

Youth Activity in Politics: A Study of Youth in Seke District, Zimbabwe

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Abstract: The youth in Zimbabwe have been involved in politics variedly. Resultantly, all have resorted to extreme ends of the possible solutions to conflicts. The study therefore sought to establish the youths' inspiration for pacifism and activity in politics. This triangulated study was conducted following an exploratory approach. The study examined a convenience sample of 120 unemployed youth from Seke North district, Zimbabwe. In the sample, there were 80 males and 40 females. Data were collected through in-depth interviews before scrutiny using NVIVO software for an effective large scale qualitative analysis. The study was guided by a concept of political participation. It was established in the study that the youths' political actions are a response to some stimuli. The activities by the youth were also noted to be protests over non-recognition, abuses and 'containment'.

Key words: Youth • Political Participation • Withdrawal • Inactivity • Conflict resolution • Containment

INTRODUCTION

In Zimbabwe, formal studies and other casual and informal observations have revealed that a sizeable number of the youth in most high density suburbs are exposed to politics. As a result of this exposure, many of them are politically active. The same studies have also noted that most of these politically active youth are exposed and at some point involved in political violence. However, there are some youth who are never involved in political activities while others are active politically but are non-violent. Therefore, recognizing the fact that there are some politically active youth who do not involve themselves in violence, this study seeks to establish these youth's motivation for pacifism and their preferred approaches to conflict. It is also against a background where most Zimbabwean youth in politics are on record for violence and enjoying instability and disorder [1, 2, 3].

Background to the Study: Historically, the youth in Zimbabwe have always served as the social and political vigilantes. From the liberation war era, the combatants were drawn from the youth constituency right up to the post-war political and economic activities; the youth have always been at the helm. However, what has been notable is that the youth are recognised when there are crises and conflicts and when there is stability and economic

development, the same youth are pushed to the peripherals for menial duties. Closely akin to the above is that, Zimbabwe has periodically experienced conflicts where the youths have been socialised into violence and acts of torture.

Zimbabwe has since its political independence recorded fatal conflicts during the 1982-1987 *Gukurahundi* genocide, 1985 General election, 2000 farm invasions, 2001 isolated Parliamentary by-elections, 2002 Presidential elections, 2005 Operation *Murambatsvina* (Operation Restore Order) and the 2008 Presidential re-run elections. However, during each election period, the youth are assigned to police their communities ensuring that they identify and weed out potential political rivals. Often times, these assignments are defined by serious violence and abuses of human rights.

Traditionally, most communities in Zimbabwe have been dominated by Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) political party until the coming of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in year 2000 when it won 57 of the available parliamentary seats. Resultantly, there has been serious hatred and open hostility between the two political parties unfortunately cascading down to the grassroots membership. What usually happens is that the youth are assigned to campaign for political space and covertly allowed to 'loot and rob' as compensation for their efforts. Along the way,

some are arrested while some get away with it. Some of the participating youth have materially benefitted from the illegal political activities while others have either been injured or murdered.

Over the years, there has been a realisation of withdrawal by some of the youth from activities. While some new youths have joined the political activities, a sizeable number has gradually withdrawn from active participation. There was a youth group in Unit F that had a membership of 56 but reduced to 44 by 2008. A ZANU PF youth group in Unit A that was formed in 2008 with 140 members anticipating to get urban residential stands had 71 members in 2011. A youth group in Unit C that had 63 members in 2011 had 25 members in 2015 while another youth group in Unit F that had 101 members in 2008 hoping to get residential stands had 55 members in 2013. In Unit K, there was another youth group in 2013 that had 45 members serving as rank marshals and touts at C-K Junction and Unit K/M bus terminus which had 17 members in 2015 [4, 5, 6, 7].

It is therefore these developments and statistics that have motivated the study hoping to establish the reasons for the reduced numbers of youth partaking in political activities and possibly understand their preferred options for resolving conflicts other than violence.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A triangulated study was conducted following an exploratory approach. The study examined a convenience sample of unemployed youth from Seke North district. Following a study clearance from the relevant District Administrator's office, 120 youth participated in the study with 80 males and 40 females. The database from which participants were sampled was obtained from the Ministry of Youth and Employment Creation who had a list of youths who had registered for possible employment opportunities. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 30 years. The study sites were Seke Unit A, C, F and K with each Unit contributing 30 participants distributed as follows; 20 males and 10 females respectively.

In the selection of the 30 participants, every possible effort had been made to ensure that each one of them was still looking for a job, still below 30 and that they had at some point participated in politics. The latter aspect followed that the registration of youth for possible employment through the Ministry of Youth and Employment Creation is done through political party structures and often times during political party meetings. All the participants were cleared to have been politically

active between 2008 and 2015. The lists provided had full names, physical addresses, mobile contact details, sex and ages. This made appropriate selection of the ideal participants and fixing interview appointments easy. All the participants were informed of the scope of the study and all the relevant ethical aspects to which they were advised of their freedom to participate or exit the study. All their identities were also concealed at data analysis stage.

The dataset included qualitative in-depth interviews with 120 youth who all responded to an interview schedule. All the interviews were conducted by inducted research assistants. Empirical data collected over a three-month period was comprehensively coded, using NVIVO software. This coding approach was chosen to ensure an effective data analysis. Coding was conducted in two stages; the first covering open and axial coding [8]. The two coding trees were unified based on emerging topics. In the second stage, coding trees were again revised and integrated. The merged coding tree enabled a clear identification of the created commonalities and differences in the themes and new findings. Data was then presented according to the created themes.

The interview schedule sought to collect data on the following aspects;

- Level of education attainment by each participant
- Reasons for participating in politics
- Reasons for their actions during political activities; violence and protests
- Their reasons for withdrawal from politics
- To understand their preferred options for resolving conflicts

Conceptual Framework: The study was guided by a concept of political participation paying particular attention on the youth in high density areas of a developing state. Political participation is a broad phenomenon which has been used to justify the forced inclusion and abuse of some youth in political circles. The concept of political participation is a form of engagement that carries out actions which seek to inspire political structures and personal behaviour in order to transform the present situation of people as defined by Honwana [9] and Pirk [10]. The form of political participation guiding the study comprises of both conventional and unconventional activities directed towards inducing some political results. Contextually, the study seeks to understand the inspiration of the youth pursuing some actions within the political domain.

The youth in Zimbabwe make up a subjugated majority, fundamentally left out from key socioeconomic establishments and political processes. Most youths cannot manage to finance starting their families and are not capable to turn into fully independent and take part in the privileges and responsibilities of social parenthood. Most youth are affected by similar problems of marginalization and constrained futures. It is only after some time of manipulation that they are beginning to proclaim their rights as citizens, demanding a new space for themselves. The form of participation does not only refer to the over-zealous type of activity, it also looks at the inactivity side of it as defined by Holmes [11] and Martin [12] who argue that this form of action is calculated to inspire some outcome.

Study Area: The study was conducted in Seke North district. Seke North is in Chitungwiza town, which is 30 kilometres to the south-east of Harare. Chitungwiza is a high-density dormitory town of Harare with three main suburb sections; Zengeza comprised of five sub-sections, Seke consisting 15 sub-sections and St Mary's township. Demographically, Seke North has over 100000 people who all live under high density conditions. According to Zimstats [13], a housing unit accommodates an average of 15 people. With Zimbabwe's unemployment levels pegged at over 96% and youth population taking up over 23%, the majority of the youth in the area under study remain exposed to poverty, unemployment and desperation.

The four Units under the study; A, C, F and K are within the same geographical zone thus sharing most of the social, political and economic conditions.

Literature Review

Youth and Conflict: Researches have it that people's willingness to engage in conflict varies depending of the surrounding factors like instigators and restrainers. However, it is argued that conflict is natural and inevitable and thus cannot be stopped because it is a part of humanity [14]. If managed well, conflict, especially interpersonal can reduce the growth of small issues by releasing tensions, which can build up relationships [15].

The study on youth and conflict often is treated as a social phenomenon. However, there are various explanations for youth violence and conflicts: political, social, cultural, economic and religious among others. Depending on who is driving youth conflicts and violence, the direction through which they walk and the end-of-the walk promises, there is often the covert use of

force or violence, either in interpersonal relationships or in group interaction. Often times, this covert application of violence is not seen or reported thus making it part of an institutional culture that is not either questioned or rectified [16].

The study on youth and conflict and violence also has a strong connection with group norms and values permissive of violence and violent behaviour. According to some studies [17], youth behaviour is to some extent defined by group cultures and values that develop over time [18]. Some youth are influenced into some conduct by such factors like impulsivity and exposure to violent peers, poverty, lack of confidence and the need for identity and companionship [19, 20, 21].

Youth and Politics: The world trend has been that as soon as pupils develop an appreciation of social and economic dynamics, they are introduced to politics. Soon after getting onto the political arena, they are then expected to partake in several of the processes including; old, conventional, traditional, new, alternative and unconventional. Some of these processes include voting, decision-making, making their voices heard and demanding basic rights among others. The youth aged between 15 and 30 constitute a fifth of the world's population [22]. However, despite the youth demographics, they are rarely considered in developmental areas. Most youth experience poverty, obstructions to education, different practices of discrimination and few employment opportunities [23]. Youth opportunities to participate in governance and other decision-making processes largely rest on the socio-economic, political and cultural backgrounds that often discriminate against women and the youth in general. Other youths' path into politics is defined by other factors like literacy and the nature of education acquired [24]. Similarly, another study [25] shows some relationship between school environment and youth violence socialisation.

Several studies show that politically inactive youth [26, 27] have their own unconventional ways of political activism. Some scholars have observed that present-day youth are involved in what Farthing [28] calls 'micro-political' or 'cause-oriented' actions. This means that the youth are mobilised around particular matters that are significant in their lives. Another study [29] on the possibility to divide young people into two groups: the ones involved in traditional forms of political activism and others engaged in unconventional participation, showed that it was rather impossible. Besides these forms

of participation, some youth are engaged in both forms of activism; traditional and contemporary while others are still politically inactive. In some instances, politically apathetic youth are registering their displeasure by intentionally disengaging from formal conventional involvement [30]. It is this disengagement which eventually withdraws the youths from political violence and before opting to resolve conflicts through other peaceful means.

Unlike in Zimbabwe and South Africa, studies show that the youth in such countries like Kenya, Rwanda, Angola, Tanzania and Zambia are keen to participate in active politics because they see tangible results of their effort [31, 32, 33, 34, 35]. According to the studies, each time there are political activities, there are noticeable changes on the ground unlike in Zimbabwe and SA where most youth are retiring due to frustration and lack of change on the ground.

Another study, [36] discovered that youth participation in politics improves their entrepreneurial skills and citizenship. Youth feel duty-bound to take part in democratic processes. However, after realising that they have very little space to participate, either they withdraw [37, 38] or force their way violently. Now, the youth find themselves involved in politics but as foot soldiers that are often abused by political elites to engage in evil and torturous acts. It is unfortunate that most of the studies on youth violence were conducted in the western world where surrounding conditionalities are different. In Africa and Zimbabwe in particular, there is a dearth of information around the study.

However, some studies have also attributed youth political inactivity to lack of political knowledge. Political knowledge is the relevant information about politics that people have in their long-term memory [39]. Often times, it derives from a sufficient pool of information on the set political manifestos, most of which are little known to the leading politicians. The end result in such instances is that the youth are fed with information that encourages them to engage in violence [40], which unfortunately is resisted by others differently.

Pacifism and Inactivity: As the study looks at the involvement of the youth in political processes with particular attention on their withdrawal from the front line, it is important to also understand the entire process of withdrawal from a political perspective. Some scholars refer to this withdrawal as pacifism while others call it political apathetic or non-violence. Pacifism is generally

viewed as opposition to all forms of violence and war primarily for moral reasons [41, 42]. It is also interchangeably used for non-violence [43].

Pacifism as it is referred to in this study, is a deliberate withdrawal of youths from active politics for some defined reason. Often times, especially in the developing world, youths withdraw citing various reasons including fatigue, false promises and the desire to pursue education among others. Usually it is after the youth realise that their expectations are not being met that they choose to withdraw for other pursuits. In other instances, the youth protest in ways which violently send their messages. Typically, in Zimbabwe, there were food riots in October 1998 while the youth in Kenya in 2007 protested over political discrimination and in South Africa, there were xenophobic protests in 2007. Mozambican youths protested in September 2010 over rises in the prices of basic foods. From 2011, the youth also led anti-government protests in Tunisia, Sudan, Angola, Burkina Faso, Malawi, Egypt, Libya and Nigeria [44]. Again, in 2011, there was a *Y'en a Marre* (Enough is enough) protest movement in Senegal [45], with the October 2014 citizen uprising in Burkina Faso while in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), youth protested against President Kabila's attempt to pass a bill that eventually allowed him to stay in office. It is also after such involvement and eventually getting no recognition that some youth either withdraw or adopt a pacifist approach. Pacifism or withdrawal has in most instances helped to reduce cases of violence as youths opt to keep away from active politics which often drive them into violence. Withdrawal of the youth from active politics leads the youth to see conflicts differently thus crafting their resolutions in a different manner.

RESULTS

Following an analysis of the data collected, the findings were presented according to the created themes. All the sampled 120 participants ($n=120$) were recorded and factored in the responses.

Level of Education Attainment by Each Participant: After profiling all the 120 participants with a view to understanding their levels of education and literacy, they were categorised into five groups; Grade seven level, Ordinary level, Advanced level, Diploma level and Degree level. According to the Zimbabwe education system, Grade seven is the most basic level where one attends

primary school for seven years taking four subjects. Ordinary level is the second in line where one adds on the primary seven years, another secondary four years now taking a minimum of five subjects while Advanced level sees one adding two more years on top of the secondary tuition. In total, Advanced level takes a total of 13 years of tuition. It is after the Advanced level that one pursues Diploma studies for a minimum of two years depending on the areas of specialisation. Entry into degree studies requires a pass at Advanced level [46].

It was established that 13 youth had withdrawn from active politics to pursue education. Specific breakdown of the levels of education pursued are given in the figure below.

Level	Male	Female	Total
Grade 7	0	1	1
Ordinary Level	4	1	5
Advanced Level	1	2	3
Diploma Level	2	1	3
Degree Level	1	0	1
Total	8	5	13

Fig. 1: Education Level Pursued

It was noted that one male youth pursued a degree while one female pursued Grade seven level. This was in anticipation of securing formal jobs rather than remain serving as political youth and getting exposed to violence and human rights abuses. This is akin to [47] assertion that it takes the desperate youth to participate in politics that do not reward vertically and often times, it is the least educated who remain stuck in politics.

Reasons for Participation: Thirteen participants clarified on their understanding of political participation indicating that almost every youth in a developing economy was into politics considering their desires for growth and development. The participants pointed out that while there could be some talk about active and non-active participation, literally everyone was into politics. Therefore, according to the participants, no youth who had once participated in politics could ever take off his/her past; rather, it was about refocusing energies towards other directions. Confirming the link between level of education and the depth and nature of political involvement, it was pointed out by 61 participants (51%) that most youths who attained university education were the most likely to be interested in contemporary politics and express their views on social and political matters. Meanwhile, most youths who were less educated having

a high school certificate were reportedly showing low levels of intellect and exhibited low confidence so much so that they could not express their views. Instead, according to 94 participants (78%) (59 males and 35 females), they easily resorted to violence for solutions whenever they faced challenges. These situations are confirming earlier findings by Ousey & Wilcox (48) and Iqbal, [49]. One participant revealed this;

Dambudziko zhinji nderekuti mayouth mazhinji zvikuru varipamusoro havana kudzidza. Nekudaro, vanofunga kuti kurova, kupunza misha nekunyopora vakadzi ndiyo nzira yekugadzirisa nyaya. Dambudziko iri harifi rakapera kusvika tava nehutungamiri hwakafunda uye hunoziva kodzoro dzevanhu. Musoro deheny'a unokurumidza kufunga hondo.

(Our major problem as the youth is that the majority are not educated. As a result, they believe that violence is the best solution whenever there are conflicts. This problem may never end unless and until the youth leadership gets educated and begins to appreciate human rights. Empty vessels easily think of violence.)

Thirty-two participants (27%) (24 males and eight females) reported that they were still active politically. Some of the main cited reasons were; nine had not yet seen anything bad with participation as they stood chances of rising through the structures while seven were benefitting materially during political crises and programmes. Six participants cited the need for identity while four indicated that they were bound by the political ideology. The other three participants indicated the need for political protection while the remaining three talked about having fun.

Reasons for Their Actions During Political Activities:

On the youth motivation for their unpalatable actions during political activities, which include violence and abuse of citizens' rights, 112 participants (93%) echoed Floyd (50) argument that conflict is natural, inevitable and cannot be stopped as it is part of humanity. They added that sometimes, they do not plan to engage in violence. However, they said that sometimes violence was used to purge undesirable elements from the political structures. One youth revealed the following;

Muno tavane new strategy yekubvisa munhu muparty kanatikaona aine support yakakura. Ndozvatakaita anaMai Mujuru neteam yavo.

In Zimbabwe, there is a new strategy of removing political elements from office especially if we realise that the candidate has massive support on the ground. That's how we removed the former Vice President Joyce Mujuru from office.

Relating to Berburg & Thorlindsson [51] who argues that there is a strong connection between group norms and values permissive of violence, 42 participants (35%) indicated that some of the actions and conflict resolution means applied were naturally derived from institutional cultures and norms. It was revealed that it was in the nature of the local political systems to adopt archaic and undemocratic approaches to address conflicts through violence.

Fifty-two participants (43%) pointed out that they engaged in violent or aggressive actions to preserve honour while 26 (22%) believed violence was an appropriate response to some forms of provocation

Sixty participants (50%) (26 females and 14 males) indicated that they often withdraw from active political participation because what they are always told relates to the armed struggle of the 1970s; an era that has no relevance to their needs. They added that, the armed struggle is always associated with violence which they disliked. With regards to the current politics, most politicians are clueless on productive plans that create jobs and improve the economy.

Forty-six participants (38%) (30 females and 16 males) indicated that the level of educational attainment played a pivotal role in the degree of youth participation and or inactivity in politics. The participants revealed that a higher level of education is linked with increased involvement in vertically elevating politics that ensured ascendancy to leadership while the least educated partook in physically oriented political activities. According to 24 participants (20%), (nine males and 15 females), the latter political activities were reportedly exposing the youths to crimes and destructive paths.

Withdrawal from Activity: The study established that there was a sizeable number of youths who were withdrawing from active politics with some simply choosing to lie low especially in times of conflicts and violence. 40 participants (33%) (25 females and 15 males) reported that they had realised that there were no changes in politics and yet they continued to campaign for violence and disorder. The same participants reported that while they might still be interested in politics, their focus was more on aspects that addressed their immediate economic needs. This is akin to what Farthing [52] and Tary [53] argued in their studies about micro-politics.

Generally, all the participants revealed their positions with regards either their noted continued involvement or withdrawal from active politics. The findings are presented in the figure below.

Reason	Sex		Total	%
	M	F		
Further Education	8	5	13	11
Attending to critical family issues	5	2	7	6
Deciding to marry	4	7	11	9
Focusing on family and bearing children	4	2	6	5
Fed up by false promises	13	6	19	16
Afraid of past political crimes	10	2	12	10
Political apathetic	14	6	20	17
Still active	24	8	32	27
	80	40	120	100

Fig. 1: Education Level Pursued

The figure shows that there were seven main drivers for the youths' inactivity in politics. It also shows that there were some youths who were still active totaling 32 (27%), (24 males and eight females). In percentage terms, it appears as if the youth who remained are more and yet cumulatively, those who have gone apathetic are more. The participants pointed out that they were comfortable with the type of politics in their constituencies so much so that they saw no reason for either withdrawal or choosing the non-violence route. One of the participants revealed this;

Some of us are enjoying this form of politics. I wouldn't want to describe our politics as dirty out of one unfortunate incident. It has to be realised that out of say, five years, violence is only recorded once when people will be jostling for positions. Besides, some of us are benefitting. It's our time. We can't all suffer.

It is evident that sheer political apathetic and being tired of getting false promises from the political leadership were the main drivers with 17% and 16% respectively. Both had 27 males and 12 females responding. Youth who withdrew to seek further education contributed 11% while those who were running away from past political crimes totaled 10%. 20% of the participants cited their withdrawal to reasons related to family commitments like getting into marriage, focusing on children and attending to pressing family issues. None cited anything to do with employment issues implying that during the period under review, no-one had yet secured employment. From the different reasons for lying low politically cited above, it is evident that indeed various social, political and economic factors as noted [54, 55, 56, 57] are instrumental in the lives of humanity especially in the developing world.

It was also reported by 34 participants (28%) that the youth through social media were networking either for violent protests or redirecting their efforts towards other areas that reward them materially. However, 24 participants who had higher educational qualifications pointed out that their choices were usually not their best. Instead, they had been forced into following those routes by desperation and the economic environment. One participant who had a diploma from a local college said this;

I realise the predicament that I am in because of our economic challenges. Realizing that these challenges may not end in the foreseeable future, I have resorted to vending for a living despite holding a diploma qualification. I can also be seen taking to the streets to protest as that will eat into my production time. If I sit, my profit will also sit. I am in a tight situation where I cannot protest against the government that has taken us this far for fear of losing business.

To Understand Their Preferred Options for Resolving Conflicts: Seeking to understand the youths' preferred choices for resolving conflicts, the participants expressed their varied views. 117 participants (98%) indicated that given the fact that there are more youths who are educated enough to be responsible, there were two divergent perspectives. The first perspective was that because of the high levels of literacy, the youth were expected to be seen conducting themselves in a civilised manner. The other point of view expressed was that because more youths had acquired education and yet failing to reap meaningfully, there were also chances of finding disgruntled youths ready to unleash violence once opportunities arose.

Seventy-eight participants (65%) pointed out that it was best to adopt more modern approaches to conflict resolution. They indicated that instead of joining political parties that eventually persuaded them ideologically to pursue violence, some youths were pursuing other peaceful paths like networking through social media and civil society groups. One youth (Y1) said this;

As youth, we are already creating alternative places for social and political intervention further than party politics and within civil society institutions. We have established and engaged with institutions that take in political action without needing party membership. We demand freedom of expression in both the real and virtual worlds; leading anti-corruption and open-government campaigns; we are in youth leadership development programs and other progressive political programmes.

The 78 participants revealed that peace was at the centre of development and therefore essential to uphold it by way of always adopting modern endogenous and exogenous means of resolving conflicts.

DISCUSSION

The study found that the youths were very far from being politically inactive. Rather, they were very much clear about the political matters that affected them. Their responses confirmed the ways in which politics for them was very much a lived experience; rather than a set of distinct fields that they chose to go into or shun. It is evident that 27% of the participants were still politically active and cited various reasons which are reasonably justifiable. This situation augurs well with a Shona saying which says "*Mbwanana hadzisvinure pamwechete*" (Puppies do not start to see at the same time). While some participants felt that their involvement in politics was taking a toll on their productive time, some strongly believed that it was worth a pursuit as they were benefitting materially. It may also be deduced that youth participation in politics is a matter of opportunities; either opportunities elsewhere or within politics.

It was shown in the study that there are various factors that determined youth inactivity/activity politically in the areas under study. Some of the most prominent of the factors include; political promises, impulsivity and exposure to violent peers, poverty, lack of confidence and the need for identity and companionship. These also to some extent, are confirmed findings [58].

Closely akin to the above, the youth are highly sentient of their marginal structural position and no longer trust the state's preparedness and capacity to find answers to their problems. In their collective marginalisation, the youth develop a sense of collective identity and a serious consciousness that leads them to withdraw peacefully [59].

While in other economies youth have vigorously taken over the fight for political space and recognition, in Zimbabwe and other torn down economies, the youth have long redirected their efforts towards self-help projects for survival. Resultantly, these youth may have no time to either protest in the streets or publicly contest for political office as their vending ventures cannot be left unattended. Therefore, while the decision to withdraw is deliberately taken, it is the outlying circumstances of poverty, joblessness and lack of recognition politically that would have forced the youth to lie low.

With regards to the level of educational attainment, it has been shown that there were two extreme situations that were noted. The first situation was that the more the youths were educated the more they partook in politics that elevated their well-being either by leading or by withdrawal. The other situation had that the least educated were technically forced to participate in politics that were violent, physical and often playing the second fiddle.

The study established a clear argument by 98% of the participants that there were two possibilities with regards to the preferred options for resolving conflicts in the areas under study. The fact that literacy walked alongside civilisation implied peace. Similarly, literacy also ushered in open-mindedness which meant a declaration for a confrontation with the authorities that are responsible for their poverty and joblessness. In the end, the eventual position taken with regards to resolution of conflicts was determined by the surrounding factors other than literacy levels. Diverted youth attention as noted from a quoted youth (*YI*) is also an important factor.

It is deductible from the findings that it has become a culture for the youth involved in politics to resort to violence and other unacceptable means when resolving conflicts. To most Zimbabwean politicians, just like conflict as argued by Floyd [60], violence is natural, inevitable and unstoppable. However, this attitude is gradually eroding their support base as more youths are withdrawing from active politics for other contemporary systems of politics especially those that address their problems in the immediate future. To those youths who have maintained a culture of violence, they are benefitting materially from the conflicts and other unacceptable practices that they engage in.

The study realises a serious lack of knowledge on politics on the part of the youth as defined by Campbell [61]. It is argued that the youth have to be equipped with the most relevant political knowledge for appropriate decision-making [62]. However, in the case of Zimbabwean youth in general and those in the areas under the study, the type of information that they get is often misleading, inadequate, inappropriate and instigative of violence. Others posit that most of the information in the hands of the youth encourages them to engage in violence, which benefits the adult leadership [63].

From the participants' arguments, the actions and approaches often taken by the youth are a protest over 'their containment' which has allegedly stifled their growth and leashed them around some narrow space of

manipulation and enslavement by political vultures. Therefore, to fight off containment, the youth resort to either of the two extreme ends; withdrawal and over-zealous activity.

Recommendations: The study recommends that there be some deliberate programmes meant to conscientise people especially the youth on their civic and political rights. This could be through political party processes or the alignment of the existing educational programmes on citizenship in most tertiary institutions. This programme could allow the youths to access the right information so that they make informed decisions and choices in as far as political activities are concerned.

The youth have to be equipped with the skills and knowledge to be aware of their capacities and weaknesses so that they do not get abused or taken advantage of. This can be achieved through accessing them to the right form of education defined by appropriate information on citizenship. In view of the fact that Zimbabwe is reported to have a literacy rate of over 92%, there is need for a review of the education curricula so that all elements that cultivate violence are removed.

Impressing on the above point, the youth must be appropriately equipped for the contemporary world of work. This could be through either ensuring that all skilled youths are accessed to the right jobs or accessing them to the right capital for entrepreneurial ventures. Having the youth equipped with the material and resources necessary for their development works towards keeping them away from places that drive them into violence. At least they will be having something to protect in the event of a conflict.

It is recommended that there be awareness by all the responsible parties to remove a jingoistic culture in the youth. Like it was noted [64] that political institutions inherited a culture of violence from the 1970s liberation war that was guerilla and uncivil in nature, the same spirit is still within the leadership. It is therefore important that the political parties' commissariat and culture and education departments embark on awareness programmes with a view to gradually erase the jingoistic mentality from the rank and structures of the institutions.

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