sup>b</sup> Chi-square

## Qualitative

From the three qualitative data sets, sixteen nodes emerged. The nodes were grouped into three categories: (1) *Immediate History of the Deceased*, (2) *Community Response*, and (3) *Family Reaction to the Death*. From the SQ texts 12 codes were identified, all of which were shared with the IDI and FGD codes: mistaken identity, false accusation, theft, unlawful punishment, warnings, increasing tiredness of continued thieving, consensus, anger and, description of community mob violence, perpetrators as good citizens, victims' families' confusion and loss. Three codes emerged out of the IDI and FGD which were not found in the SQ texts: communities' desire to live in peace, patience, and fear of revenge. More detailed understanding around the node "We have tired" from the IDIs led to refinement of the coding of the SQs to both community and family – the same phrase had different meanings in different contexts. One node in the SQs was not found in the IDIs and FGD: familial tiredness of the behaviour of the deceased. This latter result may be due to interviewer bias; all those statements were recorded by the least educated interviewer, who had complained multiple times of being tired of having her purses stolen by thieves.

### Immediate History of the Deceased

#### *Mistaken Identity*

Mistaken identity occurred when a man was running near the scene of a robbery, wearing a similar T-shirt to a suspected thief, or passing the site of a recent robbery late at night. Such an occurrence was described by the brother of a 39-year-old male (Case 85–2005).

*He was working, cultivating the farm of a person – the employer stayed in town. On the day of the event he went to drink pombe [local brew]. He passed through a way where days before, they had already been robbed. When the people saw him, they said, "Indeed it is our thief." Behold! he wasn't a thief. They began to beat him until he died.*

A policeman concurred, *"He was not a thief. Those who beat him were taken [arrested]. They are inside [jail]."*

#### *Presumed Intent/False Accusation*

People often assumed that a dusty, thin, malnourished and tired looking youth was a thief. Community action was sometimes instigated by guards who called out when they perceived somebody was intending to burglarise the place they were assigned to protect (e.g. ID5403AO). Likewise, cases were reported in which the primary perpetrator cried out with a false accusation against the victim. Several respondents asserted that perpetrators often responded without knowing the exact reason for which they were punishing the person.

#### *Theft*

The precipitating factor of most deaths was the theft of items such as cell phones, purses, or domestic animals such as chickens, cows, and pigs. Of the 129 victims reported through the SQ, 101 (78%) of the proxy respondents stated (without prompting), that the deceased was an experienced thief: *"Alikuwa mwizi uzoefu"*. Likewise, of the 13 IDIs, nine discussed thieving, as did the focus group members. For many of those who were killed, thieving had become regularised as a primary source of income. People believed that if thieves were allowed to continue, the behaviour would escalate; several respondents stated that burglars and armed robbers develop from successful petty thieves.

### Community Response

#### *Desire for peace*

Almost all respondents, including at risk youth, agreed that *"People want to live in peace (Watu wanataka amani)."* Peace is something that is created by people, by the group; *"However, if people are thieving things from you everyday this is not a peaceful life."* (ID5317AO).

## Unlawful and not helpful

Some people were against murder in principle.

*By my feelings murderers are not correct at all. Here, in Tanzanian law, there is no section like this in which it is needed to kill. ... Because if I am a law breaker, you have rights to send me to the agency of power. If you do research. I am clear that is how law breakers, the government will take me a step, and punishment which is deserved is matched by the mistake which I have made. Power, the law is there. They [the police] can do this work ... They have learned that work, they work with diligence .... (ID5607AOii).*

The most frequently stated reasons for not accepting mob justice were the possibilities of mistaken identity and false accusations. The television journalist asked the perpetrators, on the evening news, "Are you sure the person being punished is he who committed the deed?" (ID5310AO).

### Warnings and punishments

Thieves were warned by family, police, and community members. Family members warned them verbally about the severe consequences of continued petty thieving. Some families had taken recalcitrant youth to the police themselves. The police warned them through unofficial fines, beatings, and less often, jail. From the community, warnings could occur verbally or physically such as when a thief was caught, maimed, but not killed.

Many reported the victim's long history of stealing and warnings. An uncle described his nephew (Case 240), a 31-year-old who was beaten and burned.

*He appeared to be ill, without a lot of strength ... They brought him to work carrying sand, but he complained he couldn't do it. Three times he was beaten by citizens; even he was admitted to MNH and healed. Once to cure him of heroin and once to recover from broken knees and burns. His little finger had been chopped off ... He was taken to the police many times, they were used to him, but they'd just let him go.*

Youth respondents showed evidence of warnings delivered through razor cuts, fingers broken askew, knee cappings and limb amputations. Messages were congruent: when the community has no more to give, and the thief continued stealing and did not move away, he would be killed. The youth stated that they knew that the consequences of their actions were jail, being beaten and being killed (FDN05SU, ID6503AO). One thief explained that two of his fingernails were painted brightly, "So my fellows can recognise me if I am burned".

### Fear of Revenge

People were fearful that somebody taken to the police station as punishment could return for revenge. An uncle explained:

*It is very perplexing. Today a person has caught a thief. He takes him to the police. After two or three weeks, the thief again comes among the citizenry. Or you have sent him to the police because it is one o'clock in the night, and he has already returned the next day. This person sometimes stays at the home two houses down. Indeed now he is searching for you, searching for a strategy to destroy you. He says, "Because you sent me [to the police], now my project is to return. Meaning, now you will regret." (ID5725AO).*

### Patience has its limits

A female community member explained:

*The person sets the standards himself by what he is doing. People are just watching him. We have patience, but patience has its limits ... . We know who has taken our things, we have warned him. We are patient but one day we will take him to the field without caring for his wife or his children and burn him. (ID5317AO).*

*They have tired of him (Wamemchoka)*

The afflicted community members become weary of repeated thefts. The word commonly used was *wamemchoka* – with the infix “m” meaning a specific person.

The uncle of a youth whose body was 90% burned explained the feelings of the community of which he was a member, using the present tense:

*They know him absolutely – that that one is a thief and on that street they are absolutely tired of him ... . Now there on the street ... they have tired of him because of those deeds ... Therefore ... (ID5014AO).*

*Consensus*

Even as people state that *mob justice* is against the law, another statement representative of many was given by an elderly gentleman whose nephew had been killed. He insisted:

*If you take by force, yes, you will die. It is not the community that is wrong. (ID5N20AOii).*

If a thief was sent several times to the police, and returned again and again to the same activities, finally a decision could be made that he would be caught and killed, “just to finish the problem”.

*We have already talked and we have evidence. Therefore you know if you join together with the police, the police are giving them more loss. Now they agree to do – to take the law into their hands. A place where there is an affair okay, they agree to do – meaning to hunt. If they already catch you they agree to kill you (ID5607AOii).*

Violence perpetrated by a group of community members was viewed as a method of decreasing the number of bad people, “*kupunguza watu wabaya*”.

*Anger*

*Hasira* is translated as anger, but also vexation. *Hasira jazba* is described as intense, or an “ecstasy” of anger. It was reported that *hasira jazba* leads people to rush to judgment, increasing the chance of mistaken identity. Even if there is no evidence, if people are angry from an unrelated incident, it can lead to killing the next person perceived as a thief. A key informant explained, “*If a person has been robbed recently, he may feel a lot of anger – The shout of ‘mwizi [thief]’ triggers the memory and he could think, ‘This must be the person who robbed me.’ Even if another thief is caught, the person will join in to punish the thief.*” (ID5409AO). Due to the perpetrators’ anger, they will be harsher and instead of punishing somebody, they might kill him. Likewise if people are very angry, *hasira jazba* can lead to burning a person.

*Description of Mob Death*

Mob violence usually occurred in response to a victim’s cry for help, especially if the victim was perceived as vulnerable such as a woman or child or was a respected community member such as a home owner. At such a cry males rushed to the site of the alleged crime shouting, which attracted more people. Weapons used were those at hand: fists, feet, cement blocks, sticks, iron bars, machetes.

Burning occurred after the victim had been subdued, but was not necessarily dead (e.g. ID5403AO). It required the most resources and cooperation – kerosene, matches, sometimes a tire for fuel and plastic bags for kindling. Burning was often used for repeat offenders, whom the community feared could resurrect [*kufufuka*] and return for revenge.

*Perpetrators*

The perpetrators who wielded weapons were male community members who were described as *normal people with families*. No one person killed the deceased; many inflicted small *punishments*. Perpetrators were commonly called good citizens (*raia mwema*), even by those at risk of death by the community. Youth at risk were sometimes themselves

perpetrators. Several habitual thieves were killed by Sungusungu, a “people’s militia” organised at neighbourhood level to protect the community.

### **Family Reactions to the Death**

*They have tired (Wamechoka) (of the event)*

The same phrase was often used in reference to the community and to the family. On the family level relief was expressed at the death of the wrongdoer in the SQs, but not in the IDIs. The families did not deny the youth was a member of their family, evidenced by their claiming and burying the body at large expense. But their relative had brought them shame as his behaviour was damaging community members directly. Seventeen SQ respondents when asked, “Is there anything else you would like us to know,” answered, “*He was a big thief. We were tired. The problem is finished. Now we are resting.*”

#### *Confusion*

Family members sometimes had difficulty reconciling themselves with how they understood the person, and his death. A relative of a 32-year-old male expressed his confusion:

*... the deceased was a normal person, he was a person of people, he liked people. We ourselves when we heard about this event, we were confused by how which we understood him ... He was a person caring for his family. The relative spoke forcefully, He was a person who cares for his family, even though he has nothing. You have understood? – although he had nothing. Now more about the deceased, for its total, he was a good person (ID5607iii).*

#### *Loss*

A sense of loss was expressed spontaneously by thirteen SQ respondents, especially for men who had been helping to support families. An uncle speaking of a 25-year old explained:

*He was an important joint of the body at our home. Are you understanding well? And furthermore, we were expecting different contributions by our life. Truly we say that he has put a gap inside our family because there is strength which would cause to be needed right now. And later it would be needed more, because his parents, just now they are beginning to be old. Therefore it means later they would need him. It means that, like that, the uncle flicked his hand, already he has disappeared. Indeed it means there isn't a person like him again. Therefore in our family is a hole. And even the work strength of the nation also, it has already vanished also (ID5725AO).*

## **DISCUSSION**

Quantitative data enabled the sorting of outliers from the norm and comparison between variables; violence committed by groups of community members accounts for more than half of all homicides, and victims are > 99% male youths. The victims numbered about four per week in DSM. These data confirm what has been recorded in many African countries – that victims of community mob violence are usually young adult males without regular employment killed publicly by citizens as petty thieves. Most were killed on the street near where they lived with multiple weapons including bodily force, blunt and sharp objects and sometimes fire. They were killed by community members, most of whom dealt small blows, few of which were deadly, but which had a cumulative effect leading to the victims' demise.

Qualitative data added important context. Before being killed, thieves were warned by family, community members, and police sometimes severely, and several times; they were aware of the consequences of taking things by force. Some community members were against murder in principle, but the overwhelming desire was to live peacefully, without being

victimised by robbers and burglars even when unable to afford guards and fences, in a place with a police: population ratio of about one third of international standards (Van der Spuy & Röntsch, 2008). Partially because they feared revenge, they were patient with thieves, sometimes for years. If the youth did not change his behaviour, community members reported becoming tired and angry, and male members took action to protect the community from further predation. At the family level, the deaths caused confusion and loss, and sometimes relief.

Community violence is sometimes referred to as vigilantism (e.g. Adinkrah, 2005; Harris, 2001). Is community violence as manifested in DSM, vigilantism? Johnston (1996) in his foundational paper identified six characteristics of vigilantism, referring to cases of vigilante activity reported in the United Kingdom media during 1994–1996. These key elements were: (1) planning, premeditation and organisation, (2) private voluntary agency, (3) autonomous citizenship, (4) the use or threatened use of force, (5) reaction to crime and social deviance, and (6) personal and collective security. In DSM, sometimes planning and premeditation took place, as reported by several of the respondents. In other cases violence seemed to erupt spontaneously, when bystanders apprehended and punished criminals caught in the act.

The second element of vigilantism is that participation is a “private voluntary activity (that which is undertaken by individual citizens or groups of citizens on a non-contractual basis)” (Johnston, 1996, p. 4). This appears to be upheld by current data except for two deaths led by Sungusungu members who were paid a subsistence wage by the community as part of local government. The third element, autonomous citizenship, considers vigilantism a “voluntary activity engaged in by active citizens without the state’s authority or support” (Johnston, 1996, p. 4) was also upheld. However, although homicide in Tanzania is against the law, many people, including police and government officials, may individually sympathise with community practices. Indeed, the most common descriptor of the perpetrators is as “good citizens”.

The fourth element, the use or threatened use of force is present in DSM on a continuum ranging from verbal warnings to death. The fifth and sixth elements, that vigilantism is a reaction to crime and social deviance to protect personal and collective security are also met. Except for people falsely accused or arguing, virtually all community killings were a reaction to crime or deviance. Much community violence in Tanzania therefore met the definition for vigilantism. Only the element of organisation sometimes varied from the definition.

This is addressed by Senechal de la Roche (1996) who discusses non-state unilateral collective violence as social control, as “self-help” (p. 101) by a group towards deviants; it is commonly a “moralistic response to deviant behaviour” (p. 98). Collective violence is not irrational or pathological, but rather rational and comprehensible. Using the two variables of organisation and liability, collective violence can be divided into four major forms: lynching, vigilantism, rioting, and terrorism.

Lynching and vigilantism may be defined partly by their logic of individual liability: only the alleged wrongdoer is accountable; uninvolved members of the wrongdoer’s group or social category are not subject to punishment or other social control. Lynchers punish only the alleged offender, then disband. Vigilantes judge each offender individually. On the other hand, rioting and terrorism can be defined partly by the presence of collective liability, in which a group is held accountable for the offender’s conduct. Any member of a social category, including women, children and the elderly, may be vulnerable to attack by rioters or terrorists. Community violence in Dar es Salaam is based on individual liability.

It is proposed that these four types of violence can be further defined by degree of organisation. Lynching and rioting are distinguished by their relatively low levels of organisation, and vigilantism and terrorism by high levels. Lynching and rioting are temporal as well as informal. According to Senechal de la Roche’s definitions, the community violence in DSM covers the continuum between high and low/spontaneous organisation, between vigilantism and lynching. The community violence as described in DSM is in many ways similar to what has been reported from Ghana (Adinkrah, 2005). Using the above definitions, the community violence in Ghana with “no evidence of prior planning coordination or internal organisation” (p. 11) would be defined as lynching.

The specific form of violence that can be expected to occur depends on two additional variables: (1) the degree of social polarisation and (2) the continuity of the deviant behaviour. Collective (community) liability occurs where social polarisation is greater, whereas the individual liability expressed in lynching and vigilantism appears where it is lower. In DSM it was shown that most of the victims were killed in their neighbourhoods, where cultural differences and social distances between the victim and the perpetrators were small. In terms of continuity of the deviant behaviour, vigilantism occurred after multiple instances of deviant behaviour. Lynching was usually precipitated by a specific instance.

Senechal de la Roche further proposes that extra-legal beatings and executions inflicted by lynchers and vigilantes are usually reserved for poor and subordinate offenders. This proposition agrees very closely with the data of the current study, which shows that victims of community violence are demographically more vulnerable than even other homicide victims. The situation in DSM supports Senechal de la Roche's propositions predicting and explaining the likelihood and severity of the manifestations of vigilantism and lynching.

Buur (2009) explores the imaginings of the "new South Africa" about "the Other: the rural hinterland and the peri-urban townships" (p. 27). Whose fears are being discussed is not clarified further. Burr reports that mobs transform from crowds that have gathered for some other reason such as a sporting event or a political meeting. These "crowds-turned-mobs" are described as a "violent challenge to established norms" (p. 28). According to Buur, in South African imaginings, those who generically carry the blame for mob violence are deviant male youths.

Data from DSM did not concur with the imagined mobs in South Africa reported by Buur (2009). By contrast, incidents of community violence in DSM were not formed from an *a priori* event; and were an effort to uphold well understood norms. In DSM the perpetrators were "good citizens", and deviant youth were the main targets. However, the DSM victims of lynching and vigilantism did resemble the "defendants" reported from South Africa who were being subjected to the "justice" of vigilante courts in Port Elizabeth (Buur, 2003). Senechal de la Roche's framework would categorise Burr's "crowd-turned-mob" as rioting, which is violence arising suddenly without prior organisation and when perceived collective responsibility is high. This occurs when social systems are highly polarised. The framework predicts that these imaginings are of one group about another group who do not know each other well. It also predicts that interventions decreasing social polarisation and relational distance will decrease the likelihood of such events occurring.

It is not uncommon to rely on newspaper reports for research data (e.g. Adinkrah, 2005; Johnston, 1996; Outwater, Campbell & Mgya, 2011). Print media is a valuable source of information because it is often detail rich. Newspapers have been shown to have a higher impact on public perception of violent crime than any other news source (Wright & Ross, 1997). The problem is that what news agencies chose to report does not usually accurately reflect actual patterns of homicide. Coverage is biased against the statistical norm, with most reports covering outlier events (Paulsen, 2002; Peelo, Francis, Sothill, Pearson & Ackerley, 2002). What is perceived to be true by the populace about violent crime does not correlate well with the quantitative data. In Tanzania, for example, it is common to believe that violence against woman is high. This is partially because of the media tendency to report outlier events. For example, in 2005 an average of 1.5 stories was created per femicide; by comparison, male deaths registered far less interest and only one of ten cases was reported in any newspaper. Likewise, only one-tenth of victims of lynching or vigilantism were reported and only as part of a larger story (Outwater, Campbell & Mgya, 2011). This may also be true in other countries with similar patterns of violence.

The current study has described some important factors describing the victims and perpetrators of lynching and vigilantism. In DSM, considering Senechal de la Roche's propositions, the positive aspects in the situation are that the relational and cultural distance between the perpetrators and the victims is not large; understanding about what are deviant acts and their expected outcomes are shared. A decrease in lynching and vigilantism should occur when functional independence, inequality, and deviant acts are decreased. In other words, when people depend upon one another in their

daily lives, when their equality (often measured as wealth) is more equal, and when the frequency of deviant acts such as theft do not occur, then lynching and vigilantism should decrease. Employment for male youth would increase functional interdependence and equality within the community as well as decrease the need to commit deviant acts such as public theft.

A hypothesis that arises from Senechal de la Roche's propositions – that youth employment could decrease susceptibility to community violence – could be empirically tested with a case control study which compares employed and unemployed youth. Likewise, intervention research would be fruitful in which appropriate training and income generating activities are offered to at risk youths.

Serious limitations remain in the understanding of contextual risk and protective factors of the young men reported in this study, within their families, communities, and larger society. For example, the wards with the highest rates of lynching and vigilantism were congested with unemployed people and working families earning subsistence wages, amid poor infrastructure. But this describes many places in DSM – some of which do not have high levels of community violence. What are the differences? Are there wards with low levels of theft and low levels of community violence? How can youths be properly prepared for adulthood in the current economic system, when there are very few formal jobs?

Another limitation is a lack of quantitative clarity about the perceived community consensus. Buur (2009) suggests that mobs “are articulating the wishes ... interpreting and conveying the commands of the silent majority ...” (p. 29). But it is not quantitatively clear in South Africa or DSM what proportions of people within the community do/do not support lynching and vigilantism in the name of justice. Human groups tend to choose the direction preferred by the majority, but only a small group of informed individuals is needed to guide a large uninformed group. Dyer, Johansson, Helbing, Couzin and Krause (2009) found that groups of 200 people could be led to a target if only 10% of the group were informed. This is supported in the current study by the informants who insisted that many members of a crowd punishing a wrong doer do not know exactly what crime was committed. It is important to have a deeper understanding of this presumed community support surrounding lynching and vigilantism.

## **CONCLUSION**

Most homicide deaths in DSM were perpetrated by male community members protecting their neighbourhoods against social deviants. The violence varied between high and low organisation and planning, encompassing the continuum of vigilantism and lynching. Lynching and vigilantism were used defensively as methods of social control in response primarily to petty theft. Community violence in DSM was focused on individuals (not groups). While there are still serious limitations in our understanding of the contextual risk and protective factors of young men who are petty thieves, it is clear from these data that un- and under- employment of male youths is an important driver of crime including theft, burglary, robbery, and homicide in Dar es Salaam. Theoretically, decreasing the number of deviant acts would decrease cases of lynching and vigilantism. The most humane way to decrease petty theft is through appropriate employment. Hurdles to implementation of this are long-term issues such as macro-economic conditions and policies, economic inequalities, the degradation of natural resources, and lack of education and jobs. Therefore ways to engage and facilitate youths along avenues that have already been created, such as the Tanzania government's initiatives supporting small holder farmers, fishermen, and miners, and accompanying mixed methods research, are urgently needed.

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