

SEX: WHAT ZIMBABWEAN YOUTH IN POLITICS LIKE.***DODO, O., DODO, G., MUZENJE, A.**

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Corresponding Author: obediahdodo@gmail.com**ABSTRACT**

This study was designed to understand the sexual lifestyles of Zimbabwean youths during their participation in political activities, especially during election campaign periods. A well-structured questionnaire was used. Participants were purposively sampled, according to inclusion criteria -being youth (17-30 years of age) and have engaged in sex. The research targeted activities that were undertaken in a total of 331-day period between 2002 and 2013. Fifty (50) participants were sampled from each of the 4 selected election episodes. Grounded theory and NVIVO, a qualitative research analysis software was used to analyze data and the strain theory of delinquency guided the study. The study established that the youth indeed, participate in bases' casual sex both freely and under coercion, while also documenting various consequences like sexually transmitted infections, pregnancies and crimes.

Key words: Sex, youth, politics, participation, delinquency, violence**Published: 31st July, 2017****INTRODUCTION**

Many Zimbabwean youths engage in various activities as they partake in political programmes. One of the most prominent of the activities that they engage in is sex either amongst themselves or with outsiders. The motivations to engage in this sexual activity range from lack of entertainment, ignorance, sense of adventure, sense of prostitution, coercion and desperation. Sex in the youth circles especially during political activities involves males and females indulging in sexual intercourse or same-sex intercourse by consent or through coercion. The study sought to unravel this youth-sex-delinquency nexus. Particular focus was paid on selected election campaign periods between 2002 and 2013.

Zimbabwe's elections are traditionally characterized by conflicts and violence of varying magnitude. In most of these elections, it is the elite adults contesting for political offices while vulnerable women and unemployed youth foot soldiering for both support and ensuring that possible contenders are eliminated from the race. With regards to this research, it has to be pointed out that in all the election episodes studied; 2002, 2005, 2008 and 2013, women and youth were

critical in ensuring that the election activities were done and completed.

In 2002 and 2005, the elections were run from centres popularly known as campaign centres whereas from 2008, the same centres were now known as political bases reminiscent of the bases that were used by the liberation war participants during the 1970s liberation war in Zimbabwe. Therefore, the activities by these centres' occupants were lumped for easy analysis. In Zimbabwe during each election period, politically active participants are mobilised into political party centres of administration also seen as local headquarters where all the strategies are formulated and implemented, where captured enemies are imprisoned and tortured and where immorality is created and practiced with impunity.

It is in these bases where the usually intoxicated youths are exposed to either promiscuous partners who freely avail their sexual services or forcing and bullying partners who also demand sex. Because of the political base policies of lawlessness and impunity, no-one is allowed to report any wrong witnessed or refuse to comply with any demands especially from the leaders. There are also instances when drunken youth find themselves indulging in free and unprotected sex which subsequently sees other on-



lookers joining and end up sharing the loose partners. Resultantly, some youth drop from schools, married people abandoning their spouses, sexually transmitted infections spreading and social relations getting broken amongst others.

Indeed, the concept of youth is understood variedly by different parties the world-over. Its definition has also been very difficult to comprehend given the various characteristics that are looked at by the various parties that I have mentioned above. It has to be realized that the United Nations and most of its agencies define youth as people aged between 15 and 24 (UNDP, 2006) while the Zimbabwe constitution define the same people as between 15 and 30 years. In South Africa, the National Youth Policy (NYP) for 2009 defines youth as people between the ages of 14 and 35 (GSA, 2009) while the African Youth Charter defines as young people between the ages of 15 and 35 years (AU, 2006). Similarly, several other institutions define as they wish depending on the key aspects that they consider important. However, for a proper definition, the youth can be disaggregated by various factors which include gender, social class, race, age, and geographic location as these influence one's behaviour and view of the world. Interestingly, ZANU PF party in Zimbabwe until 2010, defined youth as any person whose mentality operated like a young person regardless of age. It has to be realized as well that there is a thin line between youth and adolescents as they are defined interchangeably with some UN agencies defining the latter as young people between the ages of 10 and 19.

Given the numerous reports that Africa has received concerning violence in areas like South Sudan, South Africa, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, and attacks by Boko Haram in Nigeria and by Al Shabaab in Kenya and Somalia, researchers are often pushed to seek to understand the dynamics surrounding the conflicts. According to Graham et al (2010), youth violence can be taken as the participation of young people, either as perpetrators or victims in cases concerning the threat or application of physical force in conflict or crime. This violence may be meted out with or without a weapon, and may or may not end with bodily damages or death. In all the conflicts, youth are usually at the centre of these bloody incidences, but there is diverse proof of what drives

them to take part. Various scholars (Gurr, 1986, Chai and Wildavsky, 1990, Barker, 2005, Dodo et al, 2014) have presented varying arguments for the youth participation in conflicts as amongst others; victimisation, their regular participation in civic activities, economic grievances, poor governance, insecurity and general inequalities, coercion, peer pressure and ignorance amongst others. Interestingly, according to Hilker and Fraser (2009) and Sommers (2011), an International Labour Organisation (ILO) study in Burundi, Congo-Brazzaville, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Rwanda established that two-thirds of all child soldiers took the initiative of joining willingly.

Further studies have shown that unemployed youth are two and half times more likely to participate in violence than the employed youth since their opportunity cost of doing so is low, and they may notice possible economic benefits (USAID, 2005). According to Mutto (2007), prolonged conflicts have exposed entire populations of youth at sharp threat of harm and infection with diseases including STIs and HIV and AIDS, as well as the likelihood of long-term physical and psychosocial challenges like post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD). Meanwhile Burnett (1998) argues that youth in most economies are exposed to exploitation during periods of socio-political strife. Also cited is poverty which is argued to be a factor in the formation of structural violence. Schools according to Burnett (1998) are some of the most prominent social establishments where adolescents and youth usually experience physical, structural and psychological violence almost always. Literature also shows that about 70% of armed forces and groups worldwide (Sommers, 2011) and violent activities are perpetrated by male youth with only 10-30% females participating (WB, 2011). However, some of these studies seem to be ignoring the participation of females in some conflicts like in Lebanon, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Chechnya, Israel, Congo-Brazzaville, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Uganda, South Sudan and Iraq (Richards, 1997 and Sommers and Uvin, 2011).

Zimbabwe's political environment has since 1980's political independence been characterized by violence of various forms; structural and direct. The culture of violence defining Zimbabwe emanates from a



background of intolerance dating back to the period before the struggle for Zimbabwe's independence. The war of liberation was equally violent and it led to the loss of thousands of lives causing ineffable suffering and misery.

Though Zimbabwe has had conflicts and violence since 1980, year 2000 marked the advent of a new era of violence related to politics largely at the instigation of state security agents and fueled by the ruling regime through its youth militia and state security agents (Dodo, 2010). According to HR NGO Forum (2011) and Dodo and Msorowegomo (2012), violence in Zimbabwe was intensified following the government's loss in a national referendum to change the Constitution in 2000. The government used its youth militia and state security agents to promote a crusade of terror meant to kill opposition and silence dissension. Since the formalization of violence in 2000, the prominent forms of violence recorded include murder, disappearances, intimidation, arbitrary arrests, torture, rape and forced conscription into the ranks of political vigilante groups amongst others (HR NGO Forum, 2011) typical to the experiences in northern Uganda, M-23 and FDLR in the DRC and where children and youth are particularly targeted for recruitment into rebel structures, marriage, and camp labour while others are forced to join because of the need for security, shelter, food and medical services (Mutto, 2007).

In Zimbabwe, while reports suggest that most youth in political bases were forced to join, Urdal (2006) present an eye opening argument around what they call 'initiation' and 'socialisation' of the recruited youth. In this argument, it is said that some of the forced youth may end up refusing to exit the groups even when opportunities are availed. In most cases recorded in Zimbabwe, incentives like looted goods, impunity, free sex and free food and beer have been used as factors pulling most youth into bases and participation in violence. Bradfield (2013) also points out that most youth in Zimbabwe as elsewhere in Africa were influenced by the following factors and technics; abduction and brainwashing, the use of political propaganda and hate-inspiring mass media and the use of incentives on marginalized youth to participate in violence and move into political bases.

Also, in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular, issues around sexuality are a sacred domain which is not talked about in public. There are specifically defined circles around which the subject is discussed by clearly identified people in families as a way of maintaining social order and morality. Many communities are uncomfortable with the idea of youth sexuality, and choose to stay in disavowal except for some whose family values and cultural principles have been washed away due to the family's background, the status of the marriage type; single or married, cultural systems, and to some extent the level of moral rightness of the family elders (Darroch, 2001, Guilamo-Ramos and Bouris, 2009).

Youth who envisage optimistic futures for themselves are more likely to keep healthier sexual behaviours even without supervision from their elders. To a large extent, this is made possible by the form of socialization and the level of literacy or the nature of schools attended (Moilanen et al, 2010). With regards to the youth in Bindura, a culture of seeking education is low hence a high desire to partake in political activities some of which are immoral and illegal.

Thus, the main objective of this research was to understand the sexual lifestyles of Zimbabwean youth with regards to their participation in political activities during major political periods. The study specifically tried to understand and assess the gravity of sexual activities by politically active youth especially those housed in political party infrastructures or what are commonly referred to as bases. This study was motivated by the fact that no meaningful and credible study has been conducted on the same subject matter an on the same target group in Zimbabwe. This is against a background where youth are motivated to participate in political activities by varying factors including sex. Therefore, the study, in its bid to achieve its objectives sought to answer the following issues through both interviews and questionnaires;

- To understand the sexual lifestyles of Zimbabwean youth in political bases.
- To establish their motivation for participation and
- To identify the effects of sexual relationships in the bases.



MATERIALS AND METHOD

Study design: This is a triangulated study that adopted a longitudinal survey approach and stretching from 2002 to 2013. Structured questionnaires were administered to 200 youth (n=200) aged between 17 and 30 years. The participants were purposively sampled, according to inclusion criteria, among the attendants to known political bases in Bindura urban.

Study area and population: The study surveyed a total of 200 youth drawn from Bindura district and in particular politically active youths based in Bindura urban. Bindura urban according to 2002 and 2012 national censuses had 36720 and 43695 people respectively while the 2012 statistics show that there were 21026 males (48.1%) and 22649 females (51.9%) (Zimstats, 2015). Of these statistics, 60% were youth. Of the total number of youth in Bindura, 26217, according to statistics obtained on the ground and corroborated by Dodo and Musorowegomo (2012), there were 33% of active youth who were involved in active politics thus giving 8652 youth. The study was conducted along an anti-positivist perspective that believes in depth of data rather than width and so settled for a small sample (Walsh, 2003, Sandelowski, 1995 in Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2007, and Hellstrom, 2008)

Inclusion and exclusion criteria: The inclusion criteria for the participants were being youth (17-30 years of age) and having engaged in sexual relationships. All participants who did not conform to these conditions were left out in the research. The research targeted activities that were undertaken in 331-day period, between May 2002 and July 2002, September 2005 and December 2005, February and July 2008, and May and July 2013; covering periods of political activities ahead of national plebiscites for the Presidential election, Senatorial elections, General Harmonised elections and General elections respectively.

Data Collection: At the start of each study, participants were approached to obtain consent for the questionnaires to be administered. 50 questionnaire participants were drawn from each of the 4 election episodes. Precisely, all the questionnaire participants were equally divided (100 males and 100 females).

Ethical Considerations: Guidelines for standard ethics to safeguard the participants' privacy and confidentiality were implemented. The scope of the research was explained to the participants before they consented to take part in the research. No individual identifiers were taken from them and were conscious of the fact that they could withdraw from the research at any time and that the data would be destroyed.

Data Analysis: Grounded theory was employed as the methodological approach to code and analyse descriptive data while other questionnaire data was analysed using NVIVO 10 Windows service pack 5. The Grounded theory entailed purposeful sampling of participant cases from which data was then gathered and analysed from the start to identify findings and concurrently conceptualise those findings till saturation of data was attained (Hilber, 2012). With NVIVO, the themes were created manually from different data sets while with grounded theory; the themes were created from the data itself, with no pre-existing hypotheses. The results were validated by triangulating data from the questionnaires and archival literature and the findings presented both descriptively and statistically.

Theoretical framework: While the study anchors on some theoretical framework, it has to be appreciated that there are some factors guiding the argument especially deriving from both sociological and psychological perspectives. It has to be realized that while this study is around conflict studies, it borrows heavily from various sociological foundations. The study around youth behaviour with regards to sexual relations is to a large extent influenced by issues like social learning where children emulate what they see in their elders, greed and grievances where the youth feel alienated and deprived of their dues and economic opportunities and youth bulge influences that touch on growing numbers of unemployed and poverty-stricken educated people though they are not the guiding theories to this study. The study was therefore guided by the Strain theory of delinquency by Agnew (1985). The theory argues that delinquency emanates from the obstruction of goal-seeking behaviour. It argues that unable to attain cherished objectives, individuals get upset and may turn to delinquency. In this study, it was assumed that the youth's failure to attain education, jobs and general life accomplishments forces them to



focus on sexuality in the bases as a pastime and solution to their socio-economic challenges.

RESULTS

The study employed a sample of 200 youth to complete the questionnaires. Of the sample, 35 (18%) did not attend school, 45 (23%) read up to Grade seven, 114 (57) attended up to Form four while only six (3%) went beyond Form four. Within the sample, 10 (5%) were formally employed, 190 (95%) unemployed and 71 (36%) were married while 129 (65%) were not married (see table 1).

The questionnaire responses indicated that a total of 74 participants (37%) had been raped in the entire four

periods with three being males while another 28 (14%) had been sodomised in the same period with three being females. The questionnaires also revealed that 97 (97%) males and 94 (94%) females took alcohol while in the bases while 89 (89%) males and 78 (78%) females did drugs.

Of the 100 female participants, 63 (63%) indicated that they were commercial sex workers. Of the same sample, 81 (81%) indicated that they had been at some point forced into sex while 30 (30%) males were also forced. It was also established that 24 (24%) males and 39 (39%) females had been forced into the bases and to partake in the activities (see table 2).

Table 1: Demographic Data

	Academic level				Episode Participated				Employed	Unemployed	Married	Unmarried
	N/A	G7	OL	Abo	02	05	08	13				
Male	11	19	65	5	25	25	25	25	4	96	49	51
Female	24	26	49	1	25	25	25	25	6	94	22	78

Table 2: Conditions under Which Events Occurred

	Raped				Sodomised				Drink beer	Drugs	Prostitute/pimp	Forced Into base	Forced Into sex
	02	05	08	13	02	05	08	13					
Male	0	0	3	0	6	0	19	0	97	89	0	24	30
Female	16	0	58	0	0	0	3	0	94	78	63	39	81



Table 3: Common Incidents Experienced

	# sex in base	Would you Repeat?		Day/ Night?		Forced/ Consented?		Protected/ Not?		Motivation	Punished By Leaders?		Pregnant
		YES	NO	D	N	F	C	P	NP		PD	PN	
												Coercion, Security, Drunk, Drugs, peer pressure	
Male	69	39	30	13	56	13	56	6	63		2	67	
Female	91	70	21	34	57	20	71	3	88		0	91	51

The study revealed that sexual activities in the bases were high as reflected by 69 and 91 males and females respectively (80%) who at some point of their residence in the bases, indulged in sex with another 39 and 70 males and females respectively (55%) indicating that they enjoyed it so much so that they are prepared to repeat it. Of the cases of sex in the bases, it has been indicated that 13 males and 20 females (17%) were forced to do it while 63 males and 88 females (76%) who also indulged in sex revealed that they never protected (*see table 3*).

The findings also showed that after engaging in sex within the bases without adequate privacy, 67 (67%) males and 91 (91%) females reported that they were never reprimanded to show that the practice was 'allowed' and common. Of the females who engaged in sex, 51 (56%) got pregnant and could not identify the men responsible (*see table 3*).

The findings showed that both males and females participated in the bases and the related conflicts in almost the same manner and magnitude contrary to what Sommers (2011) and USAID (2005) argue that females constitute about 10-40% players in violence. Though about 10-40% of females have participated in conflicts in the Maoist movement in Nepal, the uprising in Palestine, Hindu communalism and the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka, in the violence and all other politically related activities in the Bindura study, the levels of participation and decision-making were almost equal especially given the fact that in the management structures largely constituted of the

former liberation war participants, women were substantially and effectively represented.

Twenty-five females indicated that they engaged in practices that are intended to beautify their sexual outlook and performances so that they could be on demand in the bases. One of the noted practices is *labia minora* elongation which is the physical enlargement of the inner folding of the external genitalia, the clitoris and the *labia minora*, usually using traditional oils. The elongation is considered complete when the preferred size, which generally ranges from two to five centimeters, is achieved. Such practices according to the participants were quite rampant and popular.

The study established that a number of youth resident in the bases and who indulge in uncontrolled and unprotected sex often contract sexually transmitted infections (STI) at an alarming rate and without seeking medication. Amongst some of the recorded infections include human papillomavirus (HPV). According to the participants, there were 18, 22, 8 and 13 cases of HPV that were recorded in the four episodes respectively (*see table 4*).

According to the findings, gonorrhoea was the second most frequently reported infectious disease in the bases. According to the findings, there were 12, 17, 5 and 10 cases that were reported in 2002, 2005, 2008 and 2013 respectively with females topping the reports. The findings also showed that syphilis rates among the youth had increased. In 2002, there were 11



Table 4: Most common Diseases Recorded

		HPV	GNH	SYP	
2002	M	8	5	6	19
	F	10	7	5	22
2005	M	10	6	5	21
	F	12	11	6	29
2008	M	3	3	7	13
	F	5	2	12	19
2013	M	5	3	3	11
	F	8	7	5	20
TOTAL		61	44	49	154

Table 5: Same-sex Relations

		Same-sex intercourse	Same-sex kiss	Same-sex touching	Heterosexual intercourse	Total
2002	M	2	6	6	16	30
	F	3	5	9	20	37
2005	M	1	2	2	25	30
	F	0	0	2	22	24
2008	M	6	8	8	19	41
	F	4	7	7	24	42
2013	M	1	1	1	21	24
	F	0	0	1	24	25
Total		17	29	36	171	

cases, 2005 there were 11 while 19 and eight were recorded in 2008 and 2013 respectively (*see table 4*).

The study also established that cases of same-sex has also been reported but were being kept a secret due to the Zimbabwean constitutional provisions and the stance of hate by the ruling regime over the practice. The findings showed that in 2002, there were 26 and 36 cases of same-sex and heterosexual cases

respectively, in 2005 there were seven and 47 cases of same-sex and heterosexual incidences while in 2008, there were 40 and 43 cases of same-sex and heterosexual relations. It was also reported that in 2013, there four and 45 cases of same-sex and heterosexual relations in the bases (*see table 5*).

The study also established that youth females are more likely than their male peers to report a same-sex sexual



partner especially with the levels of same-sex demonization within the ruling regime circles. To males, same-sex talk is taboo. It was also established that condom use among the sampled youth was low, almost nil largely because of two reasons; the

authorities did not make it easily available within the bases and that the youth would not be in established relationships where sex would also be planned thus allowing condom use. This contributed to the spread of STIs as mentioned above (see table 5).

Table 6: Feelings of the Participants Post-Activities

	Do you feel abused?		Do you think That was right?		What could stop future recurrences?			What do you feel About your role?		
	Y	N	Y	N	Edu	Ban	Cond	Gd	Reg	Noth
Male	30	39	70	30	20	30	50	55	30	15
Female	21	70	79	21	18	21	61	60	21	19

Table 7: Legend of Symbols and Abbreviations

SYMBOL	MEANING	SYMBOL	MEANING
M	Male	PD	Punished
F	Female	PN	Not punished
HPV	Human papillomavirus	NA	Not attended
GNH	Gonorrhea	G7	Grade 7
SYP	Syphilis	OL	Form 4
D	Day	Abo	Above form 4
N	Night	02	2002
F	Forced	05	2005
C	Consented	08	2008
P	Protected	13	2013
NP	Not protected	Cond	Condoms
Y	Yes	Gd	Good
N	No	Reg	Regret
Edu	Education	Noth	Nothing
Ban	Ban		



Responses to participants' feelings post-activities show that 30 males and 21 females (26%) and 39 males and 70 females (55%) indicated that they feel abused and not abused during their residence in the bases respectively. Similarly, 70 males and 79 females (75%) and 30 males and 21 females (26%) feel that what they did in the bases was right and wrong respectively (*see table 6*).

On possible corrective measures, 20 males and 18 females (19%), 30 males and 21 females (26%) and 50 males and 61 females (56%) cited the need for education and literacy, out-rightly banning bases and availing condoms in the bases respectively. On the participants' role during the period, 55 males and 60 females (58%), 30 males and 21 females (26%) and 15 males and 19 females (17%) indicated that they felt good, regretted and felt nothing respectively (*see table 7*).

DISCUSSION

The concept of political bases and lawlessness has contributed towards cultural decay and decline in levels of discipline in the youth in Zimbabwe. This has also seen an increase in sexually transmitted infections in the bases. Mutto (2007) posits that prolonged conflicts have exposed entire populations of youth at sharp threat of infection with diseases. Indeed, in the study, it has been proven that human papillomavirus, gonorrhoea and syphilis recorded 61, 44 and 49 cases respectively during a 331-day study period on a sample of 200 youth. It is worrying for a normal society to record a total of 154 cases of STIs in this modern day and era.

It has been observed that there were more STIs recorded in females than in males in all the four election episodes. This can be attributed to the fact that the male youth available were sharing the available females hence the spread. The acceptance by the female youth to try and please all the available and interested males is also strongly attributed to the issues about the need for security, association and to some extent food as argued by Mutto (2007).

Studies of youth sexuality are usually restricted by the questions asked and the sacredness of the subject especially in the African cultures in general and in

Shona in particular. Because issues of sexuality are regarded taboo in the Zimbabwean cultures, they are avoided and in the process allowing the youth and adolescents to nurture whatever feelings and problems that they might have. Over the years, the lack of discussion forums and secrecy about sexuality has seen an increase in cases of same-sex intercourse and sexual abuses. It has also been realized that people have not embraced the idea of freedoms in sexual orientation as a result of the constitutional provisions and the ruling regime's stance on its hatred for same-sex. Resultantly, most of the same-sex cases are being hidden.

Like it has been pointed out in other studies by Gurr (1986), Chai & Wildavsky (1990) and Dodo & Musorowegomo (2012), youth involvement in some of these immoral, uncultured and illegal activities is perpetuated by different factors which include: coercion, need for security, drunkenness, drug abuse and peer pressure. It is also clear from the previous studies that some youth have become so vulnerable that they see protection and salvation in partaking in political activities during election times. Some of these youth derive satisfaction in mere association while others seek material benefits gotten through illegal operations. It however has to be pointed out that while there was an element of indirect coercion, Hilker & Fraser (2009) and Sommers (2011), writing on an International Labour Organisation (ILO) study in Burundi, Congo-Brazzaville, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Rwanda, reveal that two thirds of the child-soldiers voluntarily joined. It now rests on the reasons that motivated these different groups of people to join the conflicts.

Cases of same-sex relationships seem to be quite evident in the studied society despite the fact that the practice is constitutionally forbidden in Zimbabwe and that the head of state has often equated the practice to animal behaviour. The statistics given above: 17 for same-sex intercourse, 29 for same-sex kissing and 36 for same-sex touching translating to 82 cases in the entire 331day study period. It therefore implies that 24% of the study period was spent on same-sex activities. This is in comparison to 171 heterosexual incidences during the same period translating to 52% of the days used.



Sexual activities in the bases were very high and uncontrolled. It is worrying that with the HIV and AIDS scourge against poor and inadequate health services, such immoral practices are promoted especially on the youth. Statistics showing that over 80% participated in base sex, 55% enjoying it and 76% doing it without any form of protection, are a sign of a gradually decaying society with a very bleak future. It is actually a sign of a desperate youth and a dead economy.

Unlike in the olden days when culture played a vital role in nurturing people's behaviour, the youth in the present era do not seem to worry about traditional and cultural practices that moulded morality and good behaviour. Moilanen et al (2010) posit that to some extent, the levels of literacy, form of socialisation and the nature of school attended determine youth behaviour while an ILO study in Burundi, Congo-Brazzaville, DRC, and Rwanda established that two-thirds of all child soldiers took the initiative of joining willingly. These to some extent confirm the position evidenced by 75% responses that indicated that they felt right in participating in the bases' activities while 58% felt good on reflection. The fact that 55% did not feel abused, 56% actually suggested the provision of condoms in the bases with only 26% proposing the banning of bases as possible remedial measures, clearly indicated the gravity of moral decay in the urban areas largely influenced by poverty and lack of social services. On reflection, the participants are expected to regret their conduct having learnt about the possible implications health, social and economic-wise. Unfortunately, and surprisingly, that is not the case with the participants and such behaviour may be attributed to illiteracy and poverty.

From all the responses given above, the study has come up with a typology of base participants as seen from their determination, their motivations, and their conduct, how they relate with both outside and internal world and their perceptions about bases. Realizing the various levels of participation and adherence to cultural dictates, the following five classes become visible in their order of severity;

- Innocent abused – these are the youth who are reserved and vulnerable and often subjected to inhuman conditions. Given an opportunity,

they would never want to experience base life again.

- Moderate peace-makers – these are strong but withdrawn youth who always seek peace and cordial relationships with both internal and outside community. Pushed to the wall, they have the capacity to defend themselves.
- Fortune seekers – are youth who join political bases to create an avenue of opening opportunities for self-enrichment. They only concentrate on amassing the available resources and power.
- Hardened desperate – are youth who despite having been forced into bases by either poverty or coercion, have now acclimatized and now run the show. They show some semblance of morality.
- Hardened criminals – these are youth who get into political bases with a clear intention of furthering their criminal aspirations. They engage in risk activities and stop at nothing to satisfy their evil intentions.

CONCLUSION

It is the study's conclusion that with over 80% of the sampled participants voluntarily engaging in social sex in the bases, an element of coercion was minimal (17%) as shown in the statistics. Probably, the majority of the people who participate in base politics are naturally of loose morals and coming from a background of prostitution and ill-cultures. The aspect of coercion probably applies to youth of lower ages (-17 years) who unfortunately were not part of this study. Incentives for participation were varied and participants did get them hence their preparedness to 'repeat'.

The study also concludes that illiteracy, poverty and socialisation played a critical role in shaping the behaviours of most of the participants in all the four episodes. To some extent, there has also been an aspect of a culture of bad behaviour and criminal mentality in a community characterised by people of low educational attainment and of diverse cultural practices. Therefore, realizing that gap in the people,



some political parties have taken advantage to abuse the people.

Constitutionally in Zimbabwe, same-sex relationships are forbidden but allowed to subsist in bases. It is therefore clear that most of the political groups are never concerned about the welfare of the people except their votes. What also comes out clear is a horse-rider relationship between politicians and voters. Closely akin is a deliberate effort by some political groups to establish death traps and allow them to nurture for as long as they secure electoral support. The people need to realize these flaws and reflect before they are further abused. The Strain Theory of Delinquency has to some extent failed to satisfy the expectations of the study given that besides focusing on the young youth, the problem is still experienced in elderly youth including those who may have other options to the problems.

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