

CONFLICTS WITHIN POLITICAL YOUTH GROUPS: MOTIVATIONS AND DYNAMICS

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ABSTRACT

The study examined intra-group relationships of three selected political youth groups in Bindura, Glendale and Shamva, with a view to identifying prevailing conflicts. It was conducted qualitatively using Case-centred Exploratory Design. It was guided by the Social Modeling and Cognitive Theory. The groups were observed while 30 purposively sampled youth were interviewed. NVIVO was used to analyse data. The study established that intolerance amongst others on the part of the youth played a major role in intra-group conflict manifestation. These factors have over the period, created a culture of violence within the youth. Especially in Zimbabwe, conflicts within youth groups are cultural; emanating from the 1970s liberation war's culture of torture and arbitrary executions.

Key words: politics, youth, violence, tolerance, conflict, delinquency.

INTRODUCTION

Politics in Zimbabwe is run along factional and political party lines. These factions or groups follow a similar ideological belief and so are supposed to share common traits. However, there are instances when the youth within the same group fight or clash. Often, these groups clash over the inequitable distribution of resources and recognition by the leadership. The study therefore looked at some of the reasons for the clashes and the group dynamics that often keep the groups intact. The study helps in appreciating political intra-group dynamics and variances in the interpretation and analysis of policies, which culminate into conflicts and violence.

BACKGROUND

'Vanguardism of Zimbabwean politics' is the buzzword in most political parties in Zimbabwe. Since the liberation war era in the 1960s and 1970s, the youth have been at the centre of all the

programmes; recruitment, advocacy, mobilisation, street battles and gun-fighting. Ironically, the youth have been the last ones to get a seat on the dinner table.

Since the war of the liberation in the 1960s, the liberation movements established what were called bases that served as coordination and torture points. It is the same system that was adopted post-independence era but has been abused by some opportunists who now seek self-aggrandisement. The bases are establishments set by political parties as coordination and torture centres where campaign and violence strategies are devised and executed. Food and beer are served for free and various forms of entertainment are also availed which include night vigil dances, free drugs, and free and diverse girls and women for sex. In the bases, there are no separate sleeping rooms for females and males and the treatment of these two different sexes is almost the same as they are expected to participate in similar assignments. In the same bases, the youth are expected to live as a united family and complimenting each other's efforts. They are also expected to share whatever resources are available fairly and equitably. However, despite all the systems, measures and policies to ensure unity and a common agenda, there were several instances when the youth in the bases clashed, in some cases leaving others badly injured. For the purpose of this study, the three selected cases are briefly outlined below to provide an understanding of what really transpired in the bases.

Case 1 (Tsongubvi Hall Group)

The Tsongubvi youth group was based at Tsongubvi Hall in the Township of Tsongubvi, Glendale with a minimum membership of 150 youth at any given time. The heavily fortified base at which the youth were based had been in existence since the early 2000 election period and had been used as a headquarters of a particular political party where all the local campaign strategies were devised including torture and persecution processes.

While the youth have their own leadership, they also reported to the resident leadership drawn from the former liberation war participants who endorsed some of the heinous processes like limb amputation and murder. The base was manned 24 hours a day and food provided partly from the routine raids and from the coerced donations. Because of the availability of free food and beer, the youth were always in the base. Besides, there was a free environment where the youth engaged in any activity without reprimand or prosecution for as long as they did it in the

name of their party. The youth were also required to undertake assignments from their leadership especially involving the identification and abduction of girls and women who were then used as sex machines. Amongst themselves, the youth abused each other and shared female youth as sex machines.

Everyone at the base slept in the main hall where they also stored their food provisions while the outside grounds were for singing and dancing routines around a fire. The youth at the base were assigned to different responsibilities like food raids, abduction of girls, abduction of suspected enemies, street toy-toying, night vigil singing, torture, food preparations and mobilisation amongst others.

Case 2 (Tendai Hall)

Just like the Tsungubvi Hall base, Tendai Hall was established in the early 2000 specifically to coordinate campaigns against the newly formed opposition political party. However, its purpose gradually changed when the occupants started to use it as a torture chamber and headquarters for campaign programmes for a particular political party.

The base, during the 2008 election violence era was manned by an average of 200 people. This base by virtue of being the biggest in the provincial capital naturally served as the provincial main base where most of the resources were channeled. Naturally, there were also more leaders especially from the former liberation war participants' constituency.

Case 3 (Wadzanayi Hall)

All the bases in Mashonaland Central province were established almost during the same time and followed the same liberation war structures. The Wadzanayi base in Shamva district had an average of 90 youth mainly drawn from the surrounding townships. The majority of the youth at this base had a background of either living in the farms or mines and therefore largely semi-literate. The Wadzanayi youth were known for their vigilance, aggression, violence and courage when it came to issues about the opposition political activities. The rest of the structures and modus operandi followed the same lines with Tsungubvi and Tendai Hall bases above.

METHODOLOGY

The study focused its attention on the activities of three selected political youth groups in Bindura, Glendale and Shamva districts with particular attention on the prevailing dynamics and the conflicts. Each of the groups was made up of over 50 people aged between 15 and 35. All the groups' leadership was made up of former liberation war participants who directed the youth leadership on the path to follow. The groups existed during 2013 election period between April and June and were based in Bindura, Glendale and Shamva at Tendai Hall, Tsungubvi Hall and Wadzanayi Hall respectively. It has to be noted that these are the traditional group venues and groups for all the election periods and therefore follow almost the same practices and leadership protocols. The study was conducted qualitatively using a Case-centred Exploratory Design to allow a deeper analysis of participants' narratives and the researchers' observations of respective centres.

Each of the 3 groups was monitored and studied to understand the hierarchy, language use, living arrangements and the intra-group relationships. 30 (20%) other youth were also interviewed separately to understand the group hierarchy, language used by the youth, living arrangements and the intra-group relationships. The interviews were structured and in-depth. 10 youth (5males and 5 females) aged between 20 and 35 were purposively sampled from each group to meet the expected age-experience responses. To ensure that the interviewees met the required age ranges, no scientific or documentary proof was used except verbal verification with the participants. 10 research assistants helped conduct the interviews and analyse data.

The analysis of data was conducted using NVIVO (package 10) for Windows Service Pack 5. Data was transcribed using Microsoft Office Word 2007 and cleaned before it was taken to NVIVO where nodes for in-depth interviews and observations were established in the Navigation View. The research first coded with broad codes 'tracks/rieles', which are general themes in the data. After that, based on what came out during the coding stage and using a priori codes based on existing theory and the reflective notes, the research did code with 'fine' codes. To ensure accuracy and consistency in the analysis process, queries were being run as the analysis progressed from tree node to tree node. A Coding Comparison Query was also run to check on the percentage of agreement and disagreement between codes created.

To ensure accuracy, reliability and objectivity, the study sought to satisfy the following issues; ages, educational attainment, drinking and smoking habits, arrest profiles and parenting backgrounds. The study also ensured that participating interviewees were not selected for having committed criminal or violent crimes but simply being group members. All the participants consented to partake in the study.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study was motivated by the Social Modeling and Cognitive Theory (Catalano and Hawkins, 1996, Lin, 2001 and Boxer et al., 2015) which argues that youth learn to be aggressive and belligerent from modeling behaviour which they would have seen and captured. Belligerent behaviour results from acquired cognitive schemas or scripts stimulated from reminiscence and put into aggressive practice once a need arises. According to the theory, even though traits of aggressive behaviour appear during childhood, influences of family, friends and adults can preserve such behavioural traits during youth. Youth who fall within such groups can buttress each other's belligerent behaviour, and restrict access to pro-social systems of conflict resolution. In other instances, watching violence either in the home or neighbourhood can also escalate the threat for violent behaviour amongst youth (Mpofu, 2002).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conflict

Generally, conflict is described as failure to see things from the same view-point with regard to interests and ideas. Conflict is a process in which one side thinks that its desires are being negatively affected by the other player (Wall and Callister, 1995). It is viewed as an interactive process exhibited in discordance, ideological differences or discord between social units and that it can ensue between individual persons, organizations or groups competing for perfection, recognition or productivity. Conflicts, like in any other institutions, manifest in groups where people with diverse social, political and religious backgrounds interact and are expected to collectively make decisions. Because conflicting ideals and conditions generate tension, conflict is regarded as a situation in which two or more entities working in a unit seem to be unable to get along.

According to Green et al (2001), institutions have become progressively reliant on groups as the central unit of work and strength. Some of the features that are capitalized by the institutions include the diversity in technical skills, the diverse abilities to communicate and think strategically and the strength in the young and energetic individuals. However, while these groups help pool their combined resources, their interdependent nature inexorably generates conflict. The nature of conflict that is experienced in some of the political groups has often interrupted productivity, unity and the creation of a common target. As such, the forms of conflict mapping and the subsequent resolution systems should to some extent draw from the corporate style form of conflict management since some of these groups will be structured in a manner that other formal corporates do.

There are different styles of behaviour by which interpersonal conflict can be handled depending on various factors like the intensity of the conflict, the closeness of the conflicting parties and the nature of the third parties. In an effort to devise some of the best methods of handling conflict in groups and institutions, Follett (1940) conceptualised five methods; compromise, avoidance, integration, domination and suppression. In the same vein, scholars in organizational behaviour and social psychology have also conceptualised means of reducing conflict handling styles in groups and institutions which included a simple cooperation-competition dichotomy.

Youth Violence

Violence is a common feature in most societies especially if there are youth who have not been provided with the necessary parental attention and academic exposure. In most instances, violence is both destructive and expensive to local communities so much so that it has to be avoided at all cost. One of the main requirements in achieving avoidance of violence is the identification and address of predictors of youth violence at appropriate points in youth development. These predictors are potential targets for prevention and intervention. Research argues that if risk factors can be reduced and protective factors heightened through preventive strategies, then the probability of violence ought to be minimised (Capaldi, and Patterson, 1996, Alleyne and Wood, 2013).

A longitudinal study that was conducted in Sweden revealed that 15% of boys around the age of 13 with both concentration problems and restlessness were arrested for violence by the time they

reached 26 years of age and were five times more probably to be arrested for violence than others without these features (Klinterberg, 1993, Alleyne and Wood, 2013). Several studies indicate that children with a tendency to fidget in class and with recurrent talkativeness projected later violence in their lives. It also revealed that children with concentration problems in class also predicted academic problems, a factor which predicts later violence in life (Farrington, 1989). Studies by Widom (1989) Denno (1990) and Hawkins et al. (1992) examine three systems of child ill-treatment which are sexual abuse, physical abuse, and neglect and established that children who have been ill-treated in their lives are more likely to commit violent offences later in life than others.

Some studies show proof of continuousness in aggressive behaviour from youth to old age. A research in United States shows that 59% of youths who were arrested for violent crimes before they attained 18 years of age were arrested again in adulthood, and 42% of these adult delinquents were accused of at least a serious violent crime like serious assault, murder or rape (Hamparian, 1985). Hamparian (1985) posits that the larger percentage of those who were arrested in their childhood for crimes relating to serious violence were arrested again in their old age than was the case for adolescents who were arrested for crimes relating to petty violence.

Studies have also shown that anti-social tendencies like smoking, delinquency and early sexual intercourse are associated with a higher risk of violence among males. According to a study by Baker and Mednick (1984), it found out that youth between 18–23 years with fathers who were criminals were 3.8 times more likely to commit violent illegal acts than those with non-criminal fathers. However, it has to be realized that youth violence may not only be influenced by poor past and delinquent peers. Rather, there are also other factors as established by Hawkins et al. (1992) who found out that boys with very firm parents exhibited the most violence. Other studies cite other factors like drunkenness as a significant instant situational influence that could fuel disorder. A research in Sweden established that about three-quarters of violent delinquents and about half the victims of violence were drunk during the period of the incident while in the Cambridge research, most of the males engaged in brawls after imbibing (Wikstrom, 1985, Farrington, 2001).

Gangsterism and Conflict

Gangsterism is a common phenomenon the world over. It is a practice which exists in two forms; social grouping and formal clubs that seek to create an identity for a people. There are some individuals who want to belong to a group and create a self-identity which may be helpful in times of crisis or in some future assignments. While other countries have statistics of gangs, in others, those figures are non-existent because of the level of lawlessness which never requires ensuring the institution of law and order (Butchart et al, 1997). In Zimbabwe, one of the most prominent and probably the only recorded gang is called *Chipangano* which is run by ZANU PF political party in Harare. This group which operates along thuggish lines has been alleged to be responsible for several deaths and disappearances of people. Unfortunately, the group operates with impunity as it is sponsored by a ruling party regime.

Gangs are linked with violent behaviour. They often thrive in areas where the traditional social order no longer works and where other systems of common cultural behaviour are missing. Most gangs are known to thrive because youth who are desperate are readily available to join because of lack of opportunity for social and economic development, peer pressure, a lax in security systems, failure in school and ill-treatment at home amongst others (Howell, 1997).

FINDINGS

After a thorough analysis of the data, themes were created under which results are presented.

Fig. 1 Demographic Data of Participants

	S	PS	OL	AL+	BP	SP	Or	Sm	Dr	Dg	Ar	Vi	TI
Bin	M	4	3	1	2	2	1	5	5	4	5	5	10
	F	4	4	1	2	3	0	4	5	4	5	4	
Glen	M	3	3	1	2	2	1	5	5	4	5	5	10
	F	4	2	1	1	3	1	4	5	3	4	5	

Sham	M	3	3	2	2	2	1	5	5	5	5	5	10
	F	3	3	2	1	3	1	4	5	4	4	5	
Tl		21	18	8	10	15	5	27	30	24	28	29	

Fig. 2 Legend:

Ab	Full	Ab.	Full
PS	Primary school	Ar	Arrest
OL	Ordinary Level	Vi	Violence
AL	Advanced Level	Tl	Total
BP	Both Parents	S	Sex
SP	Single Parents	F	Female
Or	Orphan	M	Male
Sm	Smoke	Bin	Bindura
Dr	Drink	Glen	Glendale
Dg	Drugs	Sha	Shamva

The study showed that out of the sampled 30 participants, 21 attended primary school, 18 attended up to Ordinary Level, which is Form four and only eight having attended school up to Advanced Level which is Form six. Those who read up to A' Level indicated that they wanted to further their studies to tertiary level but could not due to poor passes while those who went as far as Ordinary level cited lack of funds for their withdrawal from school. The other nine who never

attended cited cultural reasons and ignorance on their parents' part. With reference to a longitudinal study that was conducted in Sweden which revealed that 15% of boys around the age of 13 who had challenges in the area of education were exposed to violence later in life, it is to some extent being confirmed by the statistics in this study. There is a general realisation that the more a people are exposed to education, the less they are likely to engage in violence. In this context, there are only 8 participants out of 30 who attended school up to Form 6 with another 18 acquiring basic education at Form four. This education deficiency might have played a role in the manner in which they conducted themselves.

Ten participants indicated that they have both parents alive, 15 others reporting that they live with single parents while five indicated that they are orphans. The participants living with single parents and orphans revealed that they started living without some of their parents at tender ages so much so that they do not even remember their faces. Of the 20, all the orphans and 11 others indicated that they have never enjoyed their fathers' advice or love in their entire lives. One remarked the following;

'Handina Baba vekutevedzera kunze kwemashefu pano. Baba vangu handivazive. Tsika dzedu tinotodzidzidziswa muno mumusangano'

(I have no father to look up to except these base commanders. I have never seen my father. We are developed morally in the party)

With regards to the 10 who have both parents, seven indicated that because their parents are staunch supporters and executive members of a particular political party, they were allowed to partake in any political activities at any time of the day. The above revelations confirm Baker and Mednick (1984) findings when they said parents' behaviours and activities influenced their children by 3.8 more times than others.

Another 27 participants indicated that they smoke, 30 drink while the other 24 indicated that they take drugs. 21 of the 27 participants indicated that they started smoking after they had joined the youth groups where they would share cigarettes while 20 of the drinkers revealed that they were influenced to drink by the group environment which always operated effectively after consuming some beer which would also be availed freely and always by their leaders. Of the 24 who take

drugs, 15 confessed to have been pushed into doing drugs by their group peers as a way of mobilizing courage for violent activities

Twenty-eight others revealed that they have been arrested after the 2008 election violence period while 29 indicated that they have been involved in violence during their involvement with the groups. Since the 2008 violence era which they all participated, at least 29 participants revealed that they have been indoctrinated into a culture of violence and crime so much so that they have on different occasions been either arrested by the Police or been involved in public violence. At least 15 of the 28 have become jail-birds while 19 of the 29 involved in violence revealed that they have over the period been involved in more than 3 incidents of bloody violence.

Factors Influencing Conflicts and Violence

Inequitable distribution of resources (food, beer, drugs and prostitutes) often created conflicts within the youth groups. It was revealed that at Tsungubvi, Tendai and Wadzanayi centres, the youth had clashed openly on five, seven and six times respectively over the allocation of food rations, groceries that had been robbed from the shops, distribution of party regalia or selection of prostitutes from amongst their membership. Others conflicted over the distribution of water and sleeping space in the halls. There were some leaders who were perceived as biased when it came to resource allocation while others openly discriminated on the basis of gender and ethnicity.

The bases were to some youth attractive because there were women and girls who were ready to avail free sex services. On that basis, a number of youth sought that free service and because there were particular women who were readily available, the youth ended up clashing over women and sexual services. According to narratives by the participants, there were several youth who openly fought for particular women. According to the same participants, some youth also clashed with the women who they would have had sex with for allegedly transmitting sexually transmitted diseases. In the bases, there were various types of sexually transmitted illnesses that were passed from one individual to the next without medical corrective measures being followed.

According to a study by Baker and Mednick (1984), which found out that youth between 18–23 years with fathers who were criminals were 3.8 times more likely to become criminals, 24

participants (seven females and 17 males) revealed that they enjoyed violence as it scared away provocateurs. They indicated that in their lives, they had enjoyed seeing their family elders fighting and defeating their enemies. They also revealed that their parents and some family elders had been arrested, convicted by eventually coming out victors. The participants also revealed that they had not enjoyed their childhood due to low levels of parental involvement in their upbringing. This is buttressed by the 50% of participants who were brought up without their biological parents. Eight females indicated that their exposure to beer consumption and drug taking had seriously inspired their intolerant and violent behaviours. Two girl participants revealed this;

‘Takatanga kumwa doro pataitengerwa nechikomba chamai. Fodya takatangawo nehutsi hwefodya yaiputwa mumba nezvikomba kana zvadhakwa. Ndovaitichengeta.’

(We started drinking beer when our mothers’ boyfriends availed it. We were also introduced into smoking passively as the mothers’ boyfriends smoked. We had no option, they looked after our welfare.)

Some of the recorded youth conflicts within their groups were also noted to have been part of retaliation to prior clashes. What is prevalent in most political youth groups is that the majority of the participants are either illiterate or semi-illiterate which makes them unable to make competent and rational decisions contrary to the available proof that higher education acquisition stimulates assessments and review of worldviews with regards to conflict and cooperation (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991). Their failure to make rational decisions imply that most youth could not quickly forgive, forget and move on with their lives without thinking about effecting revenge for past provocation and attacks. There were also cases when some youth looked down on their peers as ill-educated and therefore unable to lead any activity. This classification of youth was not acceptable to the less educated youth.

The existence of weapons and drugs in a group was a potent combination, heightening the probability of violence. There were some youth who had home-made weapons like catapults, knobkerries, machetes and sjamboks who wanted to use them either on their peers or relatives of some group members. The use and effects of the weapons by the youth is aptly discussed in Dodo et al (2014). This, according to 11 (five males and six females) created serious animosity

between the youth groups. It was observed over the period and confirmed through 11 participants that some of the conflicts within the youth groups were caused by excessive substance use that often led to intra-group violence.

Poverty characterizing the backgrounds of some of the youth participants played a significant role in distinguishing the youth according to their level of education and resourcefulness. The youth were motivated by various influences to join the bases. For those who joined so they could get food, water and shelter, it was not rosy as they were always spited by those who could afford supplementing what was provided at the base. It was also noted that youth from a poor background liked to raid and secure as much goods as possible so that they could send back home unlike those who had joined either to get free drugs or free sex. One male youth revealed this;

‘Mdara ini ndinoita izvi because zvinotipa mababe emuhara, hapana anoramba’.

(I joined this because it accesses me to free sex, no woman refuses.)

Identity was one of the most essential human needs that inspired many conflicts especially within the youth groups. Because some youth groups wanted to occupy the top-most positions in economic, social or political structures, there was frequently a continuous tussle between the groups that claimed superiority and leadership against those outside. According to 18 participants (nine females and nine males), conflicts over identity arose when some group participants felt that their sense of self was in danger by deprivation of legitimacy and respect. Such scenarios were recorded especially when some participants began to label others as alien, non-Shona, non-Zezuru or women. Individuals identified with those in their own group and of the same ethnicity and social interests and started to unite against those in the rival group. As the conflict escalated, according to 18 participants, rival groups turned out to be more and more divided and developed aggression towards each other. The challenge of identity in the youth groups was also to some extent magnified by the level of community disorganization. If a particular community was in a state of disorder, it was defined by poverty, lack of development and conflicts.

There were also instances when youth placed in different sub-groups for specific assignments felt that the assignments were different in the levels of importance. Such conflicts were experienced when the teams responsible for food raids demanded more food arguing that there were responsible for the mobilisation of food. Some argued that they would have sacrificed more than the other groups in entertainment or recruitment groups. On the same issue, there were some who argued that their limb amputation or torture roles were more risk than anything else. It was on that basis that various youth conflicted within the bases or youth groups.

Within the youth groups that were known, there were also gangs that operated within the main bodies. These sub-gangs were constituted along ethnic, age and preferences. As a result, those who had conflicting interests tended to clash. Some of the groups were based on ideological beliefs such as a liking to beat up or rob innocent people whilst others were opposed. Closely akin to the above is that there were cases when the youth clashed over spaces in the hall either to sleep or store their goods. Because the hall would always be occupied, it was difficult to keep personal items in the same venue. According to 13 participants, there were some youth who had declared ownership to some places for their sleep. Such declarations often sparked violence with the others who also wanted to sleep on the same position.

Traits of Conflict Leaders

From the over 400 youth who were in different bases and supported by the researchers' observations, it was established that there were several leaders who operated at various levels in the structures. The top most position was occupied by members of the former liberation war participants who worked on the direction of the national security agents. There were also youth leaders who helped in strategic planning and some who also executed all the plans especially the most heinous of them all. At the lowest level were sub-group youth leaders who then took charge of the actual operations on the ground. All these leaders displayed various leadership qualities.

From the four management levels discussed above, it was realized that most (about 60%) of the leaders exhibited hyperactivity risk-taking and restlessness as key defining traits. Evidence suggests a correlation between these characteristics and a liking for conflicts and violence as pointed out by Klinteberg et al. (1993). The leaders in this context are those youth who led in most of the conflicts. Some youth (30%) in the groups that were studied displayed a high degree

of aggression. It was observed that some of the youth had the zeal to complete all the tasks that they were assigned no matter the challenges. Their determination showed some leadership traits that also motivated their liking for conflicts and violence.

Some of the youth leaders (15%) were reported to have been initiated into violence at an early age so much so that conflicts and violence naturally became part of their lives. The three townships that were studied are all products of the colonial settlement system which sought to create particular settlements for former farming and mining workers and business service centres for the white former commercial farmers. Therefore, the majority of the residents were all poor so much so that they could not afford tertiary education and prone to be enticed into violence. This is akin to several other longitudinal studies that were conducted in Columbus, United States and Cambridge, (Wikstrom, 1985, Farrington, 2001), Montreal in Canada (LeBlanc and Frechette, 1989), Pittsburgh in the United States (Loeber et al., 1993) and Copenhagen (Kandel and Mednick, 1991), which revealed that children exposed to violence at a tender age got arrested in their early adult lives.

The involvement of the youth in other forms of anti-social behaviour was also confirmed to be a critical factor in the creation of youth who enjoyed violence and conflicts. As observed in studies in Orebro, Sweden and Netherlands (Kandel and Mednick, 1991), where some youth showing anti-social behaviours used weapons in violence, in this study, it was also observed that most youth who displayed anti-social behaviours were almost always involved in violence and led others in violence. Some youth also had attitudes that were favourable to deviance and so were always involved in conflict

Fig. 3 Frequency of Arrests

Ages	2008-2010		2011-2013		2014-++		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	female	
20-24	0	0	3	4	5	2	12

25-29	5	2	5	3	3	3	13
30-35	5	4	3	2	3	3	10
Tl	10	6	11	9	11	8	

Figure 3 above indicates the age ranges that were within the sampled participants. The ranges clearly categorise the participants into three age strands; 20-24 having 12 participants, 25-29 having the majority with 13 and the 30-35 age range made up of 10 participants. The same figure also classifies the study period into three distinct eras; 2008 – 2010 which is the immediate post-election violence period, 2011 – 2013 which is the intermediate era when communities were expected to forget and reconcile and the 2014 onward, which is the period when violence participants are expected to have reformed. The figure shows that between 2008 and 2010 there were 16 participants who were arrested for various crimes while in the intermediate era, there were 20 participants arrested. During the last period when violence participants would have either forgotten or reformed, 19 participants were also arrested. It was also observed that there were few arrests in the 30–35 age group probably implying that with maturity and family responsibilities, participants reduced their delinquency.

Others

The study also established from 18 participants (seven males and 11 females) that the rifts that were created in the bases were still visible post the violence era. 14 (nine females and five males) of the participants from Bindura and Shamva revealed that there were now prominent youth groups in Bindura and Shamva that terrorized innocent residents and also steal from homes. It was revealed that the leadership of those groups were prominent former members of the youth groups who seem to be enjoying the acts that they did under the protection of their political party. In Bindura, it was indicated that the most targets were students from a local university whose rented lodgings were frequently broken into while other students were being mugged on their way from the college. In Shamva, it was also reported that most targets were Wadzanayi residents walking from the service centre and other visitors from outside the township. In short,

it was revealed that youth conflicts had been taken out of the bases creating a dangerous situation.

DISCUSSION

Even though traits of aggressive behaviour appeared during childhood as postulated by the Social Modeling and Cognitive Theory, there were visible influences of family, friends, adults and even the prevailing surrounding conditions and circumstances as argued in various implicit youth violence theories, on the way the youth confronted each other whenever there were problems. Although the youth lived and operated as groups, the fact that they had different political, religious, social, educational and economic persuasions meant that it was going to be a challenge putting them together and effectively work as a collective. It has been shown in this study that while the youth might have worked as a collective in the eyes of the outside community, they had their internal challenges which frequently triggered conflicts and violence within the youth bases and operations. Some of the influences that have been exposed through this study include; inequitable distribution of resources like food, beer, drugs and prostitutes, ethnicity, drunkenness, illiteracy, poverty, social backgrounds, retaliation, availability of weapons, identity and the importance of assignments amongst others.

Education deficiency might have played a role in the manner in which the youth conducted themselves. While the youth had a responsibility to play on the ground, they were equally expected to be rational and flexible when it came to making decisions. The study noted that the few youth who had attended higher education were operation and interacting with their peers in a sober manner. While peer pressure might have played a role in the behaviour of most youth, previous studies did show that there was also an element of hereditary influence.

The study showed that soon after the 2008 violence, there were less former youth group members who were arrested for various crimes than in the subsequent two periods; 2011-2013 and 2014 onward where 20 and 19 participants were arrested by the Police with some getting convicted and spending time in prison. Though the sample is small compared to the numbers of youth who participated in youth groups, it represents the average youth activities on the ground and that the findings are generalizable to any other situation on the ground. Simply, the trend

shows that the habit of criminal behaviour had deeply sunk into the youth so much so that they continued committing crimes.

CONCLUSION

The study which sought to establish the dynamics in the youth bases and the intra-group conflicts did expose various complexities and influences within the youth constituency with regards to their lives and the conflicts they encountered. In light of the findings, the study therefore makes some conclusions. While the youth might have been pushed into the youth bases and groups by external forces as was revealed by the participants, it has been established that there were various other influences politically, socially, educationally and economically. It is therefore concluded that it could not have been only a single factor that directed the youths' lives but several and coming from various sides and in varying magnitude.

It was also revealed that youth clashed over food, beer, drugs and prostitutes amongst others. It is the submission of this study that it might have been deliberate that the leadership availed various resources in scarce quantities so that the youth could fight and be kept divided. It would work favourably to the party leadership if the youth groups were divided along various planes as they could not rise against the party. It is also concluded that the amount of violence and thuggery displayed within the youth groups was almost similar to that displayed to the outside community as the immoral habits had been deeply entrenched into the lives of the youth. This explains why most of the youth participants have been arrested for different crimes well after the youth bases. Intolerance on the part of the youth influenced by various factors; social, educational and economic did play a major role in the intra-group conflict manifestation and that the divisions in the youth ranks had been dangerously taken outside of the bases thereby threatening the lives of the ordinary residents.

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