Youth political participation in Zimbabwe and the prospects for representation in the national parliament (2017-2023)

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Declaration

I declare that I am the only author of this thesis. This work has not been presented in any earlier application for a degree at this institution or any other.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my loving husband Francis and kids, Allisa, Atipa, and Atida.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

"**If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants**" **(**Isaac Newton**).**

This thesis is a reflection of the unwavering support and boundless love I received from the following:

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ABSTRACT

Youth political participation is a relatively new area of study. Youth political participation is a right. This right is enshrined in several international conventions, including the UDHR and AU Charter and subsequently adopted or incorporated into national laws. In Zimbabwe, youth political participation is enshrined in the constitution and the revised National Youth Policy 2020. Notwithstanding this, global statistics reveal low representation of youth in governance institutions, including the national parliament. The international scenario on youth representation is also relatable to the Zimbabwe case. Interestingly, following the 2017 military-assisted transition in Zimbabwe, the nation experienced momentous political events with the chance to transform the country's governance system. In this respect, this study examined youth political participation under the Second Republic and the prospects of their representation in the national parliament.

Using democratic theories as the framework of analysis, the study revealed that while it is commonly held that democracy provides a system of social organisation for a just, equitable, accountable, and representative system, no single theory posits how this can be achieved. This is further complicated by the notion that, as a concept, political participation is dynamic and elastic. Political participation encompasses all the institutionalised and non-institutionalised activities that are taken to influence policy. While participatory democracy provided a valuable contribution which can be related to this study on youth political participation with prospects for representation in the national parliament, it falls short of clearly outlining the critical political activities needed for democratising parliaments. The core contribution made by participatory democracy is the identification of the workplace as a sector of participation which needs to be democratised. Participatory democrats argued that the workers spend most of their working hours at the workplace; hence, they should directly participate in the decision-making process at the workplace. Participation is crucial because it leads to the worker's self-development. The theory also posits that the workplace should be democratised not for its sake but to democratise the entire political system. This provided the basis for this study's use of the parliament as a sector of participation that can be democratised through youth representation.

Using a case analysis of the 2018 and 2023 harmonised elections in Zimbabwe, the study developed a new theory of participatory democracy with safeguards for youth participation. This theory uses parliament as a sector that needs to be democratised through youth inclusion and representation. The basis for youth inclusivity is the idea that since the youth constitute a large share of the Zimbabwean population, they must be involved in the making of decisions that affect their lives. The post-2017 political environment and the leadership of Mnangagwa under the rubric of the 'Second Republic' or 'New Dispensation' and the increased interest in the 2018 and 2023 elections among the youth made the elections suitable case studies. The new theory used identified four institutionalised political activities which are campaigning, voting, candidature and election into political office as the requisite activities for youth representation in the national parliament. These activities were presented on two pyramids, starting with campaign at the bottom and election at the apex. Pyramid A represented the empirical case of youth participation in Zimbabwe, which had the potential of being transformed by reforms enacted under the Second Republic, leading to the ideal scenario where youth participation across the activities in the pyramid is even.

Findings from the literature, including election observation reports for the 2018 elections, confirmed the diagrammatic representation of youth participation in Figure A, where youth participation is mainly concentrated on the lower rungs of pyramids during campaigns and voting. Despite the increased number of youths who registered to vote during the 2018 elections, the number of youths elected into the 9th Parliament was low. Of the 270 MPs for the 9th parliament, only five were youths, of which three were directly elected, while the other two were young women elected through the women's PR system. This, again, is in line with the illustration on the Pyramid, where youth participation as candidates and election into political office is concerning. On the other hand, the structural changes, including introducing the youth quota in 2021, influenced youth candidature for the 2023 elections. This resulted in an increased number of young parliamentarians in the 10th parliament. Out of the 280 MPs for the 10th Parliament, 35 are youths. Of the 35, 17 were directly elected into parliament, ten came through the youth quota, and eight were elected through the women's PR. The findings on youth participation in the 10th Parliament again conform to Pyramid B's depiction of youth participation. Pyramid B represents the ideal, and the relative increase of youth following the 2023 elections can be considered as such.

The implications of the findings for youth participation in the 2018 and 2023 harmonised elections and the subsequent representation in the 9th and 10th Parliament, respectively, point to fundamental theoretical and governance issues. In terms of the new theory that was developed in the study, while increased youth representation in the 10th Parliament was recorded, in literature, especially with the youth quota, it has been described as 'skewed demographic representation.' Theoretically, it implies that the nature of youth representation may improve, yet structural changes within the governance system must support the improvement. The study concludes that the relative improvement of youth representation in the 10th Parliament in Zimbabwe is not sustainable because it has not been accompanied by structural changes that have been limiting youth participation. Therefore, sustainable youth representation in parliament, the essence of Pyramid B, or the ideal situation, can be achieved through structural changes. The new theory presents these changes as safeguards to promote youth participation. These safeguards include, among other changes, aligning the voting age with the eligibility age to run for parliamentary positions (National Assembly and Senatorial seats), increased reserved youth quota seats and democratic candidate selection processes. Broadly, using youth political participation as an indicator of assessing the post-2017 governance system in Zimbabwe, the study advances the notion that there have been no fundamental political reforms in Zimbabwe that foster youth participation, such instead of democratising the governance system in the old republic remains intact. The purported 'Second Republic' is just a carry-over from the old system. The safeguards advanced in this study cannot be generalised to other country case studies. However, the use of systematic analysis of youth participation across the activities in the Pyramids can, as a means of identifying context-specific challenges hindering youth representation in parliaments.

KEY WORDS:

Youth, political participation, participatory democracy, parliament, elections and Zimbabwe.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION I
DEDICATION II
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT III
ABSTRACT IV
KEY WORDS VI
TABLE OF CONTENTS VII
LIST OF FIGURES X
LIST OF TABLES XI
ACRONYMS XII
CHAPTER 1 1
INTRODUCTION 1
1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY 1
1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT 5
1.3 GENERAL RESEARCH QUESTION 6
1.4 SPECIFIC RESEARCH QUESTIONS 7
1. 5 PRIMARY RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 7
1.6 SPECIFIC RESEARCH OBJECTIVES 7
1.7 THEORETICAL STATEMENTS 7
1.8 RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN 8
1.9 RESEARCH METHODS 9
1.9.1 LITERATURE STUDY 9
1.9.2 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH METHODS 15
SAMPLING 15
1.9.3 KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS 17
1.9.3.1 YOUTH PARLIAMENTARIANS 17
1.9.3.2 PARLIAMENT OF ZIMBABWE 18
1.9.3.3 ACADEMICS 19
1.9.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS 19
1.9.5 DATA ANALYSIS 20
1.9.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY 20
1.10 CHAPTER OUTLINES 21
CHAPTER 2 23
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK 23
2.1 INTRODUCTION 23
2.2 THE ORIGINS OF DEMOCRACY 24
2.3 DEMOCRATIC THEORIES 28
2.3.2 PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY 29
2.3.1 DEMOCRATIC ELITISM 37
2.3.3 AFRICAN DEMOCRACY 41
2.4 CONCEPTUALISING YOUTH 44
2.5 PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY WITH SAFEGUARDS FOR YOUTH PARTICIPATION 48
2.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY 51
CHAPTER 3 54
ELECTORAL SYSTEMS AND ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE FROM 1979 TO 2013 54
3.1 INTRODUCTION 54
3.2 ELECTORAL SYSTEMS 55
3.2.1 TYPES OF ELECTORAL SYSTEMS 57
3.2.2 PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION SYSTEM 59
3.2.3 MIXED SYSTEMS 61
3.2.4 PLURALITY/MAJORITY SYSTEMS 61
3.2.4.1 TWO-ROUND SYSTEM (TRS) 62
3.2.4.2 ALTERNATIVE VOTE (AV) SYSTEM 62

3.2.4.3 BLOCK VOTE (BV) SYSTEM 63
3.2.4.4 PARTY BLOCK VOTE (PBV) SYSTEM 63
3.2.4.5 FIRST PAST THE POST (FPTP) SYSTEM 63
3.3 ELECTIONS AND THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM IN ZIMBABWE 67
3.3.1 THE 1979 ELECTIONS 68
3.3.2 THE 1980 INDEPENDENCE ELECTIONS 69
3.3.3 THE 1985 ELECTIONS 70
3.3.4 THE 1990 GENERAL AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 72
3.3.5 THE 1995 ELECTION 73
3.3.6 1996 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 74
3.3.7 THE 2000 GENERAL ELECTIONS 74
3.3.8 THE 2002 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS 76
3.3.9 THE 2005 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS 77
3.3.10 THE 2008 HARMONISED ELECTIONS 78
3.3.11 THE 2013 HARMONISED ELECTIONS 80
3.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY 83
CHAPTER 4 86
DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS ON THE 2018 HARMONISED ELECTIONS 86
4.1 INTRODUCTION 86
4.2 YOUTH POLITICAL PARTICIPATION DURING THE 2018 HARMONISED ELECTIONS 89
4.2.1. THE 2018 HARMONISED ELECTORAL CONTEXT 90
4.2.2 POLITICAL PARTIES AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION DURING THE 2018 GENERAL ELECTIONS 95
4.2.3 PARTIES CONTESTING THE 2018 GENERAL ELECTIONS AND PRIMARY
4.2.4 CAMPAIGNS 101
4.2.4.1 FINANCING OF ELECTION CAMPAIGNS 104
4.2.5 VOTING 106
4.2.6 CANDIDATURE 109
4.2.7 YOUTH ELECTION AND REPRESENTATION IN THE 9TH PARLIAMENT 112
4.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY 121
CHAPTER 5 125
DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS ON THE 2023 HARMONISED ELECTIONS 125
5.1 INTRODUCTION 125
5.2 THE 2023 HARMONISED ELECTORAL CONTEXT 126
5.3 FINDINGS ON THE PYRAMID OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN THE 2023 HARMONISED ELECTIONS 128
5.3.1 PARTIES CONTESTING THE 2023 HARMONISED ELECTIONS AND PRIMARY ELECTIONS 129
5.3.2 CAMPAIGNS 129
5.3.3 VOTING 136
5.3.4 CANDIDATURE 139
5.3.4 YOUTH ELECTION AND REPRESENTATION IN THE 10TH PARLIAMENT 143
5.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY 148
CHAPTER 6 151
THEORY DEVELOPMENT 151
6.1 INTRODUCTION 151
6. 2 METHODOLOGY FOR THEORY DEVELOPMENT 151
6.3 LITERATURE REVIEW FOR THEORY DEVELOPMENT 152
6.4 PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY WITH SAFEGUARDS FOR YOUTH PARTICIPATION 155
6.4.1 SAFEGUARDS FOR YOUTH PARTICIPATION 158
6.4.2 ELECTORAL SYSTEM 158
6.4.3 POLITICAL FREEDOMS 158
6.4.4 ALIGNMENT OF LAWS ON THE ELIGIBILITY AGE TO RUN FOR POLITICAL
6.4.5 YOUTH QUOTA SYSTEM 159
6.4.6 POLITICAL PARTIES 160

6.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY 160
CHAPTER 7 162
CONCLUSIONS 162
7.1 INTRODUCTION 162
7.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS 163
7.2.1 ELECTORAL SYSTEM 166
7.2.2 POLITICAL FREEDOMS 166
7.2.3 ELIGIBILITY AGE TO RUN FOR POLITICAL OFFICE 167
7.2.4 POLITICAL PARTIES 167
7.2.5 CANDIDATE SELECTION PROCESSES 168
7.2.6 POLITICAL PARTIES FINANCING 169
7.2.7 YOUTH QUOTA 170
7.2.8 ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES 171
7.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY 171
7.4 FURTHER STUDIES 172
REFERENCE LIST 173
APPENDIX A 203
APPENDIX B 205
APPENDIX C 207
APPENDIX D 212
APPENDIX E 223

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1 Youth Political Participation……. 49

Figure 3.1 Possible aims of an electoral system…….. 56

Figure 3.2 Families of Electoral Systems…….. 58

Figure 4.1 Composition of the 9th National Assembly by Mode of Election…….. 115

Figure 4.2 Composition of the 9th National Assembly by Age……. 116

Figure 5.1 Composition of the 10th Parliament (National Assembly) by Mode of Election …….. 143

Figure 5.2 Youth Representation in the 10th Parliament…….. 144

Figure 6.1 Restatement of Figure 2.1 (Youth Political Participation) … 157

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1 Research Participant Profiles (Young Parliamentarians) …….. 18

Table 4.1 Interviewee Profiles……. 88

Table 4.2 Candidates for the 2018 Elections…… 97

Table 4.3 Voter Registration for the 2018 Harmonised Elections by Age…… 108

Table 4.4 Percent share of votes obtained by independent candidates……... 118

Table 5.1 Youth Representation in the 10th Parliament by Party……. 145

ACRONYMS

ACBO	Alliance for Community-Based Organisations
AIPA	Access to Information and Privacy Act
APU	African Parliamentary Union
AU	African Union
AV	Alternative Vote
BV	Block Vote
CAZ	Conservative Alliance of Zimbabwe
CCC	Citizen's Coalition for Change
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
DEAU	Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit
EISA	Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa
ERC	Election Resource Centre
EU	European Union
EUEOM	European Union Election Observer Mission
FPTP	First Past the Post
GNU	Government of National Unity
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems

IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
IRI	International Republican Institute
IYWD	Institute for Young Women Development
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MDC-A	Movement for Democratic- Alliance
MDC-A	Movement for Democratic Change-Arthur Mutambara
MDC- T	Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai
MINDS	Mandela Institute for Development Studies
MMP	Mixed Member Proportional System
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NDS	National Development Strategy
NDU	National Democratic Unit
NPF	National Patriotic Front
NWU	North-West University
PBV	Party Block Vote
PM	Plurality Majority
POSA	Public Order and Security Act
PR	Proportional Representation
PRC	People's Rainbow Coalition
RAU	Research and Advocacy Unit
SADC PF	Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum

SDS	Students for a Democratic Society
SI	Statutory Instrument
SMD	Single Member District
STV	Single Transferable Vote
TSM	Temporal Special Measure
TRS	Two-Round System
UANC	United African National Council
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFP	United National Federal Party
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WJP	World Justice Project
WPAY	World Programme of Action for Youth
YETT	Youth Empowerment and Transformation Trust
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front
ZCC	Zimbabwe Council of Churches
ZEC	Zimbabwe Electoral Commission
ZESN	Zimbabwe Election Support Network
ZHRC	Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission
ZIMSTAT	Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency

ZUM	Zimbabwe Unity Movement
ZYC	Zimbabwe Youth Council

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION
1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This study emanates from the underrepresentation of young people in national parliaments worldwide and the need for governments to represent all social groups. Youths constitute more than half of the world's voting population. Yet, their participation in formal governance structures, where critical decisions that affect their lives and resource distribution are made, remains marginal (Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) 2016). They are politically an "excluded majority" (Joshi, 2014). In Zimbabwe, approximately 72 per cent[1] of its 15 178 957 million total population is under 35[2]. Therefore, Zimbabwe is a youthful country (National Statistics Agency Zimbabwe, 2022). Consequently, including the youth in formal political processes is a fundamental aspect of democracy.

The election of youth into national parliament is a right (OHCHR 1989) and finds its basis in several international conventions, especially the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), and the United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 2012: 14) as well as the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948 Article 21 (1) and (3) emphasises the right to participate directly or indirectly in government through representatives chosen during periodic and genuine elections. The World Programme of Action for Youth (2010: 42) provides for the full participation of the youth in the broader society and decision-making. Similarly, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2250 recognises youth participation as one of the critical pillars for action in promoting young people's positive contribution towards maintaining international peace and security. The global regime on youth political participation prioritises youth participation directly or indirectly, including in decision-making institutions such as the national parliament.

[1] This percentage share of the youth was calculated using the total number of all persons under the age of 35 according to the 2022 Zimbabwe census.

[2] Percentage share of the youth aged 15 to 34 years is 31.8 percent. This age range conforms to the youth definition given under Section 20 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment Number 20.

Apart from the international conventions, the Not Too Young to Run global campaign, first launched at the United Nations conference in Geneva in 2016, aims to influence youth participation in decision-making bodies. During the campaign, it was discussed that youth participation in civic and public life is a right, and hence, there is a need to remove the barriers that inhibit the youth from running for public office (UN, 2016). Again, in 2016, International IDEA produced a report[3] documenting the youth's problems and practices during different electoral cycle processes.

Consequently, global systematic research on youth participation, particularly in parliament, can be traced to the works of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)[4]. The IPU in 2010 adopted a Resolution on Youth Participation in the Democratic Process at its 122nd conference meeting in Bangkok. Paragraph 18 of the Resolution recognises youth parliaments, or their parallels, as meaningful channels of information exchange between young people and their governments and parliaments[5]. The resolution is fundamental because it explicitly mentions youth participation in influencing decision-making processes. Since adopting the resolution in 2014, the IPU has been researching and collecting data on empirical cases of youth participation in national parliaments.

The IPU's Report, *Youth Participation in National Parliaments*, is published bi-annually (IPU, 2021: 6). The 2023 IPU Report indicated that young parliamentarians aged 30 constitute 2.8 per cent of the world parliamentarians while those under 40 constitute some 18.8 per cent (2023: 7). Based on these statistics, it is evident that policy rhetoric from the international conventions on the inclusion of youth in decision making bodies such as the national parliament is far from being fulfilled. Therefore, there remains an empirical challenge to fulfilling the essential principle of democracy, which requires that political systems reflect the whole society and represent the interests of all (IPU, 2021: 6).

At the continental level, youth participation is one of the critical issues that has been topping the agenda. Prioritisation of youth participation is evident through the adoption

[3] titled; “Increasing Youth Participation throughout the Electoral Cycle: Entry Points for Electoral Management Bodies.”

[4] A global organization of national parliaments founded in 1889 initially as a small group of parliamentarians focusing on promoting peace through parliamentary diplomacy.

[5] see more at; https://www.ipu.org/documents/2010-04/youth-participation-in-democratic-process

of the African Youth Charter in 2006. The Charter is a strategic document whose aim is to provide direction for empowering youth at three levels, which are continental, regional, and national. Through the Charter, state parties agree to ensure youth participation in decision-making bodies, including parliament (African Union (AU), 2006). The significance of this is that while youth participation in elections through voting is essential, it is not enough if the youth remain an excluded majority in parliament, where decisions affecting their lives are made. Inclusivity of the youth thus remains a fundamental aspect to be fulfilled in democratic projects around the world.

More so, the African Parliamentary Union (APU), at its 39th Conference, adopted a Resolution on the Participation of Citizens, Especially the Youth, In Promoting Democracy (AU, 2016). This resolution is of specific importance in the context of this study. Paragraph 10 of the resolution

> Obliges African parliaments to institute legal measures aimed at engendering youth representation in decision-making bodies and parliaments by adopting quotas, removing limiting age requirements for elections, and entrusting youth with leadership positions to make them models who can inspire their peers. In so doing, young women should be given special attention.

Despite such a comprehensive resolution and subsequent dedication of 2017 as a year in which the AU focused on youth under the theme, "*Investing in Youth as a Demographic Dividend,*" youth representation in national parliaments remains low. Empirically, statistics on youth presence on the continent are missing, and the number of youths in parliament remains low (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), 2015).

Diverse actors and international institutions have long reiterated global efforts to include youth. The relatively low numbers of youth representation in national parliaments are not evidence of a lack of international instruments and guidelines but a host of contextual and structural issues that must be studied to model best practices worldwide.

Zimbabwe, guided by the African Youth Charter, the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY), and the Global Political Agreement, developed a National Youth Policy (revised) (Zimbabwe National Youth Policy, 2013: 5). This reflects the need and commitment by the government to establish a policy that resonates the obligations and

principles of some of the international frameworks on youth participation. Among the fundamental principles outlined in the policy, the sixth one is focused on promoting young people's involvement in democratic and civil decision-making processes and national development (Zimbabwe National Youth Policy, 2013: 5). More fundamentally, in 2013, Zimbabwe adopted a new constitution which, unlike the Lancaster House constitution adopted at independence, specifically, recognises youth as an essential social group in the country's governance. Section 20 of the new Constitution urges the government and all state institutions to take affirmative action to promote youth participation in the social, economic, and political spheres. Youth participation is, therefore, an issue of concern and priority in Zimbabwe as espoused by the constitution and the national youth policy.

Furthermore, the government of Zimbabwe also developed the National Development Strategy (NDS) 1: 2021-2025, a critical strategic document outlining issues and targets the government seeks to address within the stipulated timeframe. NDS 1 espouses youth economic governance as one of the issues it aims to address. Among the outlined outcomes in this strategic document is a commitment to increase youth engagement in development and decision-making to 25 per cent by 2025, up from 3.3 per cent in 2020 (Government of Zimbabwe, 2020: 186). This target implies that youth participation in decision-making bodies and processes is low and warrants attention for improvement. Similarly, Section 3 (b) (ii) of the Zimbabwe Electoral Act emphasises inclusivity irrespective of race, ethnicity, gender, linguistic, political or religious ideology, level of education and physical characteristics in standing for political office. Thus, despite the numerous institutional frameworks and commitments established by the government of Zimbabwe, youth participation in governance remains a challenge (Gukurume, 2018).

Zimbabwe's democratic status is a contested issue. Despite the varied opinions, the Global State of Democracy report indicates that Zimbabwe performs low on the representation and rule of law range (International IDEA). According to the World Justice Project (WJP), Zimbabwe ranks 123rd out of 142 on the rule of law index. Therefore, as seen from the preceding discussion, policy rhetoric in the country is yet to transform youth representation in the national parliament. This study concurs with an observation made by the United Nations Development Programme Unit (UNDP)

(2012) that chances for youth to participate in political and decision-making processes in Africa are heavily influenced by the political, socioeconomic, and cultural environments of particular countries, where social norms result in numerous forms of discrimination, including from a gender viewpoint. Also, although statistical information on youth representation in African parliaments is lacking, the number of young parliamentarians is low (IDEA, 2015).

Therefore, this study examined the prospects of youth election to the national parliament during the post-2017 military-assisted transition in Zimbabwe and how the institutional and political context fostered or inhibited youth participation in the national parliament.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Studies on youth participation have dominantly focused on youth voting behaviour and not the prospects of election into political office. Within those studies, a seemingly contradictory trend can be observed in youth participatory behaviour. The first is considered a sign of apathy, where the youth tend to be less involved in voting and party membership than the older generations (IPU, 2016: 4). The second trend relates to young people's active role in democratic movements worldwide. Thus, discussions on youth participation have traditionally been skewed towards the role of youth as voters and activists rather than on their election to political office (IPU, 2016: 4), also ignoring the social and cultural context in which participation takes place (Cahill & Dadvand, 2018: 243). Studies on youth participation in Zimbabwe conforms to these trend (Chitanana 2010; Musarurwa 2018). There is, therefore, a gap within this continuum of studies where systematic analysis of youth representation in national parliaments is lacking. This study seeks to fill this gap.

At the same time, focusing on youth representation in national parliaments is a relatively new study area. Global statistics reveal low representation of the youth in national parliaments. In Zimbabwe, Chikova (2020)[6] observed that only five out of 210 members of parliament were aged 35 and below. Thus, youth representation in national parliaments remains low despite the numerous international conventions that seek to promote their participation in national parliaments. While the IPU Parline

[6] Chikova (2020) was referring to the 9th Parliament formed after the 2018 Harmonised elections in Zimbabwe.

[7]website consists of data on elections and parliamentary composition for member states, including Zimbabwe, there is no data on the number of youths in Zimbabwe's Parliament. Zimbabwe is a member of the IPU.

Furthermore, Zimbabwe conducted harmonised elections in 2023, yet IPU Pauline only reported ten youths for the quota system (IPU Parline Zimbabwe). These data do not reveal the number of youths directly elected into parliament and the young women in the 60 seats set apart for women under the quota system. This implies that there remains a need for a systematic study that examines the modes through which youth get elected into the national parliament. Also, the youth factor in the national parliament has not been very prominent in the country's politics. Oosterom and Gukurume (2019) observed that the prominence of youth was seen especially from 2009 to 2013. They argued that from 2009 to 2013, there was a heightened awareness of the vast youth population in the country, which influenced the focus on the productivity of young people for economic progress. Also, the Presidential Youth Interface Rallies[8] were meant to appeal to the youth vote. In the post-Mugabe ear, the new government led by Emmerson Mnangagwa acknowledges the importance of youth and their role in promoting economic development (Oosterom and Gukurume, 2019). Therefore, the question remains whether there have been changes in the fundamental factors shaping Zimbabwean electoral politics, with the changed environment paving the way for new streams oriented toward promoting youth participation and representation in the 9th and 10th parliament.

1.3 GENERAL RESEARCH QUESTION

3.1 How do the legal, political, and cultural factors influence youth participation in the national parliament in Zimbabwe?

[7] IPU Parline website is a comprehensive site developed by the IPU listing member countries including Zimbabwe. It has a record of all the elections that have been conducted in member countries. It also lists the composition of women in member states. However, it does not have statistics on the number of youths in Zimbabwe's parliament. This might indicate the newness on the focus on youth representation.

[8] These were early campaign rallies ahead of the 2018 Harmonised elections where the late President R. Mugabe's ZANU-PF's party had the aim of "speaking to the youth" Oosteroom & Gukurume (2019). The rallies were also viewed as a platform to promote the G40 (a team of younger politicians in the ZANU-PF party) against the team Lacoste (a group of the older generation, mostly the war veterans). They commenced in June 2017 and the aim was to convene these rallies in the ten provinces in the country.

1.4 SPECIFIC RESEARCH QUESTIONS

4.1 What is the nature of youth participation and representation in Zimbabwe's 9th and 10th parliaments?

4.2 What mechanisms and structures are in place to promote youth participation in Zimbabwe's national parliament?

4.3 What challenges hinder increased youth participation in parliament in Zimbabwe?

4.4 How can more youths be elected into the national parliament in Zimbabwe?

1. 5 PRIMARY RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

5.1 To examine the influence of the legal, political, and cultural factors in youth participation in the Zimbabwe national parliament.

1.6 SPECIFIC RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

6.1 To examine the nature of youth participation and representation in Zimbabwe's 9th and 10th parliaments.

6.2 To identify and evaluate the mechanisms and structures to promote youth participation in Zimbabwe's national parliament.

6.3 To discuss the challenges that hinder increased youth participation in parliament in Zimbabwe.

6.4 To determine mechanisms of engendering the election of more youths into the national parliament in Zimbabwe.

1.7 THEORETICAL STATEMENTS

The historical evolution of democratic theories has seen the contradiction and emphasis on diverse aspects of democracy, usually reflecting society's fundamental and broader organisation. Before the genesis and concern placed on participatory politics, the democratic theory was oriented towards elitist tendencies. Democratic elitism prevailed at the time triumphed by Schumpeter (1947) who argued for a theory of democracy focused on decision-making processes led by a few. Theorists of democratic elitism were sceptical about the ability of the citizens to participate in politics beyond the ballot paper. Consequently, participatory democracy arose as a critique of the failure of such democratic orientations to transform or deliver a just and

equitable society. Participatory politics emerged concurrently with notions of representation. In this study, participatory politics and the representational aspect of participatory democracy are equally emphasised.

It is a fundamental principle of participatory democracy that the political system should reflect society as a whole thereby ensuring representation of the interests of all citizens. In this regard, youth participation in national parliaments is an important global concern and issue. Statistics, as shown in the previous sections attest to the low representation of youth in national parliaments despite constituting a large share of the global population and the abundant conventions emphasising youth political participation including in national parliaments. The global experience is also relatable to the Zimbabwean context. In particular, the participatory democratic theory provides strong arguments for the inclusion of young people in decision-making processes. Yet, structural factors may affect youth political participation and representation in the national parliament. Using participatory democracy with safeguards for youth participation, this study argues that increased youth representation in Zimbabwe's parliament is contingent on structural reforms, inclusive electoral systems and political party reforms.

1.8 RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN

This research used a qualitative methodology, specifically a case study framework of the post-military-assisted transition in Zimbabwe from 2017 to 2023. The study employed an inductive approach, drawing insights from literature studies and interviews to develop a grounded understanding of youth participation in Zimbabwean electoral politics. The process involved gathering data, looking for patterns and developing a theory on youth political participation and representation in the national parliament.

Lincoln and Guba (2000: 3) underscore the importance of qualitative research as being grounded in the observation that qualitative researchers examine phenomena in their authentic environments and acknowledge the importance of meaning as attached by the participants. In this study, youth experiences in Zimbabwean electoral politics are fundamental. It allows for investigating and understanding the nature of youth participation and representation in the national parliament. Qualitative methodology,

therefore, was the best approach for a study of this nature, which sought to examine youth participation within the context of the Zimbabwean electoral environment.

Youth participation occurs within an ecosystem of rules, beliefs, and institutions; hence, the study must include the natural setting. A case study approach was used in line with the qualitative approach. As Yin (1981; 1989) defines it, a case study allows for an empirical examination of contemporary phenomena within their real-world context, making it suitable for understanding complexities of youth representation in Zimbabwe's parliament. Robson and Marshall (2016: 19) highlight the importance of contextualised deep understanding as the key to a case study. A case analysis for this study was conducted through multiple data collection methods, with literature study as the primary method, supplemented by interviews with three different groups of participants. Interviews were conducted first with officials at the Parliament of Zimbabwe, the young parliamentarians who served under the 9th and 10th Parliament, and academics. The broader objective for conducting interviews was to understand the nature of youth representation in the Zimbabwean national parliament with a view of the factors that account for such representation, whether low, average or high.

1.9 RESEARCH METHODS

This section presents a detailed discussion of the data collection methods and the sampling procedures utilized as part of data collection and analysis.

1.9.1 LITERATURE STUDY

The study made use of a systematic literature review. According to Campbell Collaboration (2016), a systematic review of literature starts with a deliberate choice of data which includes the different kinds of information to be included in the review such as books, journal articles and publications related to the research questions. The study accordingly used Afrobarometer reports, election observer reports, IPU reports, journal articles, books and related publications on youth political participation in Zimbabwe to answer the research questions and clarify the meaning of political participation.

Political participation is a central concept for this study. Yet, it is a slippery concept whose understanding has been shaped by several disciplines and broadened to encompass a wide range of activities owing to its historical evolution (Walther, *et al.* 2018; Weiss, 2020). Political participation thus entails a host of activities not limited to

signing a petition, joining a party, voting, campaigning, contacting public officials, debate and dialogue sessions, taking up leadership positions, youth parliaments, and youth councils (Musarurwa, 2018; Verba and Nie, 1972; Walther, 2012). Literature on political participation also tends to distinguish conventional and non-conventional forms of participation (Kovacheva, 2005; van Deth, 2001). The former is institutional participation and occurs within a set institutional framework. At the same time, the latter is non-institutional participation as it occurs outside the institutional framework (van Deth, 2001). Literature on youth participation in both categories is plenty (Abebe and Faraday, 2022; Dodo, 2019; Flanagan and Levine, 2010; Mengistu, 2016; Mpungose, 2020; Musarurwa, 2018; Weiss, 2020; Kitanova, 2017), yet these studies have selectively focused on different forms of participation, for example, protesting, electoral campaigns and voting with little focus on youth candidature in elections and the prospective election into the national parliament. Abebe and Faraday (2022: 4) state that youth participation "is insignificant in representation in political parties and offices." This is because youth participation refers mainly to the lower-level activities in a pyramid of participatory democracy with safeguards for youth participation[9], which are campaigning and voting. Youth participation scantly goes beyond these activities.

This study introduces the theory of participatory democracy with safeguards for youth participation. This participatory democracy with safeguards focuses on four critical political activities crucial for youth representation in the national parliament. This new theory, unlike Pateman's (1970) participatory democracy, uses the national parliament as a sector for youth participation, where four vital political activities are examined to determine the chances for their representation. These activities are presented in a pyramid in Chapter 2. At the bottom of the pyramid going upwards is campaigning, voting, candidature and election. Youth candidature and subsequent election into the national parliament are equally important political activities youths must be involved in for inclusiveness and representation in decision-making structures such as the national parliament. This study, therefore, sought to fill this research gap by focusing on participation beyond voting.

[9] Participatory democracy with safeguards for youth participation is a new concept introduced in this study to refer to youth participation starting from campaigning to elected officials. The end game of youth participation should result in their subsequent election and representation in national parliament. An expansion of this theory is done in chapter 2.

Most of the studies on youth participation both in Europe and Africa reveal a negative trend among the youths when compared to the older generation (Tambe and Kopacheva, 2023; Kimberlee, 2020; Cammaerts, *et al*. 2013; Kitanova, 2017; Resnick and Casale, 2011). These studies focus mainly on three forms of participation: voting, community engagement, and protests. On voting, AFRO barometer studies also corroborate this finding; the studies reveal that youth in the 39 Afrobarometer countries vote less in elections compared to the elderly (63 % vs 84), identify with a political party (37% vs. 45%), and attend community meetings (43% vs. 54%) (AFRO barometer[10] News Release, 2023; Asiamah *et al*., 2021; Chikwanha and Masunungure, 2007). Compared to older people, it is believed that the youth have fewer reasons for participating in political processes, given that the incentives of the former generation to participate in politics do not affect them (Quintelier, 2007: 169). This understanding of youth participation implies that the blame lies with young individuals (Cammaerts, *et al*., 2013: 11) if they do not participate in elections. Youth can thus be taken as an apathetic generation, with apathy being cured with age.

The apathy model, though plausible in some instances, does not do justice to youth participation in elections and the prospects of their running for political office. This study concurs with Cammaerts *et al*. (2013) in arguing that reasons for youth disengagement in politics and elections are complex and not reducible to apathy. Moreover, empirically, it is a reality that the youth of Africa possess higher levels of education yet experience lower employment rates and reduced political engagement than their elders[11]. ' One possible account for the disengagement perspective on youth participation is the cost of doing politics. As observed by Chikwanha and Masunugure (2007), the cumbersome electoral-related activities, such as registering to vote and checking one's name in the ballot box, may counter the prospects of seeking economic opportunities among the youths.

More so, the Mandela Institute for Development Studies (MINDS) 2016 study on youth participation in eight countries observed that the youth are frustrated with the lack of economic opportunities; consequently, they have lost faith in political structures and

[10] Afrobarometer is a continent-wide, impartial research network that offers trustworthy data regarding African perspectives and assessments of democracy, governance, and living standards.

[11] This is a title for an AFRO barometer News Release, 2023. It revealed that in a survey conducted across 39 countries in 2021/2023, addressing unemployment is a primary policy concern for young people, followed by the management of the economy.

processes. The research further revealed that the youth are leading political change in many countries primarily because of the frustration, marginalisation, and underrepresentation in government and leadership positions. Thus, youths are interested in and involved with various vital challenges encountered in their political systems. At times, it is just that the political proposal does not align with their requirements for representation and participation (Kimberlee 2002 as cited in Cammaerts *et al*., 2016: 11). It is therefore critical for a study that systematically analyses the institutional framework for increasing youth representation to be conducted as a way of ensuring that policy making addresses their needs, ultimately legitimising government and facilitating stability in the continent.

Similarly, Booysen (2015), in a study of *Youth and Political Participation in South Africa's Democracy,* found that unemployment among the youth is a common challenge, and the youth themselves were cynical about the prospects of getting jobs without political connections despite having good educational qualifications. Although the general interpretation of that situation would be non- or low-disengagement of the youth in political activities, she argued that the youth should participate or vote to get that feeling of contentment where they can appreciate that they have done what they could do. This implies that interest is there to participate, but past experiences showed no change in the urgency or political will to implement youth empowerment programs and policies. Given a youth-supportive economic and political environment, the youth trends on low voter turnout can change. Also, youth representation in the national parliament will improve. The question that remains, however, is whether the nature of that 'environment' or 'context' facilitates youth participation in elections beyond voting?

Youth participation within the institutional framework is crucial not only for legitimising government, but, as a chance to impact choices that have an effect on their lives. In line with the institutional framework perspective, the YETT (2018) highlighted that during elections, youth in Zimbabwe participate in the following activities: as candidates running for political office, voters, managing the electoral process, and observing and monitoring the polls. While these activities are essential during elections, youth representation and participation in activities such as running for political office has yet to be discovered. Most studies on youth participation in Zimbabwe and beyond tend to focus on voting as the primary indicator for youth

participation (Masuku and Macheka, 2020; Bratton and Masunungure, 2018; Musarurwa, 2018; Mususa, 2017; Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU), 2017; YETT, 2017; EISA, 2015; Chitukutuku, 2014; Oosterom and Pswarayi, 2014; Chamunogwa, 2011; Chitanana, 2010; Guzura *et al*. 2010), yet democracy does not preclude youths from running for political office.

Youth marginalisation accounts for the preclusion of youth from the institutional framework of political participation. Jaji (2020) observed that the older generation dominates and monopolises political space in Zimbabwe, obstructing the youth agenda and aspirations. This leaves the majority of the youth "politically and economically marginalised." Youth marginalisation is enabled by the fact that politics in Zimbabwe revolves around state power, and contestation for state power is perceived as an end (Ake, 2000; Lumumba-Kasango, 2005). Chikerema and Chakunda (2014: 16) argued that political power in Zimbabwe guarantees economic power through accumulation aimed at self-aggrandisement by the ruling elite (mainly the older generation and former freedom fighters).

The perpetual rule and domination of the older generation relegates youth political participation to campaigns and voting, with limited opportunities for youth to get into political office. Given the Zimbabwean 2013 Harmonised elections, Hodzi (2014) observed that within the dominant parties, youths appear to be excluded from mainstream politics; they are relegated to youth wings and consequently excluded from agenda-setting and decision-making. Youths are, therefore, deliberately excluded from participating in actual decision-making processes and made to feel content within the youth wing structures (Hodzi, 2014: 56). Thus, this "exclusion by inclusion strategy" has intensified to the level of "institutionalised marginalisation" present in all the major political parties (Hodzi, 2014: 57). Though Hodzi's observations are fundamental on the Zimbabwean democratic discourse, the major political events that took place in 2017, especially the military-assisted transition, ouster of long-time leader, Robert Mugabe and subsequent succession rule by Emmerson Mnangagwa under what is termed 'New Dispensation' call for studies on youth political participation to determine whether there have been changes on the level of youth participation or not.

In Zimbabwe, it has been observed that youth participation does not go beyond electoral politics or politics of representation; therefore, it remains peripheral and tokenistic (Chikwanha, 2010). In those instances, where the youth participate, their participation is seen as threatening the status quo (Organising for Zimbabwe Trust, 2017). The situation analysis that was conducted on youth in Zimbabwe by the Zimbabwe Youth Council (ZYC) (2015) and the Zimbabwe Youth Task Force in 2017, concluded in both cases that youths are marginalised in civic, political, and electoral processes (Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), 2020). Because of this, some election observer missions took notice of the youth factor in Zimbabwean elections for the first time. For instance, the Commonwealth Observer Group report on the 2018 Harmonised elections recommended that the government ensure increased youth voter registration and participation in electoral processes. Similarly, the International Republican Institute (IRI) Observer mission, again on the 2018 elections, observed that despite the dramatic increase in voter registration, youth like women continue to be marginalised (IRI, 2018).

The broad literature on youth political participation as reviewed above does not focus on youth representation. The studies mainly focus on voting and highlight the challenges that youth face. Therefore, there remains a gap in the literature on deliberate focus on youth participation with prospects of representation in the national parliament. This study seeks to fill this gap.

Empirically, the issue of youth representation in the Zimbabwean national parliament is troubling. Youth representation remains inadequate despite the inclusion of a quota for ten positions for young individuals in the National Assembly through Amendment No. 2 of the Constitution, 2021 Section 124. According to the European Union Election Observer Mission (EUEOM) to the Zimbabwean 2023 harmonised elections, there were only two young MPs in the previous national assembly, and currently, just three candidates are running as directly elected representatives for the national assembly (EUEOM, 2023: 29). From this observation, it can be seen that youth representation in the national parliament in Zimbabwe is deficient. These numbers, however, may obscure the female youths who got into parliament through the women’s quota. Therefore, there remains a gap in the systematic evaluation of youth's mechanisms of getting into the national parliament as well as the factual statistical representation.

Adding the three directly elected youth in the 10th National Assembly and the ten quota members (youth), youth representation would stand at 13 out of 270 members in the lower house, which remains low and constitutes a cause of concern. Apart from the youth quota, the prospects for the direct election of youth into parliament are minimal, and there is a need to establish why this is so.

On the other hand, fundamental political events in the country may influence youth participatory behaviour. For instance, the Youth Advisor at YETT, youth are identifying new ways of engagement and have renewed interest in participating in politics, including running for political office (Muyambwa, 2017:1). Recognising the renewed interest following the military-assisted transition that took place in 2017, he opines that Zimbabwe is at a transitionary moment where there are chances either to consolidate youth participation or hinder it. Therefore, there is a need for a study that systematically examines the post-2017 political environment in Zimbabwe and establishes how the institutional framework specifically facilitates or hinders youth election into the national parliament. This study sought to fill this gap by introducing participatory democracy with safeguards for youth participation as theoretical lenses for studying youth political participation in Zimbabwe.

1.9.2 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH METHODS

Through interviews with key informants, the researcher collected data on youth's experiences concerning their participation in the Zimbabwean national parliament. Through purposive and snowball sampling, participants were selected among the youth parliamentarians who served under the 9th and 10th parliament, as guided by the election results of the 2018 and 2023 harmonised elections. Interviews were also conducted with academics and officials from the Parliament of Zimbabwe.

SAMPLING

Since it is doubtful that a researcher can collect data from all the cases, the researcher drew a sample from the population. Sampling can be defined as selecting units from a population of interest and studying the selected units to allow for the generalisation of results on the group from which the sample was taken (Trachoma, 2006). A population encompasses all instances from which the researcher gets the sample (Taherdoost, 2016: 18). Thus, the target population for this study were the young

parliamentarians who served under the 9th and 10th Zimbabwean Parliament[12]. This sample constituted MPs elected under the 2018 and 2023 Harmonised elections.

Sampling is mainly classified into two groups: probability and non-probability sampling techniques. Non-probability sampling is famous for the researcher's deliberate choosing of units for the fundamental information they yield, which cannot be obtained from other sources (Maxwell, 1977: 77). This aligns with the qualitative research approach chosen. The researcher used purposive and snowball sampling techniques for the study. Purposive sampling is mainly based on the researcher's judgment, which determines the potential respondents who can provide the best information to achieve the research aims and respond adequately to the research questions. On the other hand, snowball sampling is a sampling process that uses networks.

The researcher purposively selected young parliamentarians from the 9th and 10th Parliaments and academics who participated in the study. The officials at the Parliament of Zimbabwe gave the researcher some contacts. After contacting these initial contacts, the researcher relied on referrals from the contacts, which entailed using snowball sampling.

Purposive and snowball sampling techniques are well suited for this study due to the nature of the youth MPs population. Since the study focused on young parliamentarians who served under the 9th Parliament (from 2018-2023) and the 10th (starting in late 2023), the researcher needed referrals to locate some outgoing and incoming young parliamentarians. One of the dynamics is that of the five young parliamentarians in the 9th parliament, only three were re-elected in 2023. This made it difficult to access all of them for the interviews. Accessing these parliamentarians required referrals. By and large, the researcher managed to access the young parliamentarians through referrals from Parliament of Zimbabwe and her networks. Referrals were important for building trust and gaining the confidence of the prospective participants to give consent to participate in the study. The participants were reached through emails and phone calls. After the initial contacts, they indicated their preferred mode of participation including physical meetings and phone calls.

[12] According to Section 143 (1) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe., The parliament is chosen for a term of five years that begins when the President –elect is inaugurated and takes office.

Purposive sampling was employed to recruit the academics who participated in the study. Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to recruit prominent political science professors and some former lecturers at the University of Zimbabwe. Others were engaged full-time in election and governance consultancy in Zimbabwe. The inclusion criteria used here were the participants' professional experience: academics working in Political Science.

1.9.3 KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

According to Gilckrist and Williams (1999: 74), key informant interviews may be used to fulfil three crucial goals in research: gathering data efficiently, getting access to complex–to–find data, and gaining a particular understanding or interpretation of an issue or object. Based on these advantages, the researcher conducted key informant interviews with the following;

1.9.3.1 YOUTH PARLIAMENTARIANS

The researcher interviewed 12 young parliamentarians who served under the 9th and 10th Parliaments. Of the 12 research participants, three served under the 9th parliament, with one re-elected into the 10th. This particular participant's responses were captured for both parliaments and presented separately. That is their experience for the 2018 and 2023 elections. In essence, 13 interview sessions were conducted with 12 research participants. In order to keep the participants anonymous, the researcher coded the data for identification using the year the participants were elected into parliament and the order of their participation in the interviews accordingly.

Table 1.1 Research Participant Profiles (Young Parliamentarians)

Participant Code	Political Party[13]	Parliament	Mode of Election
2018YP1		9TH	
2018YP2		9TH	
2018YP3		9TH	
2023YP1	CCC	10TH	Direct election
2023YP2	ZANU-PF	10TH	Direct election
2023YP3	CCC	10TH	Direct election
2023YP4	CCC	10TH	Direct election
2023YP5	ZANU-PF	10TH	Youth Quota
2023YP6	ZANU-PF	10TH	Direct election
2023YP7	ZANU-PF	10TH	Direct election
2023YP8	CCC	10TH	Direct election
2023YP9	ZANU- PF	10TH	Direct election

The table above shows the number of young parliamentarians participating in the study. The table shows their party and mode of election into parliament. Age was the primary social category used to select these participants. Section 20 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe defines youth as people aged between 15 to 35 years. However, in this study, the youth that were included were the youth parliamentarians serving under the 9th and 10th parliaments. Those youths should have been between 21 and 35 at the beginning of the 9th and 10th parliamentary sessions. The lowest age for election into parliament in Zimbabwe is 21. Thus, the researcher restricted her participants to youth aged 21 to 35. Thirty-five years has been taken as a cut-off year as provided in the Constitution of Zimbabwe. Therefore, age was the essential inclusion and exclusion criterion for the youth parliamentary participants in this study.

1.9.3.2 PARLIAMENT OF ZIMBABWE

Since the study focuses on youth participation in national parliaments, the Parliament of Zimbabwe provides the site for youth participation. As an institution, it is the custodian of information relating to the youth in the 9th and 10th Parliamentary sessions. At the Parliament of Zimbabwe, the researcher conducted two interviews with officials whom they were directed after being given consent by the Clerk of

[13] For the participants coded 2018, the researcher deliberately did not present data on the political parties they are affiliated to and mode of election as a means of removing any possible identifiers since the population for the 9Th parliament is too small that one might expose the identity of the participants.

Parliament to conduct research. Through the interviews, the researcher sought statistical information on the number of youths elected into the 9th and 10th Parliaments. Another objective of these interviews was to understand the mechanisms available to assist youth in getting elected into parliament.

1.9.3.3 ACADEMICS

The researcher conducted interviews with six academics specialising in Political Science. The inclusion criteria for these academics were their experience in Zimbabwean politics, as evidenced by their published material on the subject matter. The researcher was also guided by the academic profile and platforms such as Google Scholar to establish the prospective participants' relevance to the study. Eight interview sessions were conducted, with two being follow-up sessions.

As noted by Gilckrist and Williams (1999: 75), several critical informants may be involved in a study (Felterman, 1998: 47) with the ideal key informant expected to be articulate on the issue under study. The diverse informants purposefully selected for this study were important because they provided valuable and differentiated opinions based on background and experience, which were crucial for this study.

1.9.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This research was conducted according to the ethical requirements of the Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC) of the North-West University (NWU). An ethics clearance certificate was granted allowing the researcher to conduct research. For accessing data from the Parliament of Zimbabwe, a letter was written to the Clerk of Parliament and permission to conduct research was granted. This again was part of the broader requirements of the BaSSREC process.

Consent was sought from all the research participants. The participants were asked to complete and sign consent forms. The forms outlined the nature of the study, stated that participation was voluntary, and informed the participants of their right to withdraw. It also indicated that no compensation would be given for participating in the study.

The researcher kept the participants anonymous. At the commencement of the interviews, all the identifying markers, such as the participants' names, were replaced with codes assigned by the researcher. During the thesis compilation, the researcher

maintained the codes. By so doing, the researcher sought to preserve the participants' privacy by following the above principles.

1.9.5 DATA ANALYSIS

In qualitative research, the researcher is the main tool for data gathering and analysis. Thus, the researcher followed standardised methods of collecting data and analysing it as part of the reflexivity process in order to ensure trustworthiness of the research. The first bias mitigating method used in data collection was triangulation of literature study and interviews. The study made use of peer-reviewed journals to minimise potential bias from the researcher (who is a youth) on issues of youth political participation. Also, the inclusion of young parliamentarians from different political parties ensured the collection of objective data. This was augmented by the interviews with officials from the Parliament of Zimbabwe who provided descriptive data on youth representation in Zimbabwe's 9th and 10th parliaments. Furthermore, on data analysis, the researcher kept reflexive notes and engaged in de-briefing sessions with the promoter to minimise potential biases.

The data for this research were examined through content and thematic analysis. After collecting data, the researcher proceeded to analyse it. Thematic analysis is making themes out of the collected qualitative data. A theme represents a recurring pattern in the data that, at the very least, outlines and categorises potential observations and at its fullest extent, encapsulates certain elements of phenomena (Boyatzis, 1998: 4). Patton (1987) notes that during data analysis, these three things occur; data organisation, data reduction through summarisation and categorisation and the identification and linking of patterns and themes. The researcher used these steps to deduce themes from the data.

1.9.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study used qualitative methodology. Qualitative research findings are context-specific. In this case, the findings on the nature of youth representation in the Zimbabwean parliament and the factors that account for such a state of affairs only apply to the Zimbabwean context. Therefore, the results of this study cannot be generalised to other countries; they only apply to Zimbabwe.

A further restraint of this research pertains to the sample of young parliamentarians. The parliamentarians were not readily available. Also, most of the participants from

the opposition were reluctant and refused to participate in the study. In particular, some indicated that the interview question on factionalism was a hindrance to their participation. The specific interview question was; How did internal party politics from 2018 to 2023 facilitate or hinder youth candidature for elections in Zimbabwe? One particular prospective respondent, after seeing the interview guide said to the researcher, “Now is not the time to talk about factional politics[14]. So, I cannot participate in your study.” Therefore, due to these factional fights in CCC, the researcher missed an opportunity to interview more prospective participants from this party.

1.10 CHAPTER OUTLINES

Chapter 1—Introduction. This chapter laid the foundation of the study. It contains the study's background, objectives, research questions, assumptions, methodology, and limitations. It also includes the chapter outline.

Chapter 2—Theoretical framework. This chapter discusses the various theories used in the study as the analysis framework. Democratic theories on participation, such as democratic elitism and participatory democracy, are discussed. The chapter also discusses African democracy. A new theory on participatory democracy is proposed as a suitable theory for examining youth participation in Zimbabwe. The chapter further reviews the literature on youth participation to provide a foundation for the study.

Chapter 3—Electoral systems and elections in Zimbabwe. This chapter discusses the electoral system as a fundamental legal construct determining participatory behaviour and assesses whether it promotes youth elections. It does this through a historical analysis of the elections that have been conducted in Zimbabwe from 1980 to 2013.

Chapter 4- Data presentation and analysis on the 2018 harmonised elections. The chapter presents and analyses the findings on youth participation during the 2018 harmonised elections and their subsequent representation in the 9th parliament. The findings are presented according to a pyramid on youth participation showing the critical political activities on campaigning, voting, candidature and election which the study identified as essential for youth representation in the National Parliament.

[14] The prospective participant was referring to the intensive factional fights within CCC where the so called self-imposed Secretary General Sengezo Tshabangu initiated recalls of some members of Parliament from CCC mainly accused of aligning with Nelson Chamisa.

Chapter 5- Data presentation and analysis on the 2023 harmonised elections. The chapter presents and analyses findings on youth participation during the 2023 general elections and their subsequent representation in the 10th parliament. The findings are presented according to youth participation during campaigns, voting, candidature and election in the national parliament. Challenges affecting youth during the four outlined activities are also presented and analysed.

Chapter 6- Theory development. The chapter presents the new theory on youth participation with safeguards for youth participation.

Chapter 7- Conclusions. The chapter presents a recap of the results, offers a conclusion, and highlights the study's contribution to the field of Political studies. The chapter also discusses further study areas.

CHAPTER 2
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
2.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter introduces the theoretical and empirical literature on youth participation in national parliaments. Democracy is guided by equality, inclusion and participation of all eligible citizens in decision-making and broader political activities. It is within the ambit of these principles that youth are equally expected to participate in decisions in national parliaments. However, while broadly, democracy envisages the principles above, which can be used to justify the involvement of young people in decision-making processes, theoretically, this is not an easy task because there are various theories on democracy, each emphasising different and particular philosophical underpinnings and, in turn, assigning different roles to the citizenry and specifically the youth. Therefore, there is a need to establish a theoretical framework relevant to studying the prospects of youth representation in national parliaments.

Therefore, this chapter aims to conceptualise youth participation within the discourse of democratic theories. The chapter discusses the following theories: democratic elitism, African democracy and participatory democracy**.** A discussion is provided on the philosophical assumptions of each theory, the processes that help realize the kind of democracy espoused in theory, and the role played by citizens. While these stated theories potentially provide a framework for analysing youth participation in national parliaments, a moderate participatory democratic perspective is adopted as the guiding theoretical framework, given its strength for providing a nuanced analysis of the case of the prospects for youth participation in the Zimbabwean National Parliament. The moderate approach adopted in this study considers participation a complementary element of representative democracy (Backrach, 1967). The empirical part reviews material relevant to informing and contextualising the study. Youth participation has generated interest among academics, policymakers, and international organisations. There is abundant literature, among them books, journal articles, and other secondary sources of information, that examines youth participation from different perspectives. The dominant focus for most studies has been on youth participation in elections, using voting as an indicator of youth participation. Such an approach is based on democratic elitism, which mainly views democracy as selecting the few elites whose main responsibility is to make decisions on behalf of the polity. The main shortcomings of this democratic perspective are the perceived ignorance

and lack of capacity of the populace, including the youth, to partake in governance matters. About this theoretical orientation, youth are viewed as apathetic citizens with no interest in taking up political office. Such studies compare youth voting behaviour with the older generations and conclude that the latter group tends to dominate in partaking in elections. Politics from this perspective and voting during elections is a generational matter. Alternatively, some literature points to the agency exhibited by the youth. This is evident through the various social movements initiated and led by the youth calling for inclusion, equality, and improved socio-economic well-being.

Further, some literature within this alternative view, as opposed to apathy, emphasises the multiple internet-based platforms used by the youth to mobilise and participate in political activities. Youths are, therefore, not apathetic but progressive and have "engineered" new forms of engaging in politics beyond the ballot box. What is missing from the latter discourse, though it recognises the potential and capacity of youth to be involved in decision-making institutions, is that it mainly focuses on emergent platforms for youth engagement, ignoring traditional institutions such as national parliaments. Suppose youths are not apathetic and have the potential to strategise, organise and participate in political activities and decision-making processes through internet-based platforms. How can their potential be harnessed into traditional political institutions such as the national parliament? This study sought to cover this knowledge gap by making a theoretical contribution to the moderate participatory democratic theory to promote youth participation in the Zimbabwean National Parliament.

2.2 THE ORIGINS OF DEMOCRACY

Attempts on the investigation of democracy mainly trace back to Athens because it provides a site for consistency and an original example of a democratic government or something close to it (Ehrenberg, 1950: 515), that is, a government created by the people, representing the people and serving the people (Leach, 1900: 361). Bluntschli notes that "Democracy found its most logical expression in Athens, and its nature can nowhere be better studied than in the Athenian constitution" (as cited in Leach, 1900: 361). Therefore, Greece has been considered "the birthplace of democracy" (Fleck & Hansen, 2013: 390). The section does not comprehensively attempt the origins and nature of Athenian democracy, for that has been done elsewhere (Hansen, 1986; 1999). However, an attempt is made here on the salient features of democracy from

Athens and how it has been transformed over the years resulting in various theories of democracy.

That democracy emerged in ancient Greece is a widely held popular view yet it is not so familiar to many that it initially appeared in a highly developed ecosystem of around 1000 city-states (Hansen & Nielsen, 2004 as cited in Ober, 2008: 3) geographically in the Mediterranean and Black Seas (Ober, 2008: 3). The 1000 city-states (*poleis*) had similarities in linguistic and fundamental cultural traits, yet varied in scale, governance, and economic systems (Ober, 2008: 3) the most fundamental elements which might in some ways make Greece democracy impracticable to modern and heterogeneous societies of the twenty-first century. Athenian democracy is, however, the most prosperous and well-documented one.

Democracy is a concept taken from the Greek word demokratia, which conjoins two terms: demos, a term for “the people,” and Kratos, a term for power (Ober, 2008: 4). Greek democracy gave prominence to the active involvement of the general population in communal self-governance. While democracy, understood as the power of the people, seems to be a straightforward concept, definitional and operational questions persist to this day.

Ober (2008) proposed that one way of trying to make sense of the concept of democracy is to revert to the time when it was coined and how it was defined. This presents two schools of thought. Some scholars, particularly Berkeley, refer to the view of historian Raphael Sealy (1987), which suggests that the term democracy emerged in the mid-fifth century as a derogatory label used by opponents of Athenian democracy to argue that popular governance was merely the capricious authority of the lower classes (Sealy, 1987; Miller, 2018). Thus, for Sealey, the original understanding of democracy was something like “mob domination” (as cited in Ober, 2008: 5). On the other hand, prolific Danish historian Hansen (1986) suggests that “demokratia” was probably a term of approval: utilised during the fifth century, and possibly even during the transformative period of the late sixth century. Based on comparison with the terminology of the other Greek regime, the original meaning of democracy defined by the democrats was the ability of a populace, made up of all native adult males, to achieve valuable outcomes in the public sphere, hence, the capable individuals instead of merely the authority of the populace (Ober, 2006).

While it seems imperative to trace the definition of democracy from its coinage, concern remains about who the people in the Athenian democracy were. It becomes a truism to say that some of the problems that affected the theory of democracy were present when the concept originated. Questions thus remain on the legitimacy of referring to a regime characterised by slavehood and limited franchise, as democracy (Ober, 2008: 5).

It might, therefore, be correct to say that, even with so many centuries of political speculation gone, it is still anomalous that democratic theory has continued to be unsatisfactory, both as a basic ethic of communal political character and as a descriptor in an endeavour to conceptualise real world political participation (Dahl, 2006: 1). The imminent challenge that continues to be encountered in the political science discourse as noted by Dahl (2006) is the existence of many different democratic theories. Democracy is, therefore, a "contested concept embedded within rival theories" (Conolly, 1993 as cited in Cunningham, 2002: 3).

Dahl (2006: 4) emphasised that democracy rests upon compromise, yet compromises, clashes, and antagonistic principles characterise the democratic theory. Therefore, attempts in the development of a systematic democratic theory confront the challenge that practically, it is accounted as an ideal political system that is not wholly unattainable and an actual historical system consisting of a set of political institutions that may be attainable under some limiting conditions (Dahl, 2006: 4). It is also imperative to accentuate the fact that some conceptualisations understood as democracy in political theory actually, compromise on 'democracy' as they "delicately papers over several cracks without quite concealing them" (Dahl, 2006: 4). These cracks are what critics of democratic theories point to as the challenges on fully attaining democracy. Dahl (2006) refers to those cracks as the "shadow theory of democracy."

The above challenge is embedded in the very concept of democracy itself. *Demokratia*, taken from the roots, demos understood as the people, and kratia, rule or authority, gives way to questions on who comprises the demos and what it means for them to rule. According to Dahl (1989: 3), the definition of the people is inherently ambiguous and has often led to disputes. The first point of ambiguity lies in the concept

of “a people”-what defines “a people” within a democratic government. He further stressed that,

> The Greeks assumed that the Athenians, Corinthians, Spartans, and inhabitants of various Greek city-states formed “a people” with the right to political independence. In contrast, while the ancient Greeks identified as distinct- the Hellenes- with their language and history, they did not see themselves as a ‘people’ in a political context where they should govern themselves as a unified democratic entity. Greek democracy was not a single concept but somewhat local to each city-state, being Athenian, Corinthian, or specific to others (Dahl, 2006: 3).

From the very onset, philosophers presupposed that ‘a people’ possessing equal rights of political participation already existed and was considered to be a truth, a product of historical events. Yet the practicality of such suppositions fell short, where some people, like women and slaves, were excluded from participating in politics and decision-making. Thus, the reality in the contemporary world is that the exclusion of the youth from participating in elections as candidates due for election into political office is a practical requirement for the realisation of a democratic system of government.

The second question and ambiguity are closely embedded in the first. Among a community, only a limited sub-set of persons is entitled to participate in governing and thus constitute another sense of the implied people (Dahl, 1989: 4). It therefore remains an unsatisfactorily decided question for the democratic theorists: “who ought to be a member of the demos?” (Dahl, 1989: 4). The question on who constitutes the demos has had different interpretations even among the ancient Greeks such that the *demos* has continuously been expanding in such ways that if the ancient Greeks that coined the term demos were present today, they could be questioning the legitimacy of what is today termed democracy and in particular the people. In particular, the franchise of Athens “were males of age eighteen or over, who could prove Athenian parentage on both sides. Women and, of course, slaves were permanently disqualified; aliens could only become citizens by special enactment of the Ecclesia or Popular Assembly, which used its powers of enfranchisement on rare occasions only” (Cary, 1927: 206).

Athenian democracy, as articulated above, would be viewed as narrow and undesirable since it is not inclusive. Applied as it was in Athens, it would be exclusive

to young women, thereby directly contradicting the principle of inclusivity, which makes democracy a desirable form of government. Again, questions on Athenian democracy would be about the kind of activities that the young males were relegated to. Therefore, there remains a need for a theory that allows all eligible citizens to participate in selecting candidates and to be among the possible candidates and ultimately elected political leaders.

Critique on Athenian democracy relating to the limited franchise discussed above points to the number of the disenfranchised as too big to be ignored. It has been argued that recent statistics reveal that the slave population in Athens constituted about one-third and the aliens about one-sixth of the total population (Sargenti, 1924 as cited in Ober, 2006). Dahl (2006) concurs and notes that while many today would deny the Athenian system of governance as undemocratic due to the exclusion of almost half or two-thirds of the adult population from participating, it remains a fact that the Athenians were the first to apply the word democracy to their polis. In concurrence with Ober (2008) and Dahl (2006), it would be anti-progress to try and measure the extent of democracy in Greek societies then, against what is being practised in the twenty-first century. Rather, it would suffice to understand the nature of democracy and the institutional arrangement used in Greek societies, including Athens, which made it a democracy, and see how modern societies can be modelled around that to ensure the equal and full participation of the eligible citizens, including youths. It is, therefore, important to appreciate Athenian democracy as the foundational basis for contemporary democracy, where modifications incorporating principles of inclusivity and representativeness are possible.

2.3 DEMOCRATIC THEORIES

Within the democratic discourse, the long-standing observation made by Dahl (2006) is that there are many democratic theories (Dahl, 2006: 1). These theories include, liberal democracy, classic pluralism, catallaxy, participatory, deliberative and radical pluralism (Cunningham, 2002). During the wave of the struggle for independence in Africa, some statesmen like Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, and Sekoure Toure, among others, argued for an African type of democracy. This section, therefore, deliberately discusses democratic elitism, African democracy, and participatory and

representative democracy to develop a new theory suited for youth participation, leading to representation in the national parliament.

2.3.2 PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

The classical philosophical and empirical case for participatory democracy can be traced back to Athenian democracy and the city-states. Athenian democracy entailed the direct participation of all eligible citizens in decision-making, an important normative aspect that makes it appealing for this study on youth participation in national parliaments.

The origins of participatory democracy date back to the 1960s, and specifically, the coinage of the concept "participatory democracy" appears to have emanated from Kaufman's call for 'participatory politics' in Human Nature and Participatory Politics (Mansbridge, 1995: 5; Hilmer, 2010: 45). This was at the height of student's power movements (to whom Kaufman was an advisor) that were taking place in the United States of America. The movements' aims were outlined in the document popularly known as the 'Port Huron Statement'. This document was prepared by radical students at the University of Michigan demanding participation within the university and other sites of governance within the broader society (Cunningham, 2002: 123). In the document[15] or statement produced by the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) movement (Elstub, 2018; Mansbridge, 1983), the main concern was space for partaking in decision-making. It was a call for participatory politics. It suffices therefore to state that the document prepared by the SDS served as the initial theoretical exposition of participatory democracy.

Interest in 'participation' dominated political science discourse and life in the United States of America during the 1960s and 1970s. Important works on participation that were written at the time included Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation (1969) and Pateman's Participation and Democratic Theory (1970). The latter work was the earliest comprehensive account of the theory of participatory democracy. Therefore, by the early 1970s, participatory democracy had evolved enough to be recognised as an independent theory of democracy (Hilmer, 2010: 45) which can be used as a framework of analysis for youth participation in elections as a pathway to their

[15] The Port Huran Statement drafted by members of the SDS in critique of the American society. It embodied an illustrative instance of how participatory democracy is practiced (Hauben 1995)

subsequent representation in national parliaments where they would actively influence the decision-making process.

Participatory democracy is aimed at nurturing active citizens who are not only recipients of the decisions made by the few but active participants in decision-making. In the political system, therefore, participatory democracy is concerned about citizen participation beyond electoral politics, which mainly centres on voting leadership into power. Citizen participation is never a burden but an essential element for the full development of individual capacities (Scafer, 1974: 495). Under participatory democracy, citizenship does not end with voting; rather, voting is just one of the preliminary democratic activities requiring the participation of eligible citizens. Decision-making is an integral element of citizenship. Youth participation beyond electoral politics, in particular, being voted into political office as leaders and or parliamentarians, is a key attribute of participatory democracy, which can be used to measure the democratic standing of countries, including Zimbabwe.

The invaluable significance of citizen participation was prominent in Pateman and the SDS document. Both Pateman and the SDS document identified an important subjective element of participatory democracy which makes it valuable as a form of the democratic theory. They point to the value of this kind of democracy in that it enables citizens to go through self-development and increases positive psychological consciousness such as the feeling of political efficacy (Hilmer, 2010; Pateman, 1970). This was a departure from the empirical democratic theory represented by Schumpeter (1942) and Downs (1957) whose contribution was that citizens lack the aptitude or predisposition to participate and democracy was better off this way (Elstub, 2018: 2). It is within the context of such dominant thinking that participatory democracy came in claiming that under the appropriate conditions, citizens have the ability and responsibility to engage successfully in democratic processes (Pateman, 1970; Macpherson, 1977). Similarly, this study upholds the democratic sentiment raised by participatory democrats that under good conditions, the youth, should and can participate effectively in elections and national parliaments.

The concern for members of the SDS was in the form of American democracy, which had ceased to exist. The statement took notice of the ways through which the

detachment of individuals from authority is the method employed to maintain people's lack of interest and indifference (Hauben, 1995: 3), it explains;

> Apathy starts as a personal experience; it is the sense of helplessness among everyday individuals and their acceptance of the overwhelming nature of events. However, this personal apathy is reinforced by the actual conditions in America, where there is a clear structural divide between people and power, as well as a disconnection from critical knowledge and decision-making authority. Just as the university shapes a student's lifestyle, major institutions foster environments where isolated individuals struggle futilely to comprehend the world and their place in it ("The Society Beyond" in the Port Huron Statement in Miller, 1987: 336).

The underlying causes of apathy are the objective reality on the ground then obtained in America now relatable to the Zimbabwean environment. In America, especially within the workplace, there was a growing disconnect between the upper class and the masses of workers who suffered and were exposed to depressed standards of living while experiencing a growing sense of powerlessness (Backrack and Botwinick, 1992: x). The increased gap between the few powerful elites and the many powerless people threatened the core of democracy in America.

Within the above context, participatory democracy was essential as a means not only for democratising the workplace for its sake but to transform the workplace into a place where a fairer distribution of power can be realised, fostering a more democratic political process overall (Backrack and Botwinick, 1992: x). This is important and reflective of the case of the youth in Zimbabwe where first, the apathy observed amongst the youth is being encouraged and perpetuated by the objective element or the situation on the ground such as "unemployment" (Chamunogwa, 2011) and the reluctance of the government and politicians to address this and many other problems causing the youth to live in abject poverty whilst feeling powerless to effect change in their lives and those around them. As such to the extent that apathy is observed among youth in Zimbabwe, it is caused by objective socio-economic challenges and the hegemonic tendencies of the political leaders who expect the youth and the general populace to accept them without holding them accountable. This sad reality can be changed when the youth are allowed to participate in decision-making.

The implications of the separation of people from power are such that decisions are made for and on behalf of the general populace without their involvement. This same scenario has inspired the ('Nothing About us without us[16]' movements) amongst the African youth. Thus, the personal disconnect between society and the youth in Zimbabwe is such that,

> The very separation of individuals from power, community, and the ability to aspire leads to democracy that lacks active public involvement. With a large portion of the population being both structurally and psychologically reluctant towards democratic institutions, these institutions themselves weaken and, in a vicious cycle, become less accessible to those few who genuinely desire to engage in social matters. The crucial democratic link between community and leadership, and among diverse elites, has been so distorted and corrupted that ineffective policies frequently go unchallenged (Miller, 1987: 336).

Experience shows that the challenge has persisted as evidenced by the decreased turnout during national and local elections (Hauben, 1995: 4). This has also been the trend reported by some scholars concerning youth participation in elections in Zimbabwe. The research by the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) (2015) revealed that although the vast majority of the population in Southern Africa including Zimbabwe, is under the age of 30, youths tend to be disengaged from the democratic life because they vote less, stand as candidates less and often remain under-represented in electoral managerial functions. Yet, no systematic studies have attempted to conceptualise this trend concerning the prevailing structural limitations that inhibit the participation of youth in elections and the national parliament in Zimbabwe.

Participatory democracy underscores the influence of the environment in shaping participatory behaviour. For the participatory democrats, the overall nature of a population is largely influenced by the socioeconomic structures within the community (Scafer, 1974: 496). It can be added here that the extent of youth participation in elections in Zimbabwe, is by and large a measure of the socioeconomic environment within which they are living. The apathy, disengagement, and cynicism among youths

[16] Origins of the phrase can be traced back to the South African disability right movement during the 1990s wherein disability activists sought to fight systemic oppression and have persons with disability being involved in making decisions that affect them (National Democratic Institute (NDI), 2022). Recently, the phrase was invoked by the youth represented by numerous organisations during the African Union Agenda 2063 Youth Summit in 2015 where they encouraged the AU to include them in decision making processes.

in Zimbabwe towards political activities such as voting is thus a function of the unresponsive and intolerant politics in the country. Under the right circumstances, the youth can equally vote and participate in political life effectively. Yet still, if youth participation is largely influenced by the context within which it occurs, it equally entails that youth can participate in decision-making institutions such as the national parliament so long the circumstances permit. Therefore, there remains a need to examine the Zimbabwean environment and establish the extent to which it influences the prospect of youth participation in the national parliament.

Participatory democratic theorists such as Pateman, in their attempts to underscore the importance of participation, distinguished between what they term “modes” and “sectors” of participation. According to democratic theorists, the participation sector refers to the physical location at which participation occurs (Hilmer, 2010: 46). On the other hand, the different forms of political participation that take place at the site are referred to as modes of participation. A sector can be within the civil, social, and economic domains. In Pateman’s study (1970)[17], the sector of participation was the professional environment, and areas of government authority at local and regional levels, as well as bureaucratic management. Thus, modes of participation vary to include deliberation, cooperative ownership and management, collective decision-making, and administration, among others. Although participatory democratic theorists did not allocate equal attention to both sectors and forms of participation, it is crucial to recognise that each of these elements is considered to be a fundamental side of the participatory theory (Hilmer, 2010: 46). Unlike Pateman’s sector of participation, which was the workplace, this study focuses on the national parliament as the physical location where youth participation should be examined as a pathway for inclusive decision-making aimed at improving their socio-economic well-being.

Pateman identified the workplace as the site for participatory democracy, while Macpherson calls for democratising the current conventional political structures, which have not been sufficiently democratised (1977). Macpherson sought a kind of participatory democracy that functions within a parliamentary or congressional

[17] Hilmer (2010) notes that from the ground-breaking work on Participatory democracy by Pateman (1970) the workplace has been recognised as a key area for democratisation, and often, participatory democracy and workplace democracy overlap. Nevertheless, the majority of theorists who focus on participatory democracy consider workplace democracy as just one of the various areas that can be democratised.

framework (Macpherson,[18] 1977 as cited in Hilmer, 2010: 46). On the question of how this objective can be fulfilled in the context of modern, large, and complex societies, Macpherson notes that; there must be some form of representative system, rather than a full direct system (as cited in Hilmer, 2010: 46). This view contradicts the idea by other participatory democrats that representation does not augur well with the participatory claims. In such quarters, participatory democracy has been taken as direct participation (Parvin, 2020; Cohen, 2000; Held, 1996). Yet, over time, the participatory turn has given birth to various heterogeneous participatory practices (Bherer & Breux, 2012), some of which accord citizens a triad role in the democratic process. Citizens can thus be "*participants*[19] in participatory settings; some individuals serve as representatives with formal roles in these venues, while others advocate for them in additional public settings (Sawald, 2010 as cited in Wampler, 2012: 2).

The above participatory view from Macpherson is relevant to this study and has a representative orientation. Macpherson observed that the process would result in a "pyramidal system with direct democracy at every level above that" (as cited in Hilmer, 2010: 46). Although Macpherson still noticed the challenges that could beset such a system just like the other participatory practices, he obtained optimism in the fact that the pyramid is based on a strong basis of direct democracy within the community and at work. He thus concluded that even though it is true that as one ascends the pyramid, there's a decrease in democratic involvement, the system still retains direct control by citizens at the base of the pyramid. This view then brings attention to the notion of representation discussed in the section that follows.

Therefore, an intrinsic feature of participatory democracy that makes it relevant to the study on youth participation in the national parliament in Zimbabwe is its emphasis on participation and representation in decision-making. This inherent feature of participatory democracy is evident in the common understanding of this process among members of the SDS. Tom Hayden, a member of the SDS defined participatory democracy as;

> Engaging actively. Citizenship. Creating history…Voting alone is insufficient. A democracy characterised by apathetic citizens receiving information from a single, dominant media source and casting votes occasionally is fundamentally

[18] In *The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy*.
[19] Emphasis given in Wampler (2012)

> weak, representing a waning form of democracy. We believed in the necessity of allowing individuals to become whole and to play an active role in history rather than merely existing as passive subjects. Our primary emphasis was on participatory democracy, both as an inherent goal and as a way to facilitate change (Miller, 1987: 144).

Flacks (1996: 397-398) notes that at the core of participatory democracy lies the idea that individuals should have a say in the decisions that influence their lives. Consequently, the conception of citizenship should be extended beyond the traditional domain to all institutions. However, it should be emphasised that such an understanding of citizenship still warrants attention in the context of youth participation in national parliaments. While acknowledging the importance of extending citizenship beyond the political sphere, it should first be ascertained whether the vital decision institutions presently reflect the inclusion of the relevant stakeholders responsible for making decisions on behalf of society. Evidence from most African countries, including Zimbabwe, shows less participation of youth in national parliaments.

Another essential feature of participatory democracy closely related to the above is that this kind of democracy has the potential to reduce socio-economic inequalities and, consequently, be a more substantive democracy (Macpherson, 1977: 94). Further, Macpherson (1977: 94) identified a 'vicious cycle' on the causal relationship perpetuating socio-economic disparities in engagement in politics. He noted that the less certain groups, like the youth as in this study, engaging in politics limits their ability to organise and express their demands effectively. As a result of this, the decision-making process would be dominated by the privileged socio-economic groups who, in the case of Zimbabwe, usually are the freedom fighters, whilst the youth or 'born frees' constitute the less economically and politically affluent. This is supported by Oosterom and Pswarayi (2014), who observed that the term 'born-free' is a derogatory name given to young people meant to emphasise their absence in the fight for the country's independence. Similarly, Jaji (2020: 78) observed that the post-independent Zimbabwean political and economic environment is controlled by elderly men thereby leaving many youths apathetic, hopeless, and resigned. Macpherson (1977) thus argues that usually there may be little or no interest among the privileged social groups to protect the interests of other groups, they may restrict such groups from participating. The only solution that Macpherson identified is more democratic participation than what is available (1977: 100) and what would follow would be that

improved participation would be reciprocal to an upsurge in participation and vice versa.

More recently, Ackerman (2004: 447) as part of the deepening democratic engagement which can be considered an extension to participatory democracy called for “co-governance” involves engaging social actors in the main functions of the government. This view gains support from the study conducted by McGee *et al.* (2003) on the legal that promote engaging local governance. Among the numerous avenues cited by that study and relevant to this study is the approach whereby the current representative framework becomes more inclusive with the implementation of quotas for groups that have been historically marginalised. These studies affirm the importance and relevance of participatory democracy even in the present democratic discourse, thereby serving as a foundation for the current study on youth political participation in Zimbabwe.

While the benefits and importance of participatory democracy are widely documented in literature, both classical and recent, they also have been subject to criticism. Arguments from some quarters are that participation can be subject to abuse where it can easily be captured by the elites, thereby ending up as a “new tyranny” (Cooke & Kothari, 2001). On the other hand, Houtzgar (2003) (as cited in Gaventa, 2006: 16) contends that proponents of participation have an immature view of power because participation has not managed to confront challenging political issues, establish party structures, and mobilise advocacy for demands. Other critiques question the actual participants in the recent democratic spaces that have opened up, also asking the extent to which such spaces can be made more inclusive. While proceeding with participatory democracy as a theoretical guide for this study, two important issues are borrowed from Gaventa (2004). The first point is that while this study is concerned about youth participation in the national parliament of Zimbabwe as the key legislative institution, it still acknowledges that, “Not all spaces for participation can become spaces for real change…Instead, spaces are infused with and shaped by power dynamics that influence who has access, who can share knowledge and perspectives, and who reaps the rewards” (Gaventa, 2004: 1). Implied here is the notion that youth participation may not be the panacea to the social and economic challenges that youth faces, because the sites for participation may still exhibit exclusionary tendencies

which may affect the youth. The mere candidature of youth for elections in Zimbabwe is not enough if there remain legislative and institutional barriers that constrict the prospects for youth elections in the national parliament. Therefore, a participatory democracy with safeguards is a potential framework for countering the development of a “new tyranny, " ensuring that youth participation ensures their representation in national parliaments. The second point that is borrowed from Gaventa (2004) is a participatory view, which encompasses the processes of representation, where certain individuals act as intermediaries for others in policymaking, frequently relying on assertions of legitimacy (Gaventa, 2004: 1). Modern democracy does not allow for the direct involvement of individuals in shaping decision-making processes. Therefore, youth representation in parliament is equally important as it fulfils the democratic principle of inclusion.

Focusing on the national parliament as a sector of participation and examining the prospects of youth election to parliament developed a new theory on youth participation. This theory uses the national parliament as a sector of participation where four main political activities are crucial for understanding the prospects of youth election into the National Parliament.

The study aims to provide a theoretical contribution to answering the question of how to elect more youths into the Zimbabwean national parliament. Based on participatory democracy, the study takes Zimbabwe's national parliament as a participation sector where youth representation should be increased. The study's contribution is to the development of a participatory democracy with safeguards and opportunities for the election of youth into the national parliament in Zimbabwe. This participatory democracy with safeguards for youth participation is used both as a theoretical extension of participatory democracy and a contextualised approach aimed at answering the research question; how to elect more youth into national parliament in Zimbabwe?

2.3.1 DEMOCRATIC ELITISM

The elitist theory dominated social sciences during the 19th and early 20th centuries (Chandel, 2021: 3790). The theory's critical exponents included Vilfredo Pareto, Gaetano Mosca, and Robert Michels. The underlying assumption of the elite theory is the notion that at all times, society is characterised by a minority group of people with

a relatively disproportionate high quantity of resources in their hands, imposing themselves on the masses who lack such resources (Sola, 2000 as cited in Campati, 2022). Classical elite theorists pointed to a gap between political leaders and democratic ideals in noting that- the notion of a government by the people is futile; instead, reality points to "an elite-dominated "democracy" as the practical reality of societies (Best and Higley, 2010: 3). Ideologically, democracy and elites were viewed as inimical to one another. Hence, their cohabitation was viewed as awkward (Porter, 1965).

Subsequently, Schumpeter's theory of competitive democracy, popularly known as 'democratic elitism[20]' sought to reconcile democracy with elites (Best and Higley, 2010: 3). Accordingly, Schumpeter defined democracy as a method for making political decisions where individuals (political leaders and elites) gain the authority to make choices through a competition for the public's vote (1942: 269). This understanding of democracy opposes the perspective of democracy as a "way of life" or "type of society", instead, it is seen as a "system for selecting and legitimising governments" (Elliot, 1994: 1).

With a bias toward the capitalist system, Schumpeter argued that "Democracy mirrors capitalism." He opined that the vital actors in a democracy are the leaders and elites, with voters being the citizen-consumers who select the leaders and officials to oversee them (Best and Higley, 2010: 4). In a democracy, the responsibility of the populace is to create a government while the chosen leaders and elites retain the autonomy to make decisions. In particular, he stressed that the electorate must understand that after they have chosen a candidate, engaging in political affairs becomes the responsibility of that individual, not theirs (Schumpeter, 1942: 290).

The practice of citizen participation bears a minimal role under democratic elitism. This view is in line with Schumpeter's notion of democracy, which can be summed up as people's opportunity to accept and reject the individuals who are meant to govern them (Schumpeter, 1947). Dahl concurs with this view of democracy by adding that the essential political, economic, and social choices in liberal societies are determined by "small groups of individuals" (Dahl, 1956). The significant reasons brought forward for

[20] In his theory of democracy, Schumpeter does not mention elites, rather he conceptualizes democracy as an electoral contest between leaders of oligarchic political parties (Bealy, 1996: 320).

elite rule include first, the reality of contemporary societies wherein the majority are politically unorganised, fragmented, and passive (Scafer, 1974: 493). Secondly, it was argued that the general population lacks political skills, and Schumpeter opines that the masses can only do a political stampede (1947). Accordingly, the only conceivable activity that the people or the masses should be allowed to do is voting for the leadership. Consequently, beyond elections, citizens do not have any political activity to do other than follow the tide of the decisions being made for them by the leaders.

The dominant thinking dominating liberal political thought from Locke through Schumpeter to Dahl is the expectation that active participation only comes from the dissatisfied citizens in the political community (Scafer, 1974: 294). Democratic elitism, therefore …

> posits that the worth of the democratic system for everyday people ought to be evaluated by how much the system's "outputs", such as safety, services, and material assistance, benefit them. Following this rationale, the more an individual can receive benefits from the system's outputs without having to engage in the political process on the input and demand side, the better their situation (Bachrach, 1967: 95).

The assumptions above are based on first, a democratic system that delivers goods and services to its citizenry including the youth**.** The democratic system assists in analysing how the youth as the future leaders and longer-term service beneficiaries are critical in establishing the policies for providing public goods and services for the socio-economic well-being of the citizenry. Secondly, it assumes that the political elite is better placed to articulate the needs of the people. This can only work to the extent that citizens remain satisfied with the system's outputs. Yet the reality of humanity is that what might be perceived as the rightful needs of the people by the elite may not match what would be expected. In so far as this is true, there is therefore need for a kind of democracy that allows for the participation of the majority, or at least their representatives for the correct diagnosis of problems facing different societal groups and the subsequent articulation of their interests. Participatory democracy therefore is fundamental in addressing the shortcomings of decision-making by tiny minorities. Unlike the one-dimensional view of democracy under the elitist view, participatory democracy presents a two-dimensional view of democratic citizenship which gives value to the democratic process and the products it delivers (Scafer, 1974 494).

Critique of the elitist view of democracy came from champions of direct democracy, including Peter Bachrach and Carole Pateman (1970), among other critics. One of the perceived weaknesses of elitist democracy is the novel depiction of voters as compliant and passive actors. At the same time, the political leaders and elites are viewed as responsible and creative actors (Best and Higley, 2010: 5). Schumpeter's silence on how individuals are chosen to participate in elections and how party primaries are conducted makes his theory of democracy "too procedural and thin" (Diamond, 2008: 20). Thus, the major weakness of the theory has been summed up by Walker's (1966) observation that, the theory positions the citizen in a passive role as a target of political action; they only exert influence over policy decisions after the fact during national elections.

Notwithstanding the above critique of democratic elitism, its contribution to this study is the supposition of the existence of an elite group and the masses, with the former constituting the political leaders and the latter being led. In Zimbabwe, the existence of these two groups is evident, where the nationalist leaders, who are now the elderly, not only have access to material goods but also occupy political offices. On the other hand, the masses, including the youth, lack material benefits and are strategically excluded from occupying leadership positions. This has been confirmed through literature where youth participation does not go beyond voting (See Literature Review Section, Chapter 1). However, elitist tendencies breed discontent, which might be disruptive. For instance, following Mugabe's prolonged rule in Zimbabwe spanning over three decades, the military which used to assist in perpetuating his rule together with the masses went to the streets prompting his resignation. Had the issue not been handled better, or had Mugabe tried to use any force to counter the protests, violence could have ensued. This example shows the shortcomings of democratic elitism. In that respect, there is a need for another theory of democracy to inform the Zimbabwean governance system other than the elitist theory.

In line with the Zimbabwean experience outlined above, Rhodes-Purdy and Rosenblatt (2023: 241) argued that empirical evidence on the consequences of elitism usually results in mass antipathy towards a political system that fuels populist revolts. Therefore, there is a need to establish a more realistic theoretical framework that accords primacy to equality and participation. These principles are important for the

inclusion and participation of youth in elections as parliamentary candidates and the prospects for their election into the national Parliament.

2.3.3 AFRICAN DEMOCRACY

While the existence of the concept and practice of democracy is widely accepted, there have been some insinuations of a context-specific democracy in the form of African democracy. Since this study uses Zimbabwe as a case study on youth participation, it is important to examine African democracy and consider its relevance to the analysis of youth participation in the National Parliament.

The democracy movement in Africa can be considered at two levels. The first level relates to the pre-colonial African societies as democratic entities whose style of governance was determined by the local environment and cultural realities (Martin, 2012). According to Diop (1996), to the extent that democracy can be understood as a process of electing political leaders that promotes participation and accountability, it can be argued that some African societies have long exhibited some democratic practices. Cheeseman and Sishuwa (2021: 708-709) observed three essential practices in some African societies, in tandem with democratic practices. These include some degree of political participation where decisions were reached through consensus, political representation and some elements of accountability. In terms of political representation, some of the West African societies, such as Songhai and Yoruba, had representatives in the King's council coming from the villages, states and provinces (McKissack & McKissack, 1994). Similarly, representation of various clans and lineage groups and, in some cases, women were institutionalised in these pre-colonial African societies. Therefore, in line with this study, it can be argued that youth participation and representation are long-standing traditions in African societies which not only demonstrate the existence of democratic systems of governance in Africa but point to the relevance of continued discussion on youth participation and representation in post-independent African countries including Zimbabwe.

While some democratic practices were observed in pre-colonial African societies, it can be argued that not all societies were organised according to the above-mentioned democratic practices. Furthermore, according to Freund (2016), in terms of political participation, some institutionalised forms of participation were dominated by older and wealthy men.

The other level through which the notion of African democracy can be analysed is the theoretical perspective. Some of the prominent theorists on African democracy include, Ayittey (2006), Ake (2000) and Osabu-Kle (2000). For these theorists, the starting point is that liberal democracy does not sit well with the communal focus of African political identity (Cheeseman and Sishuwa, 2021: 706). According to Ake (2000: 5)

> The main barrier to establishing democracy in Africa is our neglect of the cultural backdrop of democratic processes and practices. We often mistakenly equate the values and principles of democracy with particular historical instances of democratic practice. We consistently attempt to duplicate the established institutions that already exist instead of innovatively diversifying to create new institutional forms and practices suitable to our situations while still embracing the values and principles of democracy.

Similarly, Osablu-Kle, in the book Compatible Democracy, called for the adoption of a democracy that is in harmony with the African cultural context, as it can create the political conditions necessary for successful development in Africa (Osabu-Kle, 2000, as cited in Martin, 2012: 130). Like Ake's (1996), compatible cultural democracy is crucial for the distribution of resources among Africans.

Regarding youth in the context of African democracy, the African theorists (Ake and Osabu-Kle) acknowledged the importance of youth in governance processes. According to Ake (1993), among the four characteristics suitable for democracy in Africa is a democracy of integration that aims to be as inclusive as possible, featuring a legislative body that includes representation from various nationality groups and mass organisations, such as youth and women's groups, in addition to trade unions. In the same perspective, and echoing Nkrumah's Pan-Africanist perspective, Osabu-Kle called for the establishment of a Pan-African Youth Organisation for interaction and the exchange of views (Martin, 2012: 133). While Ake, was explicit in terms of youth representation in the legislature, it is not clear what mandate Osabu-Kle's PAYO could achieve in relation to youth participation and representation in national parliament. However, despite these differences, of youth participation and representation in parliament as examined in this study is one that theoretically has a foundation in the African discourse on democracy.

On the other hand, there has been arguments for the adoption of liberal democracy in Africa. Scholars such as Busia (1967) argued that the central principles of democracy

are universal and can be applied in any culture, including Africa. Consequently, all the freedoms central to a democratic system and the attendant institutions can be applied in Africa. It can, however, be argued here that while the principles of democracy can be institutionalised in any culture, that must be done within the institutional framework designed by the people within that society. Such was the argument given by the pro-African theoreticians such as Ake. To take elections as what Busia does is to provide the democratic project in Africa a dead beginning because such a practice is foreign to the continent. The key, however, from Busia is the notion that liberty and the entitlement to engage in decision-making processes are a fundamental democratic practice which is universal. Therefore, youth participation in national parliaments is a universal practice that can be implemented in any culture, including Zimbabwe.

The perspectives on African democracy are fundamental to this study because, as outlined in Ake's writing, the fundamental of democracy should not be the over-emphasis on abstract political rights but on economic rights and material betterment (2000: 7). This resonates with this study on youth participation in Zimbabwe where the betterment of youth's lives is the primary driving force for their involvement in elections and the quest for representation in the national parliament. For instance, in reference to the 2018 elections, Bratton and Masunungure (2018: 4-5) pointed out that youth unemployment is a pressing issue for the youth such that if they are to vote, they will vote for the candidates with a compelling communication regarding how to provide employment opportunities.

Additionally, African democracy is crucial in underscoring culture and how it influences democratic practices for youth participation. Participation occurs in an environment imbued by cultural expectations and social construction of roles, which can either facilitate or hinder youth representation in national parliament. For instance, gerontocracy, is a cultural set up which honours the elderly at the expense of the youth. Jaji (2020) underscored the influence of gerontocracy in Zimbabwe and how it influences the creation of a restrictive political environment which is toxic to youth participation. Gerontocratic systems are common in Africa and subsequently influences how youths participate in elections and or national parliament.

While important for the above-outlined assumptions which are key in examining youth political participation, first it can be argued that the theoretical assumptions on African

democracy did not see the light of day due to the highly political and economic integration of the continent in world affairs. Consequently, liberal democracy triumphed. Africa, therefore, imported wholesale Western institutions and processes of governance, such as periodic elections and multi-partyism, among other institutions and processes (Osaghe, 1991). Secondly, African democracy remained in abstraction in the theoreticians' discussion and could not find support and implementation from the political leaders. Impliedly, no tangible contributions remain on how Ake's youth inclusion and representation can be achieved to improve youth's lives. Therefore, this study proposes participatory democracy with safeguards for youth participation to realise the goal of including youth in the national parliament in Zimbabwe.

2.4 CONCEPTUALISING YOUTH

The term 'youth' evokes and provokes both political theory and practice. For some, the term calls up notions of energy, life, optimism, adventure, and the future. In contrast, for others, it represents easy recruits in armed rebel and insurgent movements, vulnerable, dependent, and marginalised groups (Abbink, 2005: 1), and a lost generation' (O'Brien, 1996), victims of oppressive regimes and pessimistic individuals helplessly tossed by the gigantic waves of poverty, unemployment with no agency and place in today's societies. Therefore, it is not surprising that 'youth' as a concept has attracted scholarly attention from across the divide, including development practitioners, psychologists, and political scientists. The key point of departure for this study on 'youth' is that the term is socially constructed, such that any understanding of the term has implications for the space and roles the youths can assume in the democratic process. This section is preoccupied with the question: What does it mean to be a youth in Zimbabwean electoral politics?

Central to the study of youth in African politics is the key question posed by Abbink (2005: 6); 'When is one young in Africa?' Similarly, crucial to this notion is when youth starts and finishes. The results would be unsatisfactory if behaviours and attitudes were used to define this category. This is because there are instances where the behaviour of the adults may be construed as 'childish', and young people may also exhibit 'adult-like' perceptions and actions (Howard, *et al.* 2002), thereby rendering distinctions based on behaviours vacuous. There are also prospects for extension of the youth phase in Africa in cases where some sections of the youth fail to meet the

socially ascribed responsibilities due to the incessant socio-economic hardships they would face, despite their ages, which may be within the youth range (Olaiya, 2014).

Several contending definitions of 'youth' can be understood based on age and social and political identity (Oosterom & Pswarayi, 2014: 13). For statistical purposes, the United Nations defines youth as persons between the ages of 15 and 24. The African Youth Charter takes youth as persons between 15 and 35 (African Youth Charter 2006). Similarly, the Zimbabwean Constitution and the National Youth Policy adopt the aged-based definition of youth stipulated in the African Youth Charter. Based on age, in Zimbabwe, one stands to be elected as a member of the National Assembly if he or she is at least 21 years of age (Section 125 (1) (b) Constitution of Zimbabwe. Using the age criterion, one would expect many youth to be Members of the National Assembly in parliament in Zimbabwe. However, youth is a socially constructed phenomenon where relations of power and control affect it (Abbink, 2005: 5; Oesterom & Pwsarayi, 2014). The youth are frequently viewed as 'individuals in a state of development rather than fully developed' (Honwana, 2005), not considered complete and equal citizens.

Youthhood is a stage where individuals navigate the intricate dynamics of personal and socio-economic transformations as they move from the reliance of childhood to the independence of adulthood (UNECA, 2017: 4). Honwana (2012: 165) suggests the concept of "waithood" is used in Africa to illustrate youth hood, representing transitional phase between childhood and adulthood. This idea of waithood indicates that young people face delays in accessing the experiences and resources necessary to become 'social adults and full-fledged citizens.' These delays are attributed to 'endemic poverty and chronic unemployment stemming from ineffective neoliberal economic policies, poor governance, and political turmoil (Honwana, 2012).

Cultural factors are also imperative in the understanding of the spaces that African youth occupy in the political terrain within the continent. Some cultures in Africa place the elderly in sacrosanct positions where they are considered to be correct always, until even when younger people demonstrate more knowledge compared to their seniors, they are not taken seriously (Adeleke, 2017: 6). These cultural perceptions are intentionally or unintentionally experienced within the political domain, with the effect of a larger share of the youth population without political pedigree (Adeleke,

2017: 6). Given such cultural barriers, it becomes difficult for the youth to break and ascend the political ladder.

Adebayo (2018: 149) believes that election into political office in Africa requires political connections mostly built over decades and extending across multiple ethno-religious divides. Unfortunately, youths in Africa do not possess such connections which highly determine electoral outcomes in the continent (Adeleke, 2017: 149). In Africa, the fact has remained that despite being the continent with the highest youth population, the societies have been run predominantly as gerontocracies (Adeleke, 2017: 147). The youth thus remain marginalised in politics and consequently, that is one of the reasons why there have not been cases of the shift of authority from the elders to the younger generation.

In post-independent Zimbabwe, the youth narrative has been one which has been determined by the powerful actors through the labeling of the youth (Oosterom, 2019). One common and prominent label given to the youth is the 'Born-free', a derogatory name that refers to a generation born post-independence that is criticised for treating independence and freedom as if they are inherent (Mate, 2012 as cited in Oosterom, 2019). The 'Born-frees' under the late former President of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, were depicted as being vulnerable to external influence, as demonstrated by their backing and affiliation with the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) (Mate, 2012 as cited in Oosterom, 2019). On the other spectrum, are the 'good youth' who are patriotic and support the liberation ideology. Such a narrative depicts youth in two opposing stances, either one is for or against the ruling party.

Jaji in a recent article published in 2020, *Youth Masculinities in Zimbabwe's Contested Gerontocratic Political Space*, builds on the narrative discussed above. She identifies two groups of youth in the Zimbabwean political terrain. Her point of departure is that the Zimbabwean post-independent political terrain is harmful and limiting, resulting in a sense of apathy, hopelessness, and resignation among many young individuals (2020: 78). On the one hand, are young men who establish their authority in Zimbabwe's political landscape by creating methods to integrate older masculinities to undermine them (Jaji, 2020: 78). These youths who primarily are members in the ruling party ZANU PF, reduce the age disparity and strive for significance by aligning and prioritising their interests with those of the ruling party which in return award them with

material rewards and even jobs in the government (Jaji, 2020: 79). The effect of such a strategy is that these youths in effect continue their dominance and isolation by being submissive to the older men (Jaji, 2020: 79).

From the politicians' perspective, they view the above section of youth as their pawns who assist them in entrenching their domination. Such a goal is achieved through what Hodzi (2014: 57) terms an ‘exclusion by inclusion’ strategy, where political parties have youth league wings, which, in essence, is their strategy of ‘marginalising the youth in institutionalised politics’ (Ndhlovu, 2021: 1).

The other section of youth identified by Jaji (2020) are young men who have taken masculinity roles that challenge and subvert gerontocracy. This youth critique presents that the prevailing gerontocracy in Zimbabwe lacks wisdom and significance, which are qualities that historically provided legitimacy to the system in pre-colonial societies (Jaji, 2020). The penalty for taking such a stance is that these youths are viewed as threats and are not given the rewards given to the loyalists.

As shown in the foregoing discussion on Zimbabwe, youth is a socially constructed terrain whose understanding is shaped by powerful actors reflecting historical and economic connotations. Nhapi and Mathende (2019) assert, "Politicians in Zimbabwe tend to offer minimal political opportunities to young people and confine them to their youth league structures.” Within such a discourse, the age-based definition is relevant only to the extent that it serves the interests of the politicians. This can be supported by cases where leadership in the ZANU-PF youth wing was held by Absolom Sikhosana and Pupurai Togarepi, aged 68 and 54 in 2017 and 2019, respectively (Daily News, 2019). Jaji (2020: 83) concludes that youth is a matter of political positioning rather than age in Zimbabwe.

Although the above narratives help understand the issues related to youth and politics in Zimbabwe, they are insufficient. While it has been acknowledged that youth retain the ability and agency to position themselves in politics in the country, there have not been any studies that examine such agency in terms of formal institutions such as the National Parliament. There are cases of youths who contested as Members of parliament during the 2018 and 2023 elections as self-standing candidates and members of political parties, including the two primary political groups in the country,

ZANU-PF and CCC. These include Chimina Livingstone, MP for Chiundura constituency (won the 2018 elections), Fadzayi Mahere (contested as an independent in 2018 and lost but in 2023, she resented the CCC and won), Joana Mamombe, MP for Harare West (won both the 2018 and 2023 elections) among others. Also, through the women's proportional representation system introduced by the constitution in 2013, Tionei Melody Dziva, 29, became a member of parliament in Zimbabwe (iKnowPolitics, 2013). As such, there is a need for a study that systematically examines youth political participation in Zimbabwe and the prospects for their election into the National Parliament.

2.5 PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY WITH SAFEGUARDS FOR YOUTH PARTICIPATION

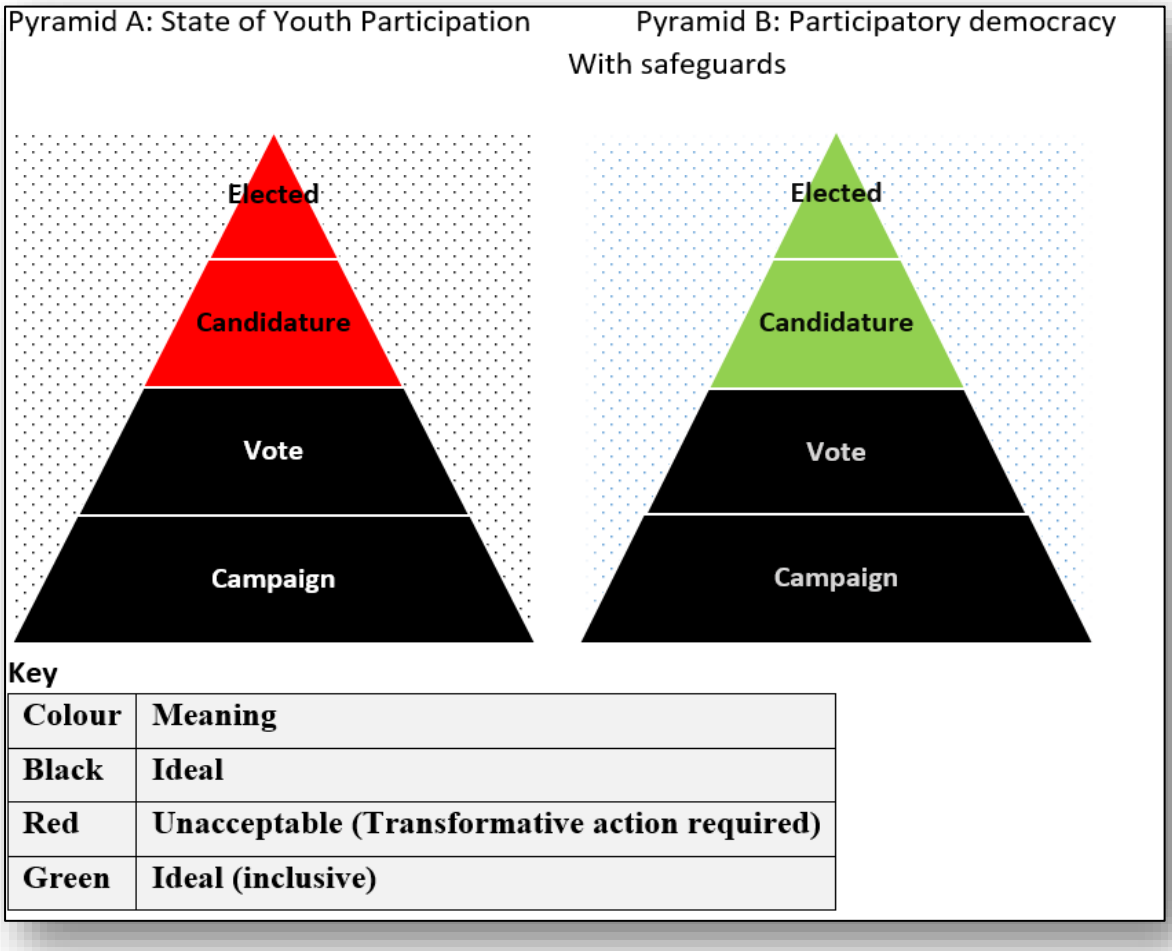
As introduced in the preceding section, participatory democracy with safeguards for youth participation is a contribution from this study. This theory is used as a framework for answering the issue of how to choose more youth in the national parliament in Zimbabwe.

While Pateman's (1970) theory focused on the workplace, it has some limitations when using parliament as the participation sector. The major weakness is that the workplace can allow for direct participation of the workers in decision-making processes. Also, participation in the workplace is not tiered as compared to participation in electoral processes. Similarly, while Macpherson emphasised the need for democratising the already existing traditional political institutions such as parliament, which is the sector for participation in this study, again, he did not outline the key political activities which can result in the representativeness of the institutions. Macpherson's approach thus falls short of detailing how and what activities the youth should also be involved in to ensure representativeness in parliament. Thus, the participatory democracy with safeguards for youths fills this gap.

According to the participatory democratic theory with safeguards for youth participation developed in this study, youth participation occurs on four tiers. Yet, like a pyramid, their participation is concentrated at the base, where it is confined to campaigning and voting. At the top tiers of the pyramid, as reflected in global statistics on youth

participation in IPU reports[21], youth stand less as candidates in elections. Subsequently, few youths are in the National Parliament. The pyramid below shows this in terms of the activities that youth mainly participate in;

Figure 2.1 Youth Political Participation



Key

Colour	Meaning
Black	Ideal
Red	Unacceptable (Transformative action required)
Green	Ideal (inclusive)

Source: Author's Compilation

The Pyramids above presents two first, the empirical case of youth participation in Zimbabwe and the ideal scenario. From pyramid A and confirmed by literature (Afrobarometer, 2022), youths' political participation in Zimbabwe mainly revolves around campaigning and voting. In terms of political campaigns, it has overly been emphasised that the "demographic superiority" of the youth in Africa makes the youth vulnerable to meagre rewards that politicians throw their way in return for them being recruited to do the dirty work of politics which entails politically motivated violence and

[21] As referenced in Chapter 1, IPU Report (2021), "Only 2.6 per cent of the world's parliamentarians are under age, a small increase of 0.4 per cent since 2018."

protests mostly during campaigns (Chitukutu, 2014; Oosterom & Pswarayi, 2014; O'Brien, 1996). Youths are easily recruited for these activities due to poverty and the high number of unemployed. Even some youths who are still going to school or tertiary institutions become victims to these recruitments. Disillusionment with the unsatisfactory socio-economic environment affects youth voting patterns. Yet, at least, it is another activity they wish to participate in in their numbers if the conditions are right. The empirical reality as shown in Pyramid A is that while the number of youths who gets elected into parliament and represent others should be minimal compared to the actual, it seems to be non-existent. Several studies showed concern on the number of youth candidates (Musarurwa, 2019; ZESN, 2023). Therefore, the new theory represented by Pyramid B, shows that youths must equally be visible at all the levels resulting in their equitable representation in the national parliament.

Pyramid B represents meaningful youth participation that can occur through the adoption of participatory democracy with safeguards for youth participation. Emphasis is placed on youth participation beyond campaigns and voting. Youth participation or candidature in elections is important as a means to their election into political office (the highest tier of the pyramid). However, as depicted in Pyramid B, youth participation beyond voting occurs in an ecosystem of rules, beliefs, attitudes, and institutions such as political parties, which either facilitate or hinder youth's candidature and subsequent election into political office. Therefore, the ecosystem within which participation occurs is at the top tier of Pyramid B (candidature and election into political office) is filtered by institutional arrangements such as political parties, electoral laws, and cultural beliefs, which impact the prospects of youth election into the national parliament. These filters are a common political and organisational arrangement because the elevation of youths to the top tiers of the pyramid implies power transfer from other social groups (in this case, the older generation) to the youth. To circumvent these filters, there is a need to establish safeguards for youth participation. Establishing safeguards is vital as a bedrock for selecting youth as candidates in elections and subsequent elections into political office. Therefore, there remains a need for a holistic approach to adopting safeguards that address a host of structural and institutional barriers to youth participation and representation in the National Parliament.

2.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed democracy as a principle of social organisation that has the potential of fulfilling the principle of inclusion and representativeness. These principles are important in fostering youth political participation with a potential of youth representation in national parliament. However, theoretically, even from Athens where democracy originated, democracy has been characterised by compromises. These compromises relate to fundamental questions on the demos, who to be included in the demos and the kind of participation that the demos should engage in. As such, the theories of democracy such as democratic elitism, participatory democracy and African democracy as discussed in the chapter revealed fundamental aspects that have a bearing on youth participation.

Democratic elitism, traced back to the works of Schumpeter underscores democracy as nothing more than a process of electing political leaders. Based on capitalist assumptions, society is made up of two classes, the elites and the masses. The elites are better placed to lead than the people to be ruled because they do not have the ability and experience to lead. The citizens can only participate through voting and in some instance protest activities only. Thus, in this instance, youth are excluded from decision-making because the elite in such a society are the better placed leaders. Because of the limited political activities, the citizenry can do, participatory democracy arose around the 1960s calling for more spaces in different sectors of participation such as the workplace and, schools among others as spaces for participation. Participatory democracy emphasises participation in decision-making processes as a means for addressing inequalities. While Pateman called for participatory democracy in the workplace, Macpherson called for the democratisation of traditional political institutions such as national parliament. As such, this study also adopts parliament as a sector for youth participation. However, while emphasising participation in decision making, participatory democracy is silent about the processes that takes place in the case of institutional participation in national parliament such as candidate selection processes and the political economy of elections and how that can influence youth participation.

More so, African democracy as considered in the chapter pointed to fundamental aspects related to youth political participation. First the existence of African democracy is questionable where some scholars trace it to precolonial African societies,

theoretically, it is based on the theoretical underpinnings of scholars such as Ake and Osabu-Kle. Theoretically, African democracy is not western democracy and is unique in its emphasis on the cultural implications on the social organisation of society. African democracy theorists pointed to the importance of culture and the development of institutions that reflects African history. At the centre of African democracy, youths play a crucial role in governance processes including the need for their representation in national parliament. However, it can be argued that, empirically, African democracy never saw the light of the day, hence the continued need to study the prospects for youth election into National Parliament.

Due to the theoretical shortcomings of the theories discussed, the chapter proposed a participatory democracy with safeguards for youth participation as a development of participatory democracy and a framework for youth inclusion in national parliament. Theoretically, participatory democracy with safeguards first presents a hierarchy of key political activities leading to representation in national parliament. These activities start from campaigning, voting, candidature and elected officials. Campaigning and voting are on the lowest rungs of the pyramid. This is where most of the youth are concentrated. Significantly, at these lower stages, these activities reveal democratic elitist tendencies where democracy is only about selecting leaders thereby denying the youth the 'power to' influence decisions that affects their lives. Therefore, true democracy that is inclusive can be achieved when more youth becomes candidates and are subsequently elected into political office. This participation is what was envisaged in participatory democracy as initially defined in the 1960s and now amplified in this chapter by a pointer to the specific political activities that matters and ensures that youth are included and represented in National Parliaments.

However, since participation takes place in an ecosystem of rules, beliefs and institutions, the chapter conceptualised youth in Zimbabwe. With a nationalist background and liberation history, youth are either identified as 'one' of us or the 'other' (Born frees) by the ZANU-PF party. Subsequently, this has had an impact on youth political participation. As such, the safeguards proposed in the study should be holistic first, acknowledging the influence of identity on political participation. The next chapter discusses the electoral system in Zimbabwe as a key legal instrument that determines

electoral outcomes. The chapter sought to establish the influence of the electoral system on youth participation.

CHAPTER 3
ELECTORAL SYSTEMS AND ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE FROM 1979 TO 2013
3.1 INTRODUCTION

Youth political participation does not take place in a vacuum. It is shaped by the structural and legal rules governing participation. Opportunities for the youth to participate in politics are shaped by the broader ecosystem consisting of laws, institutions and, practices which form the environment shaping citizen participation, including that of the youth (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2018: 38). The chapter examines electoral systems as a fundamental legal construct that shapes electoral outcomes as its objective. It has been argued that the kind of electoral system influences the representativeness of the ensuing Parliaments, whether all or some of the social groups within society would be represented. Reeve and Ware (1992: 2) concur by pointing out that the electoral system used is fundamental in determining the chosen electorate. One stands a better chance of being elected under one system and not in the other. Implied from this is that youths as a social group has a better chance of being elected into office under one electoral system and not the others.

The chapter discussed electoral systems in general and focused on the electoral system used in Zimbabwe from 1980 to 2013. This was done to establish the dominant trend in the country's electoral system, electoral outcomes, and the place occupied by the youths during this period, which the Mnangagwa government seeks to dissociate itself from.

Elections, just as electoral systems, are essential due to their perceived contribution to the democratic project. Elections first are part of a process of determining leadership, either its change or continuity (International IDEA, 2017: 2). Secondly, even flawed elections may be instrumental in institutionalising electoral integrity as long as the subsequent electoral cycles reinforce democratic principles (International IDEA, 2017: 2). Inevitably, a country’s electoral history signals moments either of confirmation of an older or circulation of rulers within or between political parties (Bogaards, 2013). Furthermore, elections serve important principles that help consolidate democracy. Such principles include legitimisation, accountability, and representation. More specifically, representation is instrumental in facilitating the development of responsive policy programs. Therefore, this chapter examines

Zimbabwe’s electoral history to determine the pattern of leadership confirmation and change to establish the spaces occupied by the youth as they seek to be elected into the National Parliament.

Overall, this chapter aims to determine the role of the Zimbabwean electoral laws and electoral system in promoting youth elections to the national parliament. It is based on a comprehensive review of literature, including electoral laws, constitutions, journal articles, and books on Zimbabwean elections.

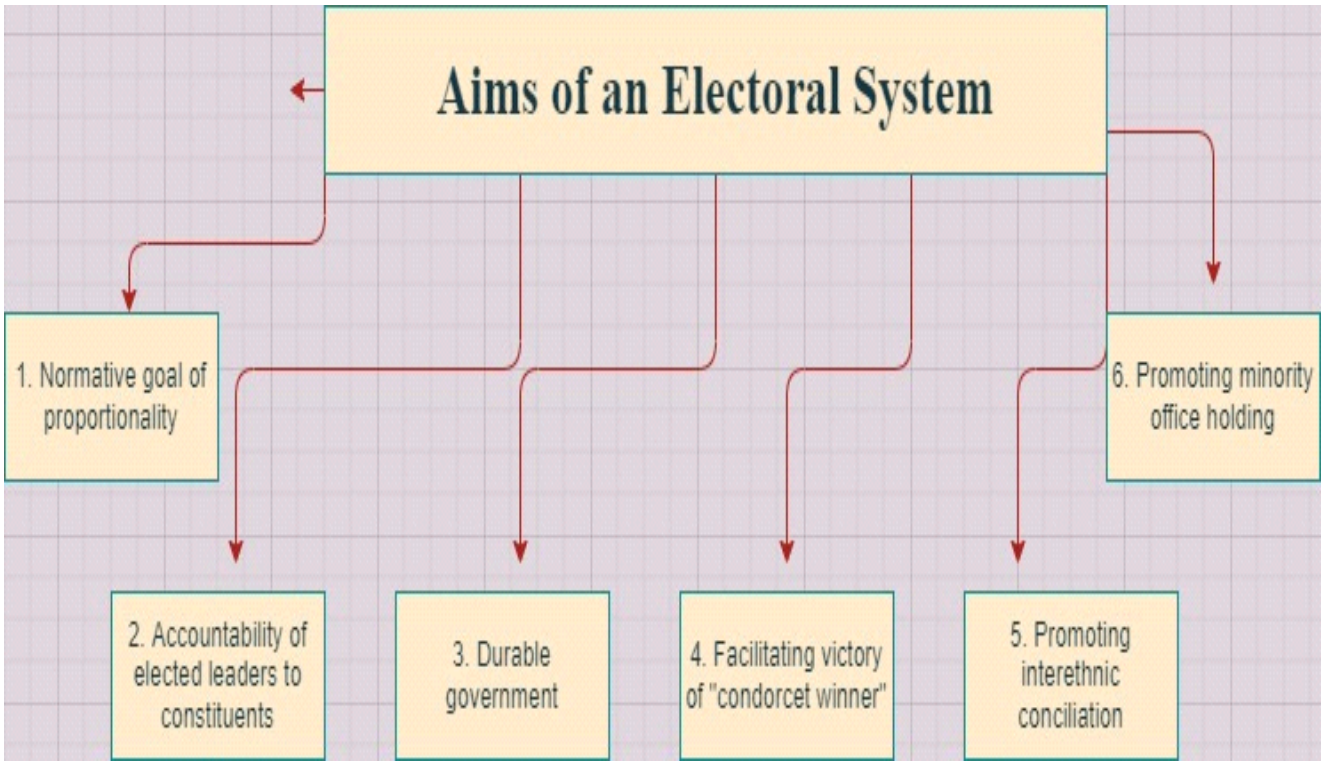
3.2 ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

Throughout the world, elections constitute an essential activity for the democratic process. This makes studying electoral systems and elections critical for establishing youth political participation. Metaphorically, Farrell (2011: 2) argues that electoral systems are the mechanisms that ensure the smooth operation of democracy. Their importance is derived from the fact that they determine the political system's functioning.

An electoral system comprises a collection of regulations established in constitutions or legal frameworks that outline how votes are converted into seats, including positions like president, member of parliament and councillor (International IDEA, 2017: 2). Electoral systems play a crucial role in influencing the number of political parties active in a nation, the behaviour of voters, and the levels of clientelism and corruption within the political framework (Moser & Scheiner, 2012: 22). Certain electoral systems can support the functioning of a multi-party system, while others shape the dynamics of a dominant party system or a two-party system. Additionally, an electoral system is instrumental in shaping voter behaviour, either by facilitating the election of minorities or their exclusion. Therefore, according to Bognor (1983), electoral systems are the vehicle for realising notions of consent and representation.

Similarly, Horowitz outlined six potential objectives of an electoral system, which are compiled in the figure below.

Figure 3.1 Possible aims of an Electoral System



Source: Author's compilation from Horowitz as cited in Diamond and Plattner (2006: x-xi)

The figure above shows some of the possible aims of an electoral system. It must be pointed out that no one electoral system fulfils all of the above-stated aims. This means no electoral system can fulfil all the aims cited in the figure above. Gallagher and Mitchell (2005) emphasise this point by noting that no single electoral system maximises all the desirable outcomes expected to come out of an electoral system, such as legitimacy, inclusivity, accountability or producing a cohesive and responsible government. Thus, electoral systems involve trade-offs where the principle of majority rule is at odds with inclusivity (International IDEA, 2017). This means that the outcomes of one electoral system fulfil some of the democratic principles and not others. Consequently, some electoral systems promote youth representation and inclusivity while others do not. This evaluates electoral systems fundamental to this study on the prospects of youth political participation.

Horowitz further cements the point above by stating that;

> No electoral system merely mirrors voter preferences, the current divisions within a society, or the existing political party landscape. Each electoral system influences and modifies these contextual elements, and each does so in a unique manner. The diversity of biases present in each electoral system means that those who chose among these electoral systems effectively select a preference for one set of biases over another…When addressing goals to be pursued, it is important to understand that the electoral system alone cannot accomplish them. Electoral systems influence and limit the behaviors of politicians and constituents. However, they represent just a small aspect of the various forces that shape the entire range of behaviour, including political behaviour (Horowitz, 2003: 3-4).

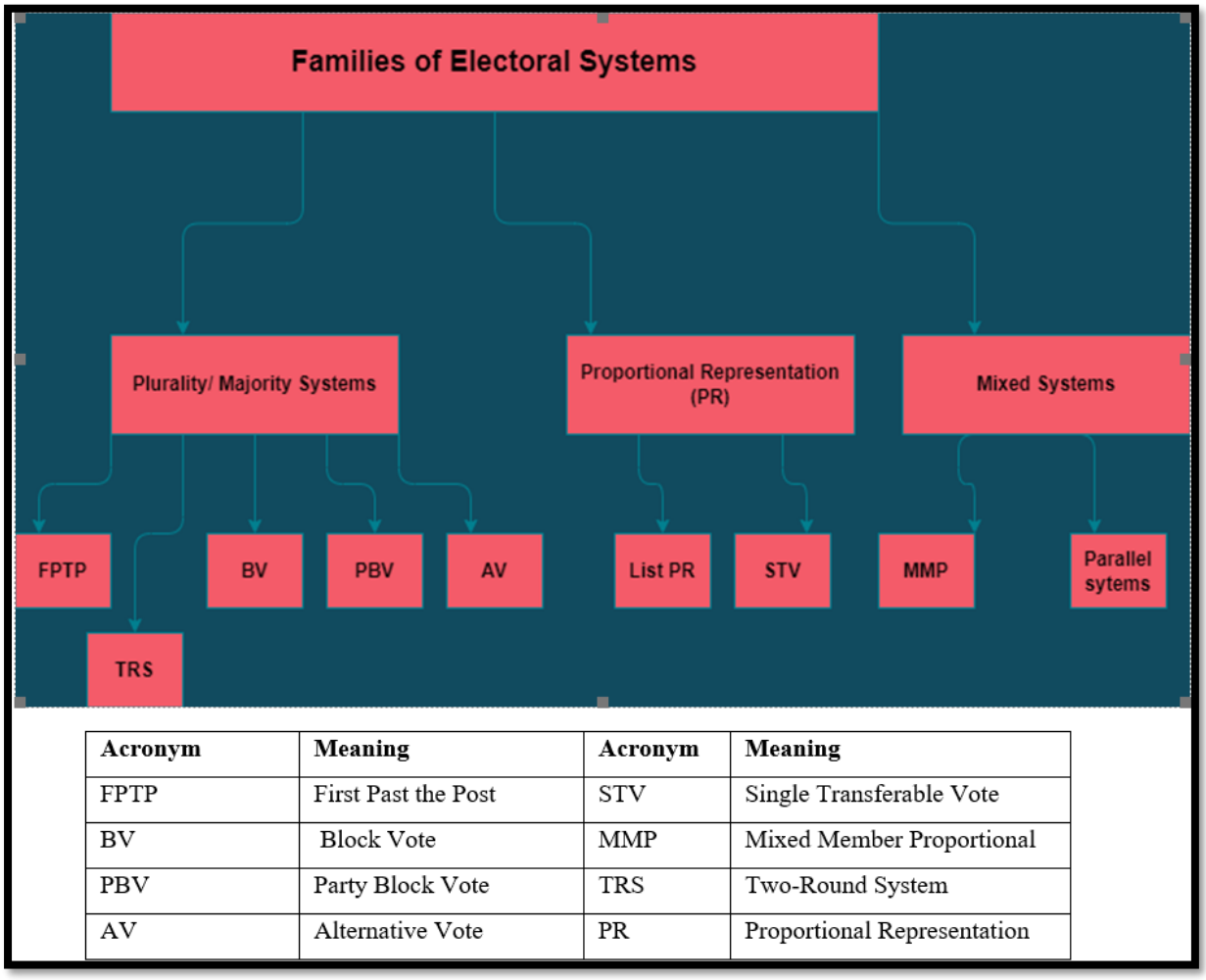
The above argument implies that leaders must know the aims they seek to fulfil when choosing an electoral system. Equally important is that electoral systems do not achieve the desirable outcomes shown in the Figure 3.1 above; they are one factor that shapes political behaviour. Though important, other factors remain crucial in shaping youth participation, hence, the need for comprehensive safeguards in addressing the multifarious factors that shape political behaviour.

Despite their significance, it must also be acknowledged that for most countries, the selection of an electoral system was primarily a matter of chance; it stemmed from a rare set of circumstances, a fleeting trend, or a historical quirk, with the influence of colonialism and the impact of nearby countries frequently playing a significant role (International IDEA, 2005: 1). Notwithstanding the effect of electoral systems on representation and politics in general, it is noteworthy that they are often not deliberately chosen but inherited from colonial times or copied from surrounding countries (Dreef and Wagner, 2013: 23). However, once established, electoral systems are stable and usually political leaders have few incentives to change the rules of the game that facilitated their election into office (Dreef and Wagner, 2013: 23). This confirms the dominance of the First Past the Post (FPTP) system in Zimbabwe since the 1980 independence elections.

3.2.1 TYPES OF ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

There are three primary categories of electoral systems utilised globally, namely, Plurality Majority (PM), Proportional Representation (PR), and the Mixed Member Proportional System (MMP) (International IDEA, 2017; Dreef and Wagner, 2013; Colomer, 2004; Bodganor, 1983). The following figure presents the broad families of electoral systems and the sub-types found under each broad system:

Figure 3.2 Families of Electoral Systems



Acronym	Meaning	Acronym	Meaning
FPTP	First Past the Post	STV	Single Transferable Vote
BV	Block Vote	MMP	Mixed Member Proportional
PBV	Party Block Vote	TRS	Two-Round System
AV	Alternative Vote	PR	Proportional Representation

Source: Authors compilation from International IDEA (2005: 3)

The importance of the electoral systems shown above derives from the notion that they determine who the elected officials are (Farrell, 2011: 3). Therefore, depending on the electoral system design, it may be easier or harder for particular parties and or individuals to gain representation in parliament: the likelihood of a single party being able to govern independently can vary. In summary, the selection of electoral systems plays a significant role in shaping critical questions regarding the operation of political systems (Farrell, 2011: 3). Similarly, the selection of an electoral system can either enable youth representation in political bodies like the national parliament or impede their ability to secure positions in political leadership.

3.2.2 PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION SYSTEM

Proportional representation is one among the broad families of electoral systems. Under this system, as shown in the figure above, is the List proportional representation and the Single Transferable Vote (STV). Proportional representation is used in Argentina, Portugal, Indonesia, Israel, Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands. It is a system that is commonly preferred among new and social democracies. Under the PR system, both the minority and majority can be elected and become representatives in the legislature. It has also been commonly observed that PR system tends to produce coalition governments.

Although many variants are under the PR system, the popular one is the party list system. Some Southern African countries that use this system include Mozambique, South Africa, and Namibia. One of the prominent features of this system is that elections are conducted with the whole country being taken as a single constituency such that there is no room for delimiting boundaries (Matlosa, 2007: 34). Therefore, "rather than being a constituency-based system, it is rather an opinion-based electoral system" (Matlosa, 2007: 34). This means that the boundaries of electoral districts do not limit individual's voting decisions; instead, they are influenced by their beliefs and preferences concerning the ideologies and actions of competing parties (Matlosa, 2007: 34).

Another feature of the party list system is that it gives primacy to candidates appearing on the list prepared by political parties (Matlosa, 2007: 34). Therefore, the primacy given to party candidates leaves no room for individuals contesting as independent candidates. During an election, voters are not electing individuals but political parties. In this regard, Jackson and Jackson (1999: 37) noted all party list systems are aimed at ensuring that the law-making body mirrors the relative popularity of the parties, while individual candidates are of secondary importance. As a result, following the elections, the elected representatives are held accountable to their political party rather than to the electorate. The electoral framework criticized in this context is characterized by its failure to establish a mechanism that ensures members of parliament are answerable to the voters rather than solely to the party (Matlosa, 2007: 35).

Representation in parliament is an essential goal that the electoral system can help fulfil in part. John Adams, one of the classical advocates of the microcosm view on

representation, argued that parliament should precisely reflect the general populace, as it should share their thoughts, emotions, and actions (cited in McLean, 1991: 173). Plart (1991: 16) asserts that the degree to which a parliament represents its people is determined by how proportionate it is. This suggests that a "population composed of men and women at a 50:50 ratio, and urban to rural residents at a 70:30 rate, should choose a parliament that mirrors these proportions on a smaller scale" (Farrell, 2011: 10). The National Parliament, in this regard, should be representative of the entire population. While this may not be easily achieved in practice, efforts should be made to achieve a proportional setup as close as possible to the representative sample (Farrell, 2011: 10).

Strong insinuations exist that proportional representation systems, particularly the party list, may favour youth participation and representation in Parliament. The arguments are drawn from the initial observations that the electoral system's choice affects women's representation in parliament. Ballington, cited in UNDP (2003), opines that it is widely accepted that in proportional representation systems, or electoral systems that strongly favour parties, women are more often elected compared to majoritarian systems. Similarly, the incentive structure, which may be favourable to the election of women, can do the same for the youth since they, together with women, encounter the same patriarchal structures and attitudes (UNDP, 2012: 23). Therefore, the proportional system provides a relatively better avenue for youth representation because of the use of the list or roster reflecting party control in the selection of candidates.

While the party list system has been associated with the notion of youth representation, it is still affected by some caveats that may hinder youth election. The IPU report cited that,

> Where parties create candidate lists, they have more influence. They usually prefer to back candidates who are a) most likely to succeed and b) most likely to remain loyal to the party. Parties position their favoured candidates at the top list, increasing their likelihood of winning. Younger candidates may receive less support from the party and, therefore, are often placed lower on the list, decreasing their chances of being elected (2021: 38).

Therefore, the possibility and chances for youth representation are not only defined by the use of the proportional system, but internal factors such as support and recognition

within the party also matter. In this regard, generational politics within political parties matters; it either facilitates or hinders the selection of youth on the list. This implies that even if Zimbabwe was using the party list system, in theory, it could potentially ensure youth representation. Yet, the reality of internal party politics can result in the exclusion of youth. Taking ZANU PF, for instance, the interplay of factional politics between Team Lacoste and Generation 40 (G40)[22] exemplifies the dynamics of inter-party generational politics. Yet, even for the G40, the supposedly young generation in ZANU-PF was typified by individuals like Kasukuwere and former first lady Grace Mugabe, who are well beyond the youth category. Therefore, the real question of youth representation in such a scenario is difficult because the supposedly youthful camps represent older people. G40 was just a cohort of the relatively young blood in ZANU-PF without war credentials. Therefore, honest young people become victims of inter-party politics, consequently affecting their representation in the National Parliament.

3.2.3 MIXED SYSTEMS

This system usually combines the use of the plurality/majority system and Proportional Representation (Reynolds, 2008). Under mixed systems, the same voters cast their votes, which help determine the election of representatives in both systems (Reynolds, Reilly, and Ellis 2005). Parallel systems and the Mixed Member Proportional are the common variants under the mixed systems. The first option employs both a proportional representation component and a plurality/ majority component that operate separately from one another (International IDEA, 2005: 29). Under the latter, two systems are also used, however, the difference is that the PR element is used to compensate for disproportionalities emanating through the plurality or another system resulting in a more proportional outcome compared to a parallel system (International IDEA, 2005: 29).

3.2.4 PLURALITY/MAJORITY SYSTEMS

The concept behind plurality and majority voting systems is straightforward: once the votes have been cast, the candidates or parties that receive the highest number of

[22] Team Lacoste and the G40 are two factional groups that emerged in ZANU-PFsoon after the 2013 elections with the hope of replacing Robert Mugabe, who was suffering from old age. The former initially known as Weevils was led by the current president Emmerson Mnangagwa who had the backing of the military and some war veterans while the latter represented the younger party members supporting Grace Mugabe as the potential successor, its other prominent members included; Kudzanayi Chipanga, Jonathan Moyo, Patrick Zhuwao and Saviour Kasukuwere (Institute for Peace and Security, Studies 2018; Mungwari, 2018; Mutanda, 2023).

votes are announced as the winners (International IDEA, 2005: 35). The five variants found under plurality/majority systems are FPTP, BV, PBV, AV, and the Two-Round System (TRS).

3.2.4.1 TWO-ROUND SYSTEM (TRS)

Under the TRS, this system is used after an election with no candidate obtaining the stipulated number or percentage of votes. This system seems to be popular during run-off elections. Most countries that use this TRS were previously former colonies of France. Such countries include the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Gabon, Togo, Egypt, Mali, Iran, and Kazakhstan.

One of the advantages of the TRS is that it allows the electorate to think second-hand about whom to vote for (Huskey, 2008). Having two major parties contesting, the TRS enables voters to choose the right candidate whom they may not have initially voted for. Also, the TRS has a few candidates contesting, easing the illiterate the burden of identifying their preferred candidate. However, it has been argued that this system is expensive because it forces the electoral management body to run elections quickly. At times, this may cause the other contesting party to develop cold feet and may pull out of the election contest.

3.2.4.2 ALTERNATIVE VOTE (AV) SYSTEM

The AV system is based on the principle of majority votes for one to be declared the winner. According to Reynolds *et al.* (2008), under the AV system, the winner is the candidate who obtains 50 plus 1 vote; if no candidate manages to attain this stipulated threshold, then the least of unsuccessful candidates' votes will be allocated to the candidates with highest votes until one candidate reaches the 50 plus 1 vote. This system is mainly used in Europe and North America in countries such as Australia, Fiji, and Papua New Guinea.

The major strength of the AV system is that it allows the major parties to accumulate votes from the least parties so that one of them can get the stipulated threshold for a winner. This seems less expensive than the TRS. However, its major weakness is that it does not give room for the minority, which might incite incidences of violence between different ethnic groups.

3.2.4.3 BLOCK VOTE (BV) SYSTEM

The BV is one of the plurality/majority systems primarily utilised in nations with ineffective or absent political parties. It is frequently implemented in multi-member constituencies, where voters possess "several votes equal to the number of candidates to be chosen. The candidates securing the most votes are awarded the positions" (International IDEA, 2005: 44). The system was used in 2004 in countries such as Kuwait, Lebanon, and the Syria Arab Republic. One of the noticeable advantages of this system is the ability to vote for individual candidates and increase the role of highly organised political parties (International IDEA, 2005: 44). However, one of its disadvantages is that it often yields unpredictable and undesirable electoral outcomes.

3.2.4.4 PARTY BLOCK VOTE (PBV) SYSTEM

The PBV is another variant under the plurality/ majority systems where voters possess only one vote. They have to choose between party lists of candidates instead of individuals, as is the case under the FPTP (International IDEA, 2005: 45). In 2004, PBV was used in the following countries: Cameroon, Chad, Singapore, and Djibouti. One of the common advantages is that its simplicity makes it easy to use. This is derived from the fact that no absolute majority of votes is stated, and the candidate who obtains more votes is declared the winner. Furthermore, there is room for accommodating different ethnic groups while listing party candidates, thereby increasing the chances of fair representation. However, among its shortcomings is that it may lead to extremely imbalanced outcomes, particularly, when one party secures all the seats with just a simple majority (International IDEA, 2005: 45).

3.2.4.5 FIRST PAST THE POST (FPTP) SYSTEM

This electoral system is known by various terms such as 'relative majority', 'simple majority', 'single member plurality', and popularly referred to as 'first past the post' or 'winner-takes-all' (Farrell, 2011: 13; Sachikonye, 2003: 120). According to Farrell (2011: 13), single-member plurality is the title that best captures the essence of this system.

The FPTP is considered one of the most straightforward electoral systems globally (Matlosa, 2007; International IDEA, 2005). This is because it is easy to administer since it only considers the candidate with more votes as the winner. As such, "it is not necessary to win an overall majority of the vote: provided the candidate has at least

one vote more than each of the other candidate, then he or she is declared the victor" (Farrell, 2011: 13). The winner under this system is simply that candidate who attains most votes, in theory, a candidate can win with just two votes as long as all the other candidates receive only one vote each (International IDEA, 2005). This is the relative majority or plurality (Bogdanor & Butler, 1983: viii). More so, the simplicity of this system is drawn from the fact that it is a candidate-centered system utilising single-member districts. During voting, the voter will be presented with the names of the nominated candidates, and then, one has to choose only one candidate (International IDEA, 2005).

In terms of usage, the FPTP system seems to be more popular than other electoral systems. This electoral system draws from the practices of liberal democracy in the United Kingdom (UK), the United States (US), and Canada (Matlosa, 2007; International IDEA 2005). Matlosa (2007) further notes that in Africa, 18 countries that employ the FPTP system were previously British colonies. Southern African countries that use this system include Lesotho, Tanzania, Botswana, the DRC, Zambia, and Zimbabwe (Matlosa, 2007: 26). The adoption of the FPTP system in Southern Africa could to a greater extent has been essentially unintentional, it arises from a rare blend of situations, a fleeting trend, or a historical anomaly, with the effects of colonialism and the impact of powerful neighbouring countries frequently being particularly significant (International IDEA, 2005: 1). The effects of colonialism and the British influence appear to be the major contributing factors for the adoption of the FPTP system in Zimbabwe and other former British colonies.

One of the advantages of the FPTP is that it promotes accountability. According to International IDEA (2005: 36),

> It establishes a connection between citizens and their elected officials by creating a legislature consisting of representatives from specific geographical locations. Elected officials represent particular districts within cities, towns, or regions instead of merely adhering to party affiliations. This concept of 'geographic accountability' holds significant importance in agricultural societies and emerging nations.

It is important to note that the notion of accountability under this electoral system follows the 'principal-agent' model of representation. This opposes the 'microcosm' principle epitomised by PR electoral systems. The 'principal-agent'

understanding of representation emphasises that the members of parliament are chosen to represent the interests of their constituents. From a general perspective, this implies that even if parliament is composed of a particular social category, that dominance does not matter so long as the decisions that are made reflect the interests of the voters (Farrell, 2011: 10). McLean (1991: 175) concludes by aptly observing that, the PR school examines the makeup of a Parliament, while the majoritarian perspective focuses on its decisions. Thus, youth representation in parliament in Zimbabwe can be ensured by a PR system and not a majoritarian currently used.

Apart from ensuring an accountable parliament, the FPTP system has been hailed for providing stable governments. This can be achieved in ethnically divided societies where the system can encourage parties to be 'broad churches', which may incorporate many elements found in society, mainly if there are two main political parties and various societal groups. However, it should be noted that combining the diverse groups in society does not guarantee their selection as candidates standing for the party. Also, of producing a duopoly (emergent two-party system) (Matlosa, 2007: 33)), it excludes minority parties from partaking in the management of the nation.

Furthermore, the system enables voters to select from various individuals instead of parties (International IDEA, 2005: 36). Voters under such a system have a chance to assess the performance of individuals as opposed to just accepting the candidates provided on a list under the PR system (International IDEA, 2005: 36). In addition, the system accords independent candidates a chance to be elected. However, one caveat associated with this electoral system is that candidates stand in their right to contest in elections even though parties may have to endorse their candidature (Matlosa, 2007: 27). In some instances, this has resulted in conflict, especially during primary elections where at times there would be disagreement between voter bases and party officials regarding candidate selection (Matlosa, 2007: 27).

There are far-reaching consequences of intra-party conflict during primary elections on the choice of candidates. Firstly, this incites violence, which can result in damage to property and human injuries. For instance, a total of 105

cases of internal party violence was recorded, with 62 incidents occurring in ZANU-PF and 53 in the MDC Alliance (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, citing Zimbabwe Peace Project, 2018: 15). The report took note of cases of intra party violence which occurred in Budiriro Ward 43 where MDC-A youths resisted the imposition of Costa Machingauta as the parliamentary candidate. Also, this can disrupt the sanctity of the party structure, where some may decide to form their political parties or contest the election as independent candidates. Zamchiya (2013: 960-961) observed that following oblique and violent-prone primary elections in Zimbabwe's main political parties in 2013, "28 MDC-T parliamentary candidates contested as independents… four ZANU-PF candidates stood as independents including Jonathan Samkange in Mudzi South, Daniel Garwe in Murehwa North, Marian Chombo in Zvimba North." Also, in 2008 Simba Makoni, former finance minister, stood as an independent presidential candidate after failing to stand as ZANU-PF candidate. Makoni argued that,

> I would have liked to serve as the official candidate for ZANU PF. Sadly, as we are all aware, that chance was not afforded to any other member who might have stepped forward to contribute to the party and the nation (Raftopolous, 2014).

Makoni's experience shows one extreme case of the effects of conflict on candidate selection and its aftermath. Where party members decide to contest as independents after failing to get party approval can negatively result in the division of party votes and prospective chances of winning the position.

More so, the FPTP system excludes youth from the legislature. According to International IDEA (2005: 37), the 'candidate that is widely acceptable' syndrome underlying this system affects the ability of women (and youth also) to attain a position in the legislature due to their reduced chances of being chosen as candidates by party systems that are predominantly male. The IPU 2021 report argued that under majoritarian systems, youth can be relegated to unwinnable constituencies, curtailing their chances of being elected into political office. Also, due to age, the youth are unlikely to be endorsed by their parties due to the perceived notion that they are immature and lack political experience.

The foregoing discussion underscores the importance of electoral systems in ensuring democratic principles. The IPU (2021) report highlighted the influence of electoral systems on the election of younger people into political office because they translate votes into parliamentary seats and determine relationships between parties and candidates. Electoral systems ensure accountability and representation and promote minority office holding. However, not one electoral system can deliver all the expected benefits, such as accountability and representation; instead, there would be a trade-off of benefits, either prioritising accountability over representation. Majoritarian systems such as the FPTP are aimed at promoting accountability.

Accordingly, Lewanika (2023) argues that the winner-takes-all system used in Zimbabwe for the parliamentary and local elections is distortionary and leads to unjust electoral outcomes that undermine representation. PR systems are claimed to be better placed to ensure representation. Thus, although the PR and majoritarian systems may produce different outcomes depending on the context, the former has a better incentive structure than the latter in providing opportunities for youth election into the legislative assembly.

3.3 ELECTIONS AND THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM IN ZIMBABWE

Elections are a vital ingredient in the consolidation of democratic governance because they ensure “political participation of the citizens in the political system and the determination of national leadership” (Chikerema & Chakunda, 2014: 62). They also offer one of the essential foundations of a democratic society, and one of the potentially viable means for the youth to ‘speak truth to power’ especially given the reality that in most cases, popular resistance, demonstrations and protests have not yielded the expected results (Alexander & McGregor, 2013: 4).

The relationship between elections and democracy, however, is not straightforward, despite the “broad consensus that competitive elections are the identifying property of the contemporary democratic process” (Powell, 2000 cited in Thomassen, 2014: 1). The paradox of elections is that they can be used both to promote and to undermine democratic governance gives rise to many questions about the value and meaning of elections in Africa (Matlosa, *et al*. 2010: 2). Elections do not amount to democracy, yet democracy cannot exist without multiparty elections (Matlosa, *et al*., 2010: 2).

Therefore, the extent and significance of the democracy initiative in Africa should not be evaluated solely by how frequently elections occur but by the positive impact those elections have on democracy (Matlosa, *et al*. 2010: 2).

While the mere conduct of elections does not amount to democracy, it remains one of the principal democratic activities where youth participation can be promoted and measured. Also, they symbolise the process of leadership recruitment and socialisation, making them the epicenter and entry point for the young into leadership positions. Thus, while elections play a crucial role in democratic governance, they alone do not equate to democracy (Chikerema & Chakunda, 2014: 62). In this context; therefore, consideration of other variables such as the country's electoral system, political culture, and the broader factors shaping the electoral environment becomes important. Since independence, several elections have been held in Zimbabwe.

3.3.1 THE 1979 ELECTIONS

The 1979 Zimbabwe-Rhodesia 'internal settlement' marked the enfranchisement of most black Zimbabweans (Sithole & Makumbe, 1997: 124; Sithole, 1979: 151). During this election, every male and female citizen aged 18 or older, regardless of whether they are black, white, 'coloured', or Asian, could register on the unified voter's roll (Sithole, 1979: 153). Thus, for the black majority, the experience of electoral politics effectively commenced in 1979 (Sithole & Makumbe, 1997: 124). While discussions on the Zimbabwean electoral discourse may begin with the 1980 elections, (Sithole and Makumbe, 1997) believe that politics related to elections for most black Zimbabweans should start with the 1979 elections. This is because

> …numerous significant characteristics of electoral politics in Zimbabwe can be traced back to this election. For example, in addition to universal adult suffrage, institutions and mechanisms such as a bicameral parliament, designated seats exclusively for whites, an election supervisory commission, an election directorate, the practice of inviting international monitors for elections, voter education initiatives, polling procedures, and the use of 'indelible ink', which have all become prominent features in later elections were established during the 1979 election.

The elections were conducted utilising the PR party list system with a threshold set at five percent across the eight provinces (Sithole and Makumbe, 1997). According to the provisions of the constitution of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, the legislature was

bicameral, made up of the National Assembly and Senate with the following composition:

The Senate comprised 30 individuals, with 10 being black members chosen by 72 black individuals from the House of Assembly. Additionally, 10 were white members elected by 28 whites from the House of Assembly, and the remaining 10 were African chiefs selected by the Council of Chiefs. The House of Assembly, on the other hand, consisted of 100 members; 72 were blacks to be elected by voters on the common roll. However, for the inaugural parliament, these members were to be selected through a party-list system rather than by constituency. Twenty seats were allocated for whites, who were elected using a preferential voting method by voters listed on the white voter's roll across 29 constituencies. Additionally, eight white representatives were chosen from 16 candidates nominated by the 28 white members of the previous House of Assembly, with the election being conducted by the 92 members of the House of Assembly. For the initial election, the 16 candidates were put forward by the 50 white members of the earlier House of Assembly (Sithole, 1979: 152-153).

Only three of the African parties contesting the election secured parliamentary seats. These are UANC (Muzorewa), which secured 51 seats; ZANU (Sithole), which had 12 seats; and UNFP (Ndiweni), which had nine seats (Ibid: 153). Chirau's ZUPO and Chiota's (NDU) failed to secure any seats in the House of Assembly. However, the government formed by Muzorewa failed to garner international recognition because of the intensification of the armed struggle and non-participation by other nationalist parties. Consequently, the Lancaster House talks were initiated, leading to the 1980 elections.

3.3.2 THE 1980 INDEPENDENCE ELECTIONS

These elections marked the political transition from the white-ruled Southern Rhodesia to the black-ruled independent Zimbabwe. The polls were included in the Lancaster House agreement, which officially concluded the liberation war (Kriger, 2005: 3). The Lancaster House Constitution, unlike, the Zimbabwe Rhodesia Constitution, provided for 100-member parliamentary seats, reserving 20 for whites and leaving the remaining 80 for contestation among African political parties (Kriger, 2005: 4; Sithole, 1979: 152).

The elections, similar to the elections of 1979, took place using the proportional representation party list system, which includes a 5 % threshold for seat allocation across the eight provinces (Sachikonye, 2004; Sithole, 1979). The PR system was used for security and expediency (Sachikonye, 2004), yet that was the last time the PR system was used (Sachikonye, 2004: 142). Out of the nine political parties that contested under these elections, only the following three African parties won seats: Mugabe's ZANU-PFsecured 57 seats, while Nkomo's PF-ZAPU obtained 20 seats and Muzorewa's UANC garnered 3 (Sachikonye, 2004: 126; Sithole, 1979: 180). The Rhodesian Front party led by Ian Smith successfully claimed all 20 seats designated for white representatives (Kriger, 2005: 4).

The Lancaster House Constitution provided a compromise measure to safeguard the interests of whites in parliament. It specifically prohibited any constitutional amendment that would abolish white seats in the two houses before 1987 (Sachikonye, 2004: 120).

3.3.3 THE 1985 ELECTIONS

These elections marked the initial elections after gaining independence in the country. The parliamentary elections took place in June and July of 1985 for the 20 allocated seats reserved for whites and the 80 standard roll seats, respectively (Booysen & Toulou, 2009). The elections were conducted using a single-member-district (SMD) system or a winner-takes-all method in light of the expected changes to the Electoral Act (Sithole & Makumbe, 1997: 126). The Electoral Act was subsequently amended in 1987, introducing a 'winner takes all' system that had been in use during the colonial period (Sithole and Makumbe, 1997: 124). In response to the abandonment of the PR system in favour of the first-past-the-post, Moyo (1992: 156-162) fervently supported the idea that it is best suited for societies that are working towards cultivating a democratic culture. Other critics during this time, as noted Sithole and Makumbe (1997: 124), pointed out that not only is the PR considered more democratic than SMD, yet it serves as a functional means of managing and addressing ethnic and other divisions in diverse societies. Consequently, as noted by Sachikonye (2004: 120), during the elections leading up to 2000, ZANU-PF was the primary recipient of advantages from the new system.

Apart from the universal acknowledgement of democratic principles such as inclusivity, accountability and representation, democracy within a particular jurisdiction must be responsive to that societal arrangement. In this case, the winner-takes-all system in the Zimbabwean context was not best suited to address the ethnic cleavages and ensure the representation of different ethnic groups. Accordingly, the winner-takes-all system was being used by ZANU-PF to sustain a hegemonic stance at the expense of the much-needed representation. During these elections, six political parties participated in the electoral contest. The previous electoral result mirrored itself, but this time Mugabe's party secured 64 seats, causing Muzorewa to lose three seats; however, Mugabe's party lost one seat to Sithole's party in the Eastern Chipinge district, which is the home of Sithole's ethnic Ndau (Sithole & Makumbe, 1997: 127). Nkomo won all 15 seats allocated to Matabeleland by the Delimitation Commission, losing five seats due to the gerrymandering that the Commission had effected (Sithole and Makumbe, 1997: 127). Smith's recently formed Conservative Alliance of Zimbabwe (CAZ) secured 15 out of the 20 allocated for white individuals (Booysen & Toulou, 2009).

In 1987, critical constitutional amendments were effected, changing the outlook of the Zimbabwean political system. Apart from introducing the simple majority electoral system mentioned above, the clause on the 20 seats reserved for whites expired. This paved the way for introducing a powerful executive presidency (Sachikonye, 2004: 120). In addition, In November 1989, the Senate's mandate ended, and the House of Assembly increased its seats from 100 to 150 (Booysen & Toulou, 2009). This meant that at the next general election, set for March 1990, only 120 members of the House would be elected. In the interim, the House of Assembly was to include eight provincial governors, ten chiefs, and 12 nominees appointed by the president (Booysen & Toulou, 2009).

The 1985 elections also produced a youth narrative that continuously haunted the country's electoral politics. There were reports that ZANU PF's Youth Brigade compelled villagers to attend party rallies, instructing them to cast their votes for the ruling party (Kriger, 2005: 8). Distancing himself from such acts by the youth, whose effect was to taint the legitimacy of the elections, Prime Minister Mugabe on 16 February 1985 is said to have said, there seem to be certain groups of individuals who,

against party guidelines, are targeting innocent people. I would prefer to have no party members at all than to have members who are forced (Kriger, 2005: 9). In the subsequent months, attempts were made to attribute youth violence to ‘fake party members’ and ‘imposters’ (Kriger, 2005: 9). The use of violence by the youth continued in the subsequent elections in the country as will be discussed.

3.3.4 THE 1990 GENERAL AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

From the 28th to the 30th of March 1990, Zimbabweans went through the exercise of choosing the Executive President and Parliamentary representatives (Moyo, 1992: 1). These elections not only marked the country's second post-independence experience with general elections but presented the first opportunity for Zimbabweans to choose the Executive President. This was enabled by the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 7) and (No. 23 of 1987), which merged the offices of the Prime Minister and President (formerly, parliament had appointed Robert Mugabe as the first Executive President of Zimbabwe) (Moyo, 1992: 1). The executive was required to be elected directly by the citizens every six years beginning in 1990. As a result, Zimbabwe conducted its inaugural presidential election in 1990.

Another essential feature of the 1990 elections was a unity accord between ZANU-PF, and PF ZAPU, the two primary rival parties in Zimbabwe (Sithole & Makumbe 1997: 128). This merger seemed to be a progressive achievement in pursuit of creating a one-party regime in the nation; therefore, the recently established Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) was explicitly meant to oppose the one-party rule (Moyo, 1992: 2). These elections, thus, were to settle the central question of the existence of a one-party state in Zimbabwe rendered the elections a question of ‘casting a vote for democracy’ (Moyo, 1992: 2). The two candidates contesting in the first presidential elections to be held in the country were Robert Mugabe under ZANU-PF, and Edgar Tekere of ZUM. ZANU-PF and Mugabe secured 83% of the valid votes, while Tekere received 17%.

For the parliamentary elections in 1990, five political parties contested the polls. ZANU-PF won 117 out of the 120 parliamentary seats, with ZUM getting only two seats and the last one going to Sithole's party (Sithole & Makumbe, 1997: 128). These results further portray the impact of the winner-takes-all system used during these elections. ZUM managed to garner 18% of the popular vote during these elections. It

has been argued that the 18% could have meant about 20 seats if the elections had used a national party-list system. Yet, the percentage only translated to two seats. Hence, the winner-takes-all system stifles smaller parties' survival, allowing a dominant party system to emerge. This crowds out other categories and elements of people within society from being represented in parliament. The underrepresentation of youth in parliament could also be another negative impact of this electoral system.

3.3.5 THE 1995 ELECTION

Sylvester (1995; 43) refers to the 1995 elections as ‘an election that largely did not occur.’ This is because,

> A total of 55 out of the 120 seats parliamentary seats available for election had already been secured by the ZANU PF, as the six current opposition parties did not nominate candidates for those positions. Additionally, ZANU could rely on another 30 parliamentarians, comprising 12 non-constituency members appointed by the President of Zimbabwe, along with eight provincial governors and ten chiefs selected by local chiefs, all of whom owe their allegiance to the ruling party to continue traditional authority in the post-independence period. In summary, ZANU-PF was guaranteed to win 85 of the 150 seats in the House of Assembly even before voting began.

Despite the large share of seats that had been decided before the casting of votes, it is essential to note that six parties took part in the elections. However, only two political parties and one independent candidate secured seats (Sithole & Makumbe, 1997: 129). They further observed that the emergence of independent candidates marked an essential change in the 1995 parliamentary elections. In the previous three elections, there were no independent candidates, although twelve participated in the elections of 1990. The 1995 elections saw an increase in independent candidates to 29, with one competing against a ZANU-PF candidate despite facing hostility from both the party and Mugabe (Makumbe & Sithole, 1997: 129).

A unique youth narrative characterised the independent candidature phenomenon. As noted by Makumbe and Sithole (1997), one former ZANU-PF, member and youth at the time, Margret Dongo (a 35-year-old woman), contested the elections as an independent after her party had chosen her friend, Vivian Mwashita, because the former had accused the party of vote rigging and gross in competencies by the registrar’s office (Mail & Guardian, 1996). Surprisingly, she won the court challenge, a rerun was done, and she emerged as the MP for Harare South. Similarly, it has been

observed that even when she ran as a ZANU candidate in 1990, the politburo attempted to invalidate her candidacy, claiming she was too young (Mail & Guardian, 1996). Dongo is said to have boldly responded to Sally Mugabe, who tried to warn her about this by stating that, when I crossed the mountains into Mozambique and volunteered for guerrilla training, dedicating my life to the cause of liberation, did they claim I was too young? In the bush, there were no age limits. (Mail & Guardian, 1996). Therefore, the youth have had limited opportunities to participate in leadership positions despite their affiliation with the ruling party and liberation experience.

3.3.6 1996 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

The elections held on the 16th and 17th of March 1996 marked the second time presidential elections were held in Zimbabwe. According to Makumbe and Sithole (1997: 131), even with more than twelve political parties present in Zimbabwe's political scene, only two individuals were nominated to compete against ZANU PF's Robert Mugabe. Abel Muzorewa from the United Parties garnered 4.7 % of the votes, while Ndabaningi Sithole of ZANU-Ndonga received 2.4 % (Lodge, *et al.* 2002). The latter candidate is said to have sought to withdraw his candidature based on the claim that the Central Intelligence Office had infiltrated his party, seeking to discredit him (Lodge, *et al.* 2002). Mugabe, again, returned to office after gaining 92.7 % of the vote (Makumbe & Sithole, 1997).

The age restriction was again an issue during these elections, which prevented Margret Dongo from contesting during the polls. This was a historic moment in which a youth and woman sought to challenge Mugabe openly during elections. Yet, as observed by both the opposition in the polls stated, until the Political Parties Finance Act, the Electoral Act and the Broadcast Act are amended, they will not be able to compete on an equal footing (Makumbe & Sithole, 1997). From this, it is clear that ZANU PF, both in presidential and general elections, had been dominating the electoral landscape in the country. Some of the enabling factors could be the "punitive culture of intolerance to democracy" identified by Makumbe (2002).

3.3.7 THE 2000 GENERAL ELECTIONS

These parliamentary elections were held from the 24th to the 25th of June in 2000. Since the last parliamentary elections were held, so much has happened regarding the political, economic and social environment. Some of these political developments

include giving benefits to military veterans, followed by the decline of the Zimbabwean dollar in 1997 and the incessant failing economy. Also, the period was marked by a rising civil society and the call for reform to the constitution. The government had set up a constitutional assembly mostly membered by ZANU-PF party members. Thus, when a referendum was held, there was an overwhelming majority on the NO vote. Economically, the expedited land reform program had seen the white commercial farmers losing farms and looking for a solution to regain their lost land since the legal route was not forthcoming. This largely was the environment that further witnessed the upcoming of a vibrant opposition political party in the country in the form of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).

Within such a background, there was a lot of optimism and euphoria on the Zimbabwean electoral landscape. The 2000 elections promised to unleash a profoundly new phase of politics in Zimbabwe (Pottie, 2001: 61). However, though popular among the electorate, including the white community, the MDC was met with antagonism from the ZANU-PF, party. In particular, it was framed as an agent of imperialism attempting to undo the progress made during the liberation struggle. Mugabe is said to have framed the MDC as follows:

> The MDC should not be evaluated or defined solely by its black trade union representation, by the faces of young students, by the salaried black junior professionals from suburban areas, or by its rough and aggressive elements of high-density regions. It goes beyond these superficial aspects of humanity… MDC has existed for as long as the powers that dominate it, the entities that converge upon it and exert control, those that guide and influence it, and, in fact, those that advocate for, sponsor, and back it. It is a subversive Trojan horse engineered and supported by the hostile forces that subjugated and marginalised our people in the past (Mugabe, 2001: 88).

Similarly, the naming discourse was evident regarding all those considered opponents of ZANU PF, whether individuals, civic groups, or the youth.

Makumbe and Compagnon (2000) said the election results were 57, 1 and 62 seats for MDC, ZANU Ndonga and ZANU PF, respectively. However, ZANU-PF ended up with 92 seats after the president appointed 30 MPs. The 30 members appointed by the president amount to 20 per cent of the overall number of MPs. In this regard, Makumbe and Compagnon argued that,

> The presence of 30 MPs in parliament who are not elected by the public yet participate in all discussions and cast votes skews the genuine reflection of the people's desires. This clearly undermines the government's assertion that Zimbabwe is a genuine democracy. A party may secure a majority of the 120 seats (meaning at least 61) but still lack a majority in parliament. The ruling party of the current President may only require 46 seats to maintain an absolute majority in parliament (2000: 38).

While, on one hand, the need to balance with respect to infusing experts in government is a noble idea, the idea, however, must not be operationalised in such a way that it overshadows an electoral outcome where a party which initially had a majority ends up getting fewer seats in parliament. Also, there might be other ways of engaging experts in government, such as involving technocrats during cabinet meetings without diluting the people's wishes as reflected in an electoral outcome.

3.3.8 THE 2002 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

One of the critical observations Sachikonye (2002) made on this presidential election campaign was the generational gap separating the two parties that provided candidates for the election. The outlook of the parties was such that ZANU-PF had been around for nearly four decades and was headed by independence veterans. In contrast, the MDC was just over two years old and was primarily led by individuals in their 40s and 50s (Sachikonye, 2002). Compounding the political generation gap between these two parties was the reality that;

> The nation they seized control of in 1980 has undergone significant transformations. Demographics have changed, and a new generation with different political views and affiliations have emerged. Civil society has evolved into a more complex and advanced entity. A party aiming to gain or sustain dominance must consider these developments and shifts. It must adapt and rejuvenate itself (Sachikonye, 2000).

Sachikonye (2002) observed that ZANU PF's 78-year-old presidential nominee focused on his credentials as a nationalist, criticised Western imperialism, and addressed the land issue; in essence, ZANU-PF party found it difficult to renew and attend to the needs of the shifted demographics. Further, another trend observed by Sachikonye (2002) on this election was that the conflict between values and traditions was evident in the various campaigns exhibited by the two major political parties. He observed that the MDC stressed the need for a peaceful campaign and respect for the rule of law through its political symbol of an open palm. In contrast, ZANU-PF took on a "confrontational stance" symbolised by a clenched fist and the

establishment of a militia for their mobilisation efforts. In this respect, the security forces and youth were the agents for unleashing violence on opposition members, who in return, also retaliated with violence.

The 2002 presidential election results favoured ZANU PF, with Mugabe securing over 56 per cent of the vote. Despite this win, the opposition party MDC claimed that, just like the 2000 parliamentary election, the 2002 presidential ones were 'stolen.'

3.3.9 THE 2005 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

The 2005 parliamentary elections held on the 31st of March 2005 marked the sixth parliamentary elections in Zimbabwe since independence. They were held in a complex political environment (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2008). Some of the events had their roots in the experiences of the 2000 parliamentary and 2002 presidential elections. For instance, prohibitive legislation enacted in 2001 and used to curtail opposition mobilisation activities was again used during 2005. These laws are the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and the Access to Information and Privacy Act (AIPA).

The legal framework for conducting elections in Zimbabwe also witnessed changes. First was the ratification of the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections (2004), which came after the summit in Mauritius. The Zimbabwean government, in fulfilment of the obligations laid out in the guidelines, enacted new electoral laws, which are the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission Act (Chapter 2: 21) and the Electoral Act (Chapter 2: 13) (Mataure 2005: 112). The Electoral Act (Chapter 2: 13) replaced the same act (Chapter 2: 01) (Mataure, 2005: 113). According to Kriger (2008), these two new laws introduced formal reforms yet mostly replicated the undemocratic electoral regulations the administration quickly implemented before the 2000 and 2002 general elections to maintain its authority.

The two major political parties since the 2000 elections, ZANU-PF and MDC, experienced internal squabbles, which affected the latter party's performance during the election. The MDC experienced a split for many reasons, including deciding whether to participate in the election. The split saw two factions, one led by Morgan Tsvangirai and the other by Professor Welshman Ncube, resulting in the MDC-T (led

by Tsvangirai) and MDC-M (for Mutambara who took over from Ncube) (Ndlovu-Gathseni, 2008).

The generational factor was more important for this study and informed the ZANU-PF internal fights. This was manifest in the battle for leadership within ZANU PF, which involved leveraging generational gaps to overshadow ethnic divisions by a small yet vocal faction of 'Young Turks' (Kagwanya, 2005). This can be considered a critical moment within this party to have considered the generational factor, paving the way for discussions other than the traditional issues of liberation struggle and imperialism. However, it is still fundamental to note that this factor was only a means to ward off the factional fights in the party. Yet its importance should not be overlooked. As the ruling party since 1980, the mere talk of the young and generational issues was influential in the country's political arena.

Although the electoral environment witnessed less violence, it did occur. The main actors were the youth, mostly unemployed, and other vulnerable groups like single mothers and orphans (Mhike, 2007). It is estimated that more than 40,000 young militia members completed training at the National Youth Service training centres, and this was part of Mugabe's strategy to have these young people fulfil a quasi-military role and suppress or even torture opposition members (Kagwanya, 2005).

The 2005 parliamentary elections were again won by ZANU PF, which garnered 78 seats, followed by MDC, which garnered 41. One seat won by an independent candidate, Jonathan Moyo (Vollan, 2005: 18). Together with the 30 appointed members, ZANU-PF ended up with 108 seats, exceeding the two-thirds majority required for amending the Constitution.

3.3.10 THE 2008 HARMONISED ELECTIONS

In 2008, Zimbabwe experienced two controversial election processes (Ndhlovu-Gatsheni, 2008: 11), the first being the harmonised elections held on the 29th of March and the presidential run-off election held on 27 June of that year. The elections held in March marked the first time Zimbabwe was conducting all four elections, that is, the presidential, senatorial, parliamentary and local authorities, at once, hence the name 'harmonised elections.' Also, the elections took place after the Constitutional Amendment No. 18) of 2007, which increased the number of members of the House

of Assembly from 150 to 210. Unlike in the past, all of the members of the House of Assembly were to be directly elected. This progressive reform seems to have been a triumph for the long-held debate on the effect of presidential appointments on democracy in Zimbabwe. For instance, as early as 1995, there had been contentions on the issue. For example, Makumbe and Compagnon (2000: 39) cited a government mouthpiece that supported the appointments, arguing thus;

> The President has exercised his nomination authority to introduce individuals into parliament whom he believes are essential for his administration and to correct any disparities he perceives among the elected representatives. This serves as the primary rationale for the presidential privilege of appointing a limited number of MPs.

Accordingly, as anti-appointment contenders had long argued, the appointments were an affront to democracy because the previous 30 appointed MPs equally took part in all debates and voted just like the elected people, and consequently, this distorted the real meaning of democracy (Makumbe and Compagnon, 2000: 39). Thus, the amendment was progressive in that it repealed this initial undemocratic practice in Zimbabwe. Therefore, the subsequent elections after the Act were now held on an equal footing, with the president having no constitutionally secured seats for appointments, implying the triumph of democracy about parliamentary seats.

The opposition party, MDC-T, emerged victorious in the parliamentary elections, winning 99 seats, ZANU-PF97, MDC-M 10 and one seat going to an independent candidate. After a reunion in April, the MDC factions had 109 seats. This marked a historic moment for the opposition, where they won over ZANU-PF and obtained a majority in parliament for the first time since independence. However, although the opposition leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, won the presidential election, he still needs to reach the required threshold; hence, a rerun was set for the 27th of June. The use of violence to intimidate opposition was unleashed during the period towards the run-off election. Masunungure (2009: 83) observed that following 29 March, the campaign took on a militarised character. Instead of the ruling party, the security forces took the lead in driving the march towards the 27 June run-off. There are also accounts of ZANU-PF youths unleashing violence against opposition members and supporters. In this instance, these young perpetrators of violence can be seen as the vanguard of the nationalist leaders. This confirms the sad reality of youth participation in

campaigns, thereby excluding them from partaking in meaningful activities with the prospects for representation in the national parliament.

Later, to break the deadlock in the country, a mediated government of national unity was brokered, and it operated until the 2013 elections paved the way for another government. The significance of these elections on democracy was the fundamental question on whether it is possible to have a shift of power from the nationalist leaders to the opposition through elections. The establishment of a Government of National Unity (GNU) proved the infancy of Zimbabwean democracy which was not yet mature to allow for a transfer of power. Accordingly, in such an environment, the question of inclusion and representation in parliament of minority and other groups such as youth and women were insignificant issues.

3.3.11 THE 2013 HARMONISED ELECTIONS

Zimbabwe's 2013 harmonised elections were highly anticipated because they marked the end of a period of political uncertainty (Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN), 2013) and reflected "a critical juncture in Zimbabwe's socio-economic and political development…sealing the fate of the 2009-2013 three-party coalition government," (Masunungure, 2014: 1). The elections were conducted following the adoption of a people-driven constitution which was one of the key political reforms to be implemented by the government of national unity established in 2009. The constitution provides a hybrid system of FPTP and PR systems (AU, 2013: 9). The FPTP is used for electing the 210 members of the National Assembly, while the PR is used for the 80-member Senate and 60 seats for the women's quota (Vollan, 2014; AU, 2013; ZESN, 2013; Sachikonye, 2013). As a result, the elections took place under an electoral framework modified by the Electoral Act of 2012, the updated Constitution of Zimbabwe, and various statutory instruments enacted just before the elections (ZESN, 2013: 96).

The new constitution adopted in 2013 has been hailed as progressive due to the inclusion of a women's quota and representation of people with disabilities (ZESN 2013). Section 124 (1) (b) of the Constitution provides 60 seats for women in the National Assembly. Similarly, Section 120 of the Constitution (1) (d) provides two seats to represent people with disabilities. While progressive in terms of representation of women and people with disabilities in parliament concerning youth, the constitution

merely encouraged institutions and agencies of government to implement sensible actions to ensure that youth are represented and participate in all spheres of life. Therefore, it can be argued that the new constitution was instrumental in adding a 'youth factor' to the country's political discourse. Compared to women, it can be seen that the will to ensure youth representation was minimal since no seats were reserved for them[23].

Apart from the age factor from the Constitution, age did not play a significant role during this election. Much of the reference to age was seen during opposition campaign messages. This was meant to de-campaign ZANU PF's presidential candidate, Robert Mugabe, who had been in power for almost three decades. Morgan Richard Tsvangirai, the presidential candidate for MDC-T about age once said,

> I have no intention of exploiting my opponent's advanced age, but Zimbabwe could enter the Guinness Book of Records if they elect a 90-year-old. The issues we face today cannot be resolved by those from the past (Zamchiya, 2013: 957).

Thus, the age factor was only instrumental in de-campaigning Robert Mugabe and not a sincere imploration to include the youth in the electoral context. Interestingly, Tsvangirai's reference to age was not that he was a youth himself but just younger than Mugabe.

On the ZANU-PF campaign messages was the domination of what Tendi (2013: 964) calls "patriotic history." According to Tendi (2013: 963), patriotic history uses a particular version of liberation history to make a point. For instance, during a rally in Mashonaland Central, Mugabe said,

> I've heard that Tsvangirai has been campaigning in Mashonaland Central. Is he unaware that this is the territory of Mbuya Nehanda? Our initial star rally took place here at Nzvimbo to remind you of your true identity and highlight the sacrifices many made during the liberation struggle (Tendi, 2013: 964).

Significantly, patriotic history has the effect of portraying liberation fighters and participants as the rightful leaders who, by that experience, are the rightful leaders to be voted into political office. Having such messages thirty-three years after independence is exclusionary, for it does not accommodate the youth, who in

[23] Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 2) Act 2021 Section 124 (1) (c) as provides ten seats for youth aged twenty-one to thirty-five years. Therefore, the Amendment was first operationalized during the 2023 elections.

derogatory terms are the ‘born-frees’ (Oosteroom & Gukurume, 2019). Thus, while Mugabe’s use of patriotic history discriminated against the opposition broadly, it also discriminated against the youth. Therefore, it can be seen that the 2013 electoral environment was not tolerant and was open to youth elections in parliament.

According to the results of the 2013 elections, Robert Mugabe defeated Tsvangirai with 61% to 34 %, and Mugabe’s ZANU-PF won 158 of the 210 parliamentary seats (Ndoma, 2015: 1), giving it a parliamentary majority. From Tsvangirai’s campaign message, it can be argued that history was repeated in the form of Mugabe’s re-election; ‘yesterday people’ were again given a chance to rule and lead Zimbabweans. Consequently, concern over young people was not a part of the discourse then. This is even evident in the observer reports. Only the SADC Parliamentary Forum Election Observation Mission mentioned youth in its recommendations. It, however, made minimal reference to the youth where, after acknowledging the young population in Zimbabwe stated that the representation of women and young people in all areas of society, including governance systems and other avenues for democratic involvement in state matters, is a strategic and democratic necessity that must be actively pursued (SADC PF Report, 2013: 51). Interestingly, the report praised the participation of women and young people in carrying out voter education and election campaigns (SADC PF Report, 2013: 51).

The 2013 elections, like the previous elections in Zimbabwe, revealed a lack of institutionalised regulations focusing on youth. Although the 2013 constitution, endorsed through a referendum, incorporates Section 20 dedicated to youth, it lacks the formalization or explicit detailing of the specific actions that government and state entities ought to implement to enhance youth engagement in politics. Similarly, the SADC PF report on the involvement of youth in participating in conducting voter education and campaigns first defies their recommendation on the vigorous pursuit of ensuring youth representation and secondly provides a basis for the need for a theory and approach that can be adopted to influence youth representation in national parliament. Therefore, a participatory democracy with safeguards for youth participation is a means for ensuring youth participation beyond voter education and election campaigns. This theory envisions youth participation, including their candidature and subsequent election into national parliament.

3.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter aimed to explore how electoral systems, as a legal framework, might affect the engagement of young people in the voting process. The chapter also examined the various elections that were conducted in Zimbabwe to determine the key trends and how they shaped youth political participation. The chapter found that youth political participation and the prospects for their subsequent representation in national parliament cannot be understood apart from the electoral systems.

Electoral systems set the rules by which candidates are elected into office. Hence, they are crucial in determining the prospects for youth elections in the national parliament. Electoral systems are also essential in determining the nature of democracy in a country, whether primacy would be given to accountability, representativeness, establishing a durable government, or promoting minority office holding. They are divided into three main categories: PR, majoritarian, and mixed electoral systems. Theoretically, PR systems are known for ensuring representative government, while majoritarian systems promote accountable governments. Consequently, mixed systems seek to balance representation and a responsible government. Importantly, no one electoral system fulfils all the potential benefits of electoral systems. Usually, a trade-off of some principles occurs for the realisation of others. Also, contextual factors such as internal party politics among the host of contextual factors can inhibit youth representation even where a party list system is used.

Zimbabwean electoral history reveals that it dominantly used the FPTP system, only to adopt a mixed electoral system in 2013 following the adoption of a new constitution. However, the PR in Zimbabwe is tilted toward ensuring women's representation, not the youth. Yet, electoral systems are just one element determining youth representation in the national parliament. Therefore, the context and broader electoral environment also matter; thus, the extent to which the mixed system in Zimbabwe has promoted or obstructed youth representation during the 2018 and 2023 harmonised elections remains to be seen.

Zimbabwe’s electoral history from 1980 to 2013 revealed a domination by the successive ZANU PF-led government. Electoral politics in the country for the first decade aimed to establish a one-party state. This was evident in the unity accord

between ZANU-PF and PF ZAPU. Subsequently, the main issue around the 1990 elections was what Moyo (1990) termed “voting for democracy.” The elections were meant either to seal ZANU PF’s move towards establishing a one-party state or to embrace multi-partyism. Even though ZANU PF’s attempt to create a one-party state was obstructed, they dominated the state machinery, and the conduct of elections did not lead to democratic governance in the country. Literature evidenced this first by the nature of elections, and the structure of parliament, where appointed MPs constitute almost a third of parliament. The presidential appointments affront democracy since the appointed MPs wield the same power and responsibilities as directly elected MPs. Also, with the prominence of patriotic history in ZANU PF, the appointment of youth was unlikely. Elections were marred by rigging, vote buying, and violence. It can be argued that 1985 produced a youth narrative that continued to haunt the country. ZANU PF’s youth Brigade forcibly bused villagers to rallies. Similarly, in the subsequent elections, even youth from the opposition retaliated with the use of violence. This seemed to have been the basis of the narrative that youth are violent political actors.

The failure of elections to ensure democratic governance in Zimbabwe may also account for the rise of independent candidates in Zimbabwe. This phenomenon also had a youth narrative, as reflected in Margret Dongo’s independence candidature during the 1995 elections after accusing ZANU-PF of vote rigging. Her subsequent victory signified the interest among the youth, not to mention the gender dimension of participation in the top tiers of the pyramid for participatory democracy with safeguards for youth participation which are; candidature and election into parliament. Therefore, Zimbabwe’s electoral history as discussed in the chapter reveals the interest among the youth to participate in parliament, yet the environment has not been supportive.

The political landscape in Zimbabwe took a turn during the 2008 elections and the implementation of a government of national unity. Following the government of national unity, some political reforms were to be implemented as a guide for the subsequent elections. Accordingly, the new constitution adopted in 2013 was key among those recommendations. The Constitution sought to improve the representativeness and inclusivity of parliament. However, it only had a quota of 60 seats for women and two seats were reserved for people with disabilities in the Senate.

Hence, beyond Section 20 addressing youth concerns, it can be contended that the matter of youth representation in the national parliament is a topic that requires active pursuit and attention.

Electoral politics in Zimbabwe since independence was dominated by the agenda and narrative of the hegemonic party, ZANU PF. The rhetoric on liberation struggle, patriotic history, imperialism, and regime change dominated their campaigns and the general political arena. The role of the youth in this narrative has been their co-optation as agents of unleashing violence. However, it must be emphasised that youth are not a homogenous group; others exhibit agency and participate in politics beyond campaigns and voting. Nonetheless, there has been little or no documentation of the youth factor in decision-making institutions such as the National Assembly. This makes this study important and timely in this respect. The next chapter provides an empirical analysis of youth participation in the 2018 elections and the prospects for their representation in the Zimbabwean 9th Parliament.

CHAPTER 4
DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS ON THE 2018 HARMONISED ELECTIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed electoral systems and gave a historical overview of elections in Zimbabwe since independence. The chapter concluded that the use of the FPTP electoral system in Zimbabwe mainly facilitates accountability and not representation of youth in the national parliament. However, while a mixed electoral system using the FPTP and PR may have better chances of ensuring a balance between an accountable and representative government, contextual factors also influence the outcomes of the electoral system. Thus, despite, their importance in ensuring representativeness, electoral systems do not facilitate youth representation in national parliament; other factors, such as internal party processes, also matter. The chapter also concluded that the ZANU-PF nationalist sentiments have dominated electoral discourse in the country since independence. The youth have thus been relegated to peripheral political activities such as instigating violence against political opponents. Therefore, there has been limited research and or focus on youth representation in the national parliament.

This chapter presents and examines the research results on youth participation during the 2018 harmonised elections and the potential for representation in Zimbabwe's 9th parliament. Using the four tiers of participation identified in this study (as depicted in Figure 2.1 Pyramids on Youth Participation) which are campaign, voting, candidature, and election into national parliament, the chapter explores the state of youth participation during Zimbabwe’s 2018 harmonised elections. These findings are instrumental in establishing youth participation and representation in parliament and the subsequent safeguards required in Zimbabwe for enhanced youth representation in the National Parliament.

Zimbabwe has a bicameral legislative system (comprising the National Assembly and Senate) outlined in the new constitution adopted in May 2013. The power to make laws is held by parliament and the President (Section 116 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe). Youth participation in the national parliament is crucial because demographically, they constitute a significant percentage of the country’s populace. Representative democracy involves the participation of diverse groups of people in a

society, including the youth. In this respect, parliaments are the critical representative institutions in a democratic system (IPU, 2016; UNDP, 2022) where youth representation is crucial.

As presented in this chapter, the study's findings are based mainly on a literature review and some interviews conducted to supplement the data as indicated in Chapter 1. Extensive literature review of election observation mission reports, local and international such as African Union (AU), Carter Center report, combined report of the International Republican Institute and National Democratic Institute (IRI/NDI), European Union (EU), Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) among others were consulted. Other reviewed works include Afrobarometer policy papers and articles from vital Zimbabwean academics, including Lewanika, Masunungure and Sachikonye.

The results discussed in this chapter stem from the 2018 general elections. This chapter addresses the following research questions:

- What is the nature of youth participation and representation in Zimbabwe's 9th parliament?
- What mechanisms and structures are in place to promote youth participation in Zimbabwe's national parliament?
- What challenges hinder increased youth participation in parliament in Zimbabwe?

The above were the central questions upon which sub-questions were developed and administered during the interviews conducted with officials from the parliament of Zimbabwe, academics, and young parliamentarians who served under the 9th parliament.

A total of 20 interviews were conducted for the study. The table below presents the number of interviews conducted with the research participants.

Table 4.1 Interviewee Profiles

Key Informants[24]	Number of Interviews
Young Parliamentarians	12[25]
Parliament of Zimbabwe	2
Academics	6
Total	20

The table presents the total number of interviews that were conducted. This implies that the twelve young parliamentarians who were interviewed served in the 9th and 10th Parliament. The 9th Parliament had very few numbers of youth. Thus, the researcher managed to interview three of the five young parliamentarians in the 9th Parliament[26]. This was reasonable considering the youth population in this Parliament. Furthermore, the data was supplemented with interviews conducted with officials from the Parliament of Zimbabwe concerning the 9th and 10th parliaments. While only three young parliamentarians were interviewed from the 9th Parliament, which had only five youths, concurring responses from the young parliamentarians in the 10th Parliament (nine youths were interviewed from this parliament) may also be referenced. Six interviews were also conducted with academics.

It should be understood that the study mainly focused on the original members of the 9th Parliament regarding the 2018 general election. The death of members and recalls that saw the re-election of other members of parliament to fill the vacant seats may be referenced, but they were not the major focus of the study[27].

[24] As discussed in Chapter, the coding used for presenting the responses of the respondents is as follows, PO1 stands for Parliament Official 1, A1 for Academic 1 and 2018YP1 for Young Parliamentarian for the 9th Parliament formed in 2018 respectively.

[25] This is the total number of young parliamentarians who were interviewed from both Parliaments, that is 9th Parliament (3 participants were interviewed) and 9 from the 10th Parliament.

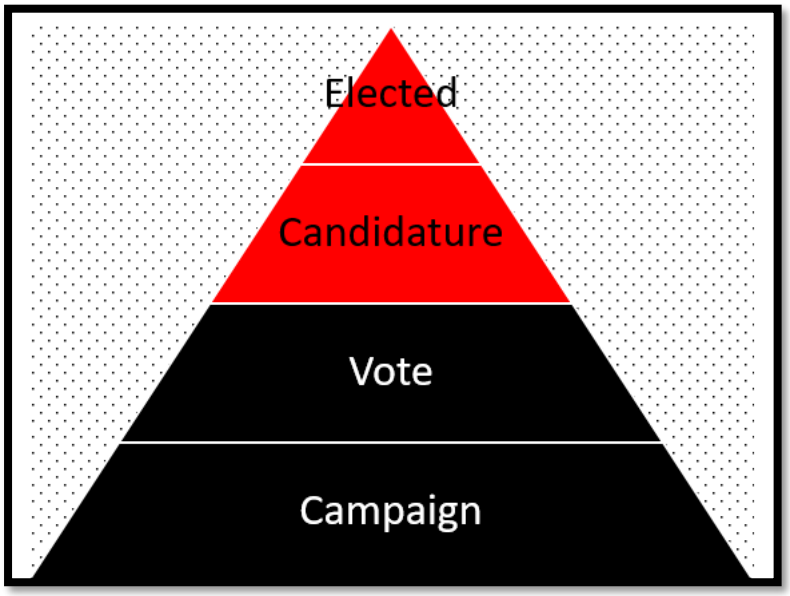
[26] There were only five young parliamentarians in the 9th parliament. The researcher therefore interviewed 60 per cent of the young parliamentarians (that is, 60).

[27] Interestingly, after the passing of Glen View South Member of Parliament, Vimbai Tsvangirai-Java, on 10 June 2019, Vincent Tsvangirai was subsequently elected on 7 September 2019 becoming

Participation revisited

Building on classical participatory democracy, this study introduced the concept of participatory democracy with safeguards on youth participation. The study uses parliament as a sector of participation, where democracy is fulfilled when the youth are represented in the National Parliament. For youth representation to be ensured, key electoral activities that youth should be involved in include campaigning, voting, and standing as candidates with a fair chance of being elected into the national parliament. These activities were presented in a Pyramid presented as Figure 2.1 in Chapter 2 and herein restated.

Restatement of Figure 2.1 Pyramid A: State of Youth Participation



Pyramid A, as introduced in Chapter 2, represents the empirical case of youth participation in Zimbabwe. As guided by the Key to the Pyramid, youth mainly participate in campaigns and voting, which is normal because there is broad political participation. However, as represented by the red colour, youth participation rarely goes beyond voting. As such, youth participation in candidature and elected political offices such as the national parliament is very minimal, and it is concerning.

the youngest MP in the 9th Parliament. However, while this may be referenced, the focus of the study is on the young parliamentarians who took office at the start of the 9th parliament.

Subsequently, the findings regarding the participation of youth in the 2018 Harmonised elections are presented against the activities shown in the Pyramid above to determine their representation in the 9th Parliament. It should be noted that the pyramid as restated above represents Pyramid A (which shows the state of affairs on youth participation) and Pyramid B (representing the ideal scenario where youth would be equally participating on all the rungs of the pyramid).

4.2 YOUTH POLITICAL PARTICIPATION DURING THE 2018 HARMONISED ELECTIONS

4.2.1. THE 2018 HARMONISED ELECTORAL CONTEXT

The study found that the 2018 Harmonised elections held on the 30th of July 2018 were significant in the Zimbabwean electoral discourse and youth participation trajectory for several reasons. Several political developments accounted for this state of affairs. First, these elections were conducted following the military-assisted transition in November 2017, paving the way for a government led by Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa. When he was sworn in, Mnangagwa significantly promised socio-economic and political change under the 'new dispensation' rubric and the 'Second republic' (Ncube, 2022). The 2018 Harmonised elections were thus the litmus test for the Second Republic, a measure of whether elections can usher in change from Mugabe's 37 years of autocratic rule.

For the youth, the study found two dominant narratives of the implications of the significant political developments before the general elections. On the one hand, the young parliamentarians in ZANU-PF interviewed for the study (two of the three young parliamentarians interviewed for the 9th Parliament) revealed an optimistic perception of the youth's socio-economic well-being under the new dispensation. One respondent indicated that "Under the new dispensation led by His Excellence E.D Mnangagwa, youth are incorporated in his developmental trajectory of 'Leaving no One Behind- youth are now assured of employment, mining rights and access to land. Youths are now part of decision-making institutions like the parliament." In contrast, the opposition young parliamentarian interviewed for the study 2018YP3 revealed a pessimistic view of the new dispensation. The respondent argued that the new dispensation is a continuation of the captured state institutions which however are being steered by a new face. These results are consistent with the responses of academics interviewed for the study. Most of these academics were pessimistic about real change in terms of

the structures and institutions in the new dispensation and the potential for real change in terms of youth representation.

Subsequently, the 2018 general elections were conducted with new presidential candidates for the major political parties. Mnangagwa was the presidential candidate for ZANU-PF while Nelson Chamisa stood for the MDC-Alliance. Interestingly, Chamisa had just met the age requirement of 40 six months before the election day to run for the presidency (Commonwealth Report, 2018: 27). Thus, at the presidential level, the contest between Mnangagwa and Chamisa symbolised a generational contest; between the old guard and the youth[28]. In the context of the political landscape and new leadership of the major political parties, Masunungure (2018) observed that Zimbabwe experienced "a three-level 'new dispensation': in the country, in ZANU-PF and the main opposition MDC-T." Therefore, the election results were crucial in determining the significance of this 'three-level 'new dispensation' to the youth discourse in the country.

In line with this study and the changed electoral environment, Afrobarometer Policy Brief No. 47, raised two fundamental questions about youth participatory behavior during this election. The first question is, "What is the focus of the election? What key concerns are motivating various groups of voters- young and older, rural and urban- to participate in the election[29]?" The responses on the pressing problems revealed that of the 2400 respondents, 64 percent responded that unemployment was the most pressing issue, followed by economic management (39 percent), with wages and salaries as the third issue (25 percent) (Bratton & Masunungure, 2018: 4). The report indicated that unemployment is the most pressing problem for the youth thus almost 73 percent of the registered young people aged 18-25 if they turn out to vote will do so for the candidate with the convincing message about "jobs, jobs, jobs" (Bratton & Masunungure, 2018: 4-5). Significantly, for this election, the primacy of the youth factor was not found in the fact that young voters were by and large the determinants of the winners but that their demographic superiority made them an important constituency

[28] Despite Chamisa not falling under the youth cohort (18-34) as provided for by the Constitution of Zimbabwe, his youthful age was a historic break of having older people standing as presidential candidate. Clearly, the age difference between Mnangagwa (76 then) and Chamisa (40) was symbolic to the generational politics in the country.

[29] In answering the above set of questions, the Afrobarometer survey asked participants the question; What are the key issues confronting this nation that the upcoming election should focus on? (Bratton and Masunungure, 2018: 4).

that required representation in parliament. Their representation would subsequently ensure that the pressing problems affecting them as a social group (such as unemployment) are managed with their active contributions. This is in line with participatory democracy which calls for people's (youth in this case) active role in decision-making processes.

More so, the Afrobarometer Policy Brief No. 47 questions crucial for this study were; How significantly will the participation of a large group of young voters, including those voting for the first time, influence the campaign's characteristics and the election's result? Or are other factors beyond age more influential?[30] The report acknowledged a historically significant fact which however changed with the 2018 electoral environment[31]. With almost 73 percent of the young people aged 18-25 percent registered to vote; it implies that these 'virgin' voters could play an influential role in influencing the outcome of the election[32]. However, the report further underscored the importance of all the factors such as age, gender, education, and location (urban or rural). Using responses on voting intentions for presidential elections, the report concluded that when considered in relation to each other, age is the least important factor. The most significant demographic indicators are the voter's place of residence in rural areas… the two primary political parties target distinctly different groups: ZANU-PF appeals to a rural constituency, while MDC-T attracts an audience among educated individuals (Afrobarometer Report No., 47 2018: 9).

While the analysis is crucial in explaining the importance of the youth element in influencing the outcome of the presidential election, it is not clear how the age factor influences parliamentary elections. Also, it points to the challenge of having comprehensive statistics on youth and their participation in elections in general beyond voter registration and its influence on particular outcomes (beyond Afrobarometer's

[30] Bratton and Masunungure (2018: 1).

[31] The report showed that previously, young individuals in Zimbabwe registered to vote, but their turnout rates were low. Thus in 2005, about 54 per cent of eligible 18–25-year-olds were registered to vote, in 2013 the number rose to 57 percent, with a dramatic increase to 73 per cent in 2018 (Bratton and Masunungure, 2018: 6). The dramatic increase of young registrants could be explained by the changed political environment and the potential of the elections to usher in a new era-breaking away from the Mugabe autocratic rule.

[32] Afrobarometer Report Policy No. 47 indicated that one of the popular narratives suggested that young people in urban areas lean towards Chamisa while the older voters lean toward Mnangagwa. On a superficial level, the youthful Chamisa stood a chance to grab the youth vote albeit from urban centres.

focus on presidential election outcome). Yet still, the youth element should be pursued in the lenses through which it can be a determinant or base for their subsequent representation in the National Parliament.

Sixty-six (66) percent (4) of the academics who participated in this study concurred on the significance of the generational element coming out of the 2018 harmonised elections. For instance, A7 argued that the outlook of the major political parties contesting the 2018 elections portrays the generation element in Zimbabwean politics[33]. He argued that,

> In terms of generational politics, a trend can be observed that ZANU-PF rises with age while MDC-Alliance decreases with age. For MDC-Alliance, having Nelson Chamisa a young presidential candidate makes other young people know that it is possible to participate in politics and contest even the highest office. They see *kuti umwe wedu uyu (this is one of our own)*, such a candidate is nearest to them, they can identify with him even if he is out of the youth category. With a youthful leader, youth will say *ndewedu (they are ours)*, they see themselves in him, and it is inspiring.

Therefore, the significance of the 2018 harmonised elections on the youth factor in Zimbabwean elections and prospects of getting into political office strongly was inspired by the changed political environment. This environment came under the rubric of the new dispensation and the attendant hopes for democratisation, a socio-economically improved environment, and the historic presence of an opposition and relatively youthful presidential candidate. It is therefore interesting to examine these elections vis-à-vis youth representation in parliament.

Findings of the study from key reports such as ZEC and ZCC (2018) revealed relatively high numbers of voter registration including among the youth. Out of the 5 695 706 registered voters, 2 506 674 were youth, thereby constituting 44 percent of the total registered voters (ZEC, 2018: 33). Similarly, the ZCC report (2018: 9) stated that for the 2018 elections, there was an incredible interest by all ages to vote with the youth's interests significantly rising from 26 percent in 2013 to 58 percent in 2018, (thus recording a 32 percent increment)[34]. Interestingly, the ZEC report (2018) revealed that

[33] For instance, Masunungure (2018) in comparing the new presidential candidates, Mnangagwa and Chamisa argued that the former's "greatest asset is his youthfulness especially arraigned against the gerontocratic cadres in the rival ZANU PF."

[34] It is not clear which statistics ZCC used for the 2013 and 2018 elections. One caveat which however can be ascertained here is that the final voter's roll for the 2013 elections was availed to political parties on the eve of elections. Also, voter registration during that time was left under the office of

the two dominant groups of registrants for the 2018 elections were the 35- 64-year age group with 47 percent and the youth with 44 percent, while the elderly made up only 9 percent (36). The marginal difference of 3 percent between the 35-64 age group and the youth 18-34 significantly showed that for the 2018 elections, the youth were not apathetic but equally interested in participating in elections just like the 35–64-year group. Alternatively, the changed political environment, wherein Mugabe was no longer a candidate, and symbolically, the presence of a youthful presidential candidate Nelson Chamisa, could have 'inspired' the relatively high number of youth registrants.

Literature reveals that, before the 2018 harmonised elections in Zimbabwe, a new voter registration process took place where the biometric voter registration (BVR) technology was introduced (ZEC, 2018: 8). According to ZESN (2013), the voter's roll that was used in Zimbabwe's 2013 elections had thousands of ghost voters, double registrants and was spoiled by under-registration of young voters. The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) (2018) report argued that the "quality of the voter's roll is an important factor in public confidence in the integrity of elections." Therefore, the BVR was introduced to address issues related to public perceptions on ghost voters and multiple registration (ZEC, 2018: 8). Therefore, it can be argued that the introduction of the BVR technology and the new voter registration system commended the ZEC in its administration of the 2018 elections. In a way, this could also have improved public perceptions including among young voters such that more youths were registered to vote as compared to previous elections. This narrative shows that youth are interested in politics broadly and voting in particular if the institutions and processes are improved to ensure electoral integrity.

Overall, with the foregoing discussion, it can be argued that the 2018 Zimbabwean electoral context presented what Masunungure described as a 'new electoral trajectory,' where Zimbabwe appears to be on the verge of having a fair and peaceful

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the Registrar General and not given to the newly established ZEC (as provided for by the transitional articles in the Constitution which had just been adopted that year, (Vollan, 2014:25). Subsequently, different statistics of voter registration were given by the Registrar General; as at June 2013 the total voter registration was at 5 874 115, on 9 July it was 6 187 003 and lastly on 23 July it was 6.4 million (Vollan, 2014: 25; RAU, 2013). All this took place amidst reviews from different stakeholders such as the Research and Advocacy Unit (2013) review of the voters roll that it had a lot of inconsistencies such as duplicates and dead people appearing on the list and that a lot of young people were not registered. Given the different statistics availed by the Registrar General, it is possible to have ZCC with 58 per cent of youth registered to vote compared to ZEC's 44 per cent for the 2018 elections.

election, with the additional possibility that the competition could indeed be free and credible, (2018). Such an environment appeals to the youth who look forward to credible and peaceful elections which has the potential to usher in change that has the potential of improving their socio-economic well-being. Youth from different political divides expect different outcomes from the environment hence the need for a systematic presentation of youth participation in the election and the opportunities or lack thereof of their subsequent representation in national parliament.

4.2.2 POLITICAL PARTIES AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION DURING THE 2018 GENERAL ELECTIONS

Findings of the study both from literature and interviews reveal that political parties are essential for operationalising democracy. Political parties are therefore the vehicle through which the youth get elected into political office. Stokes (1999: 245) contends that political parties are the workhorse of democracy and that modern democracies cannot work without them and cannot work well if they are weak. In concurrence, Hofmeister (2022: 7) is of the view that parties make a fundamental contribution as the cornerstone of democracy in the following ways:

1. They represent and influence political rivalry, serving as the most significant and often sole participants in elections;
2. They have a crucial role in governance, engaging in the legislative process and overseeing government activities in parliament;
3. They educate, engage, and motivate citizens to actively participate in politics and nominate individuals to run for office in elections;
4. They strive within government and parliament to uphold, and potentially enhance, fundamental political freedoms-freedoms essential to their survival;
5. They operate in government and parliament, as well as in other political contexts, ensuring adherence to the law and safeguarding the independence of the judiciary.

Ultimately, when influential parties help weaken one or more of the above-mentioned cornerstones of democracy, the democratic order would be threatened (Hofmeister, 2022: 7).

The primacy of political parties to the democratic order was also a prominent theme in the interviews that were conducted for the study. Point number 3 from Hofmeister's cornerstones of democracy was emphasised by most of the respondents both academics and young parliamentarians as the key duty of political parties which directly has a positive influence on youth participation, candidature in elections, and subsequent elections into the national parliament. Similarly, Sachikonye (2005: 65)

buttresses the point by stressing that “parties are the key instruments in encouraging and mobilising participation in the political process.” Almost 100 percent of the academics who were interviewed for this study concurred in pointing out the primacy of political parties in influencing participation in the political process. In particular, A3 argued that,

> In Zimbabwean politics, being an independent candidate does not pay. Electoral politics in Zimbabwe is a party affair. Without a party, one is a lonely figure. Chances of election into office are zero to very little. Partisan affiliation is important.

Youth representation in the national parliament should therefore be assessed from the institutionalized participation of the youth in political parties.

While political parties are the workhorse of democracy and can facilitate youth representation in national parliament, the nature and organization of parties are crucial for the fulfilment of these roles. There is a seemingly observable trend of mature and opportunistic parties towards election time in Zimbabwe and beyond. According to Sachikonye (2005: 65), in Southern Africa, most citizens associate parties with ‘elections’ because mostly new parties are formed to contest the elections and the old ones rise from the ‘dormant’ state springing into action. Consequently, there is a certain level of “‘electoralism’ that pervades the strategic thinking outlook of both ruling and opposition parties, old and new,” showing an “opportunistic” or “entrepreneurial” approach. Therefore, membership of youth in either mature and well-established parties or opportunistic ones influence the chances of their selection as candidates and chances of being voted into political office.

4.2.3 PARTIES CONTESTING THE 2018 GENERAL ELECTIONS AND PRIMARY ELECTIONS

Reviewed data from the literature revealed a burgeoning number of political parties seeking to contest the 2018 harmonised elections. Reports indicate that as of 14 June 2018, almost 133 political parties were before the Nomination Court, later dropping to 55 (IRI/NDI Report, 2018; Lewanika, 2018; ZESN, 2018a). The table below presents statistics on the number of candidates who sought to contest the elections standing as candidates for the 55 political parties.

Table 4. 2 Candidates for the 2018 Elections

Total Number of Candidates	1 631[35]
Number of Male Candidates	1 391
Number of Female Candidates	240
Percentage of Female Candidates	14.7 %

Source IPU Parline (2018)

From the table above, it can be noted that statistics on the number of candidates are commonly disaggregated in terms of sex and not age[36]. This points to the fact that statistics on youth political participation activities on candidature are missing. Lack of such statistical information may point to the relegation of youth candidature to the periphery thereby implying that, in Zimbabwe, representation only matters with regards to gender, not age[37]. Therefore, concerning the youth factor or generational import of the election, it was only present in the outlook and was not successfully institutionalized within political parties. Youth candidature as an activity on the rung of the Youth Participation pyramid remains unchanged, and minimal. It remains an ideal to be realized maybe in the near or distant future.

Literature reveals that, notwithstanding the 55 political parties that contested the general election in 2018, the race was just a contest between the incumbent ZANU-PF and the MDC-Alliance. The study confirms Rusinga's (2021: 93) perspective that the elections were just a binary contest between the aforementioned parties thereby reflecting the binary nature of electoral politics[38] since the emergence of

[35] This number is also inclusive of the 246 candidates that contested the elections as independents. The IRI/NDI report (2018) observed that in most instances these were incumbents who had lost primary elections.

[36] Similarly, the results from the Nomination Court for the National Assembly Direct Election held on July 30, 2018, as provided by ZEC for the 2018 Harmonised Elections, only break down candidate data by gender.

[37] Section 124 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe (before Constitutional Amendment No. 2 Act of 2021) provided for a women's quota of 60 seats. This meant that for the 2013 and 2018 general elections, women had 60 seats reserved for them in the National Assembly to be distributed on a proportional representation basis.

[38] Rusinga (2021:93) aptly notes that despite splits in the opposition at different junctures, an MDC splinter group would always the main opposition. Consequently, for the 2018 elections, the Chamisa-led MDC-Alliance was more popular than the Khupe-led MDC-T.

this largest opposition political party around the late 1990s. Youth candidature therefore should be situated in a prognosis of the candidate selection processes of these parties and their subsequent gains. For the youth, this again points not only to the primacy of party affiliation but affiliation to which party, old or new.

From the reports reviewed for the study, it was found that only ZANU-PF and the MDC alliance held primary elections out of the 55 participating political parties (ZESN, 2018a; EU, 2018). ZANU-PF managed to conduct primary elections throughout the country and subsequently managed to field candidates for all the constituencies under the contest[39] (ZESN, 2018a: 66). However, divisions within the parties manifested in terms of tensions and incidents of violence during the party primaries (Commonwealth Group Report, 2018: 9).

Findings from reports indicate that ZANU-PF primary elections took place from 29 April to the 1st of May 2018. However, they were characterized by irregularities, vote buying, ballot stuffing, and manipulation of voter registers (Heal Zimbabwe, 2018). For instance, some of the recorded incidents of violence occurred in Chegutu West on 3 May 2018, where one of the aspiring candidates Dexter Nduna is said to have discharged a firearm injuring one person after some skirmishes with the other prospective candidate at Chinengundu Primary School (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2018: 16). Another occurred in Epworth at Tembwe ZANU-PF offices where a group of ZANU-PF youths from ward 7 disrupted a meeting that was taking place at Tembwe accusing people from ward 4 for supporting Zalerah Makoni, the incumbent MP who had lost primary elections and contesting as an independent candidate (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2018: 16). More so, 100 percent of the young parliamentarians interviewed for the study confirmed the use of violence by some youths. In particular, 2018YP1 argued that youth are usually vulnerable to big and monied politicians who use them for their dirty games, yet not all of them are vulnerable to such acts. It can therefore be observed that the use of violence during primary elections acts as a double-edged sword where first, the use of such violence during primaries precludes youth from participating and showing interest in standing and seeking for nomination. Secondly, the participation of youth

[39] According to ZESN (2018) report, the MDC-Alliance

in such violent activities relegates them to peripheral activities that do not ensure their representation in the National Parliament.

The findings of the study also point to irregularities and incidences of violence during the primaries in the MDC Alliance. The MDC Alliance used consensus building as the candidate selection process, only to conduct primaries in those constituencies where the former process did not work (IRI/NDI 2018: 28). Both the Institute for Young Women Development (IYWD) (2018) and the ZHRC (2018a) reports on primary election observation for the MDC-T indicate the use of both consensus building process and primary elections especially in those constituencies where the former did not work. The ZHRC (2018a) report indicates that provinces such as Mashonaland West, Bulawayo Metropolitan, and Matabeleland North preferred consensus as opposed to primary elections. Furthermore, the report observed that the party reserved some constituencies for youth and women in Mashonaland Central. However, the report did not specify the constituencies and rationale for such an approach in this particular constituency.

Findings from key The Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (2018: 16) again reports an incident that occurred on 20 May 2018 in Budiriro where youths from Ward 43 resisting the imposition of Costa Machingauta blocked the gate and prevented people from voting, resulting in the postponement of the elections. Violence was also experienced in St Marys Chitungwiza during the consensus-building process with physical fights fronted by the MDC Alliance youths (IYWD and (ACBOs), 2018).

Literature also revealed that, apart from the primary elections and use of consensus building process in ZANU-PF and the MDC Alliance respectively, smaller parties that contested elections also fielded candidates for contesting the general elections. However, unlike the former parties, they did not conduct primary elections. ZESN (2018a) reported that the candidate selection processes for the smaller parties are ambiguous, and reports suggest that the leadership of these parties made arbitrary choices regarding the selection of party candidates. Such an approach not only points to a lack of internal democracy within political parties but also the limited space that minority groups, including the youth, have to be nominated for candidature.

Findings of the study from observer reports indicate the prevalence of the imposition of candidates both in ZANU-PF and the MDC Alliance. In the MDC Alliance, imposition of candidates was reported to have occurred in Mashonaland East and Chipinge. In particular, the ZHRC (2018b) report indicates that in Mashonaland East, the electorate complained of the imposition of a candidate from the United Kingdom whom they did not know. It can thus be argued that the possibilities of this particular individual having bought the authorities in the party for the subsequent candidature are high since they were a Diasporan. This experience relates to the challenges raised by young parliamentarians during interviews for the study. Almost 60 percent (6 of all the 10 young parliamentarians interviewed) both from ZANU-PF and the MDC Alliance concurred on the imposition of candidates by party leaders. In particular, 2018YP 1 and 2018YP 2 argued that in some instances, primary elections are precluded when the leaders seek to protect their preferred candidates. As such this can prevent more youths from standing as candidates as they may not be the preferable candidates with the political clout and resources needed for campaigning (A2 during an interview for the study).

Furthermore, the findings from observer reports on the monitoring of primary elections reveal a lack of internal party democracy in the conduct of primary elections for the dominant parties, ZANU-PF and MDC Alliance. Imposing candidates and fielding multiple candidates in some constituencies attest to this. For instance, according to ZESN (2018a: 40), twin-candidature was a common element for the parties contesting the 2018 general election the MDC Alliance has the largest number of double candidates running in constituencies including Mazowe North, Mazowe South, Mazowe West, Muzarabani North, Goromonzi West, Bikita West, Masvingo South, and Zaka West[40]. Interestingly, even smaller parties such as People's Rainbow Coalition (PRC), MDC-T and National Patriotic Front (NPF) had double candidates in at least some of the 210 constituencies (EU, 2018: 18). Other dissatisfied candidates who lost primary elections decided to stand as independents (EU, 2018; IRI/NDI; 2018; ZESN, 2018a), and this accounts for the highest number of independents contesting the 2018 general election.

[40]The MDC Alliance had multiple candidates in almost 13 constituencies (EU 2018: 18; IRI/NDI 2018: 28).

The findings of the study further reveal vote buying as a major challenge encountered during the primary elections with an immediate impact on youth candidature and internal party democracy in general. Most of the election observer reports for the general election reported the challenge of vote buying during the candidate selection processes (Carter Center, 2018; EU, 2018; IRI/NDI, 2018; ZHRC, 2018a; ZHRC, 2018b). Some of the reported cases in ZANU-PF were apparent in constituencies such as Gokwe South, Chegutu West and Masvingo North where candidates distributed groceries (ZHRC, 2018b: 14). A more shocking incident which the observers for the ZHRC heard from the electorate was the case in Kwekwe Central where it was alleged that one candidate paid $21 000 to Kwekwe City Council for utility bills for prospective voters and bought four Honda Fit cars for district Chairpersons. Such deplorable vote buying activities affect the youth most of whom are unemployed. Instead of seeking for nomination they would rather be recipients to the goodies being offered by the candidates.

Overall, party affiliation is crucial in Zimbabwean electoral politics and the candidate selection processes significantly influence the nomination of youth as prospective candidates. From the foregoing discussion, it can be argued that for the parties that conducted primary elections, the process was not conducive for youth nomination especially with the prevalence of vote buying, candidate imposition and deep-seated factionalism within the parties. Further compounding the challenge is the lack of disaggregated data on youth candidates from the Nomination Court for the successful 2018 National Assembly candidates.

4.2.4 CAMPAIGNS

Several election observation reports described the campaign environment as peaceful with an unprecedented level of political freedoms (Carter Center, 2020; Commonwealth, 2018; EU, 2018a). Such an environment of reduced political violence significantly increased youth participation in the lead-up to the elections, there is a possibility for ongoing involvement, provided the government does not revert to a culture of violence and intimidation (Muyambwa, 2018: 82). According to the Carter Center (2020: 28), the integrity of democratic elections is ensured by the maintenance of an open and transparent campaign environment characterized by a vibrant free press. The campaign period for the 30 July general elections in Zimbabwe followed the president’s announcement of the election on 30 May 2018

up until 28 July 2018 (AU, 2018; EU, 2018; Lewanika, 2018; ZESN, 2018a), despite the Youth Interface Rallies conducted by Robert Mugabe in 2017 were a component of ZANU PF's strategy for the 2018 election (ZESN, 2018a: 43) has been considered as relatively peaceful.

Literature reveals that Zimbabwe's legal framework and its obligations from international conventions establish obligations for the campaign environment to ensure to conduct of peaceful and democratic elections. For instance, Article 19 (2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (1966) provides for the right to freedom of expression the liberty to search for, obtain and share information and ideas of various types. Furthermore, Zimbabwe's Electoral Act incorporates a code of conduct that provides for the obligations of political parties and candidates throughout the election campaign period. It also details the prohibited activities thereby creating an environment of tolerance with the potential of having elections in an environment devoid of fear, coercion, and intimidation (Carter Center, 2020: 29). Such an environment is crucial for facilitating the participation of all the eligible voters including the youth. Therefore, it can be argued that the relatively unprecedented peaceful campaign environment for the 2018 general election was conducive to youth participation in all the activities of the pyramid of youth participation which are campaigns, voting, candidature, and the prospective election into National Parliament.

Findings of the study from election reports reveal the use of several campaign methods by the contesting political parties. These campaign methods include large- and minor rallies, canvassing efforts, handing out flyers, promotional events, apparel such as t-shirts and wristbands, traditional cloth for women (*mazambia*), providing food supplies, offering agricultural tools, funding social gatherings like barbeques, and purchasing drinks for the voters (AU, 2018; EU, 2018; IRI/NDI, 2018; ZESN, 2018b). While there were numerous parties contesting the election, ZESN (2018b) report indicates that ZANU-PF and the MDC Alliance and to some extent the PRC were outstandingly visible during their campaigns. On the same note, the IRI/NDI (2018) report concluded that ZANU-PF enjoyed more prominence during the campaign due to its wealth of resources and a well-structured organisation. These findings reveal that better-resourced parties have greater

chances of reaching out to the electorate. Under-resourced parties are less likely to reach out to the electorate, limiting their chances of being known and voted for. For the youth, it implies that alignment to better resourced parties engenders their chances for reaching out to the electorate and being voted into parliament.

All the 9th Parliament young parliamentarians interviewed for the study revealed that youth are vibrant campaigners. All the directly elected youths ascribed their victory to the door-to door campaigns and the use of social media as the enablers for their victory. For instance, 2018YP 2 indicated that, "*Ndaitomukira kuma4 am ndichienda kunoita* door-to-door campaign. Plus, *pandaiita macampaigns, ndaishanda netarget yekuregister* at least 100 youths per day (I would wake up around 4 am to do door-to-door campaigns. In addition, during the campaigns, I had a target of registering at least 100 youths per day)." Similarly, 2018YP 3 indicated that as young candidates, they faced limited financial resources, as such, making use of their energy and youthfulness worked as some of the tradables for effective and successful campaigns. According to 2018YP 1, "If the youth can campaign successfully for the older politicians, why not for our own?" These results therefore reveal that, youths have the potential to be both campaigners for other candidates and for strategizing their own campaigns. This implies that youths are capable political actors who like other citizens require the space and chance to get into political office.

Findings of the study also reveal that youth are the main mobilizing agents for political parties during the campaign periods. According to the Commonwealth (2018: 39), youths and women constituted the largest share of the people who attended rallies organized by different parties. This corresponds to the dominant notion that youths are mainly involved in campaigns. Similarly, almost 60 percent of the academics interviewed for the study confirmed the trend. In particular, A5 argued that "the youths are usually brought into an active manner during campaigns. They are brought in in an opportunistic way where they are used and discarded after elections." In the same manner, A4 during an interview for the study argued that

> Youth have mainly been used for mobilizing people. In the process of mobilizing, they have at times been used to commit violence, at the end of the day getting into police custody. Some of the youths closer to the centers of power will be protected while others will languish in jail. In return for these active roles during

campaigns, they are given crumbs or cars to use. The use of youth is common in both ZANU-PF and MDC-Alliance. However, it is important to note that youths coming from elite families are not exposed to such arduous campaigning tasks. So, the experiences of youths differ in terms of where they are coming from.

Youths as a social group therefore is not homogenous yet common to them is the relegation to peripheral political activities such as campaigns and use of violence for the furtherance of the party guards. With such experiences, prospects for youth representation in national parliament remains minimal.

4.2.4.1 FINANCING OF ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

One of the dominant themes from the findings is that, successful campaigning requires substantial financial resources. Candidates and political parties require money to support their ongoing activities to run election campaigns (ZESN, 2018b: 2). The financing of political parties can be done by the government or private donors to allow parties and candidates to reach out to the electorate and attract votes (ZESN, 2018b: 2). In Zimbabwe, political parties are funded through public finance which is regulated by the Political Parties (Finance) Act [Chapter 2: 11] of 2001. Section 2 and 3 of the Act regulate the manner in which citizens and other entities finance political parties. According to Section 6 of the Act, political parties are not allowed to receive foreign funding. Financing of political parties under the Act is determined by representation in the national parliament. Accordingly, the Act provides for the yearly funding of political parties that received 5 % of the vote in the preceding election (EUOM, 2018: 13). For the 2018 general elections, only two parties qualified for funding under the Act, and these are ZANU-PF and the MDC-Alliance (ZESN, 2018b: 63), each receiving US $ 6, 126, 633 and US $ 1, 873, 663 respectively (EUOM, 2018: 23).

Findings of the study reveal uneven financing capacity to mobilize and conduct campaigns. Among the contesting parties, ZANU-PF and MDC Alliance outshone other parties in terms of popular support, mobilization capacity and financing spending (ACBOS, 2018). Since these parties were beneficiaries to state funding under the Political Parties (Finance) Act, they managed to be more visible than the other smaller parties. ZANU PF's incumbency, however, enabled it to use state resources for its campaigns thereby giving it a stronger financial base (ACBOS, 2018). ZANU PF's financial muscle during the campaigns was manifest through the

unmatched purchase of 15 million T-shirts, 15 million caps, and 2 million body wrappers to entice votes (Gagare, 2018). Similarly, each of ZANU PF's parliamentary 210 national assembly, 60 senatorial and 60 women's quota candidates were given party vehicles (Gagare, 2018). In contrast, apart from state funding, the MDC A as of June 2018 was appealing for funding for recruiting polling agents, posters, billboards and other campaign costs (Gagare, 2018). Thus because of uneven financing sources and the abuse of state resources by ZANU PF, the 2018 campaign environment was slanted in favour of the incumbent party (Ndakaripa, 2020) because, "the use of state resources in elections give incumbents 'unfair electoral advantage.'" (Ritchie & Shein, 2017).

Political financing for political parties and the differential financing spending directly influences youth participation and candidature in elections. As underscored before, just as party affiliation is crucial for endorsement of youth candidates, it is equally important for financing their campaigns. Considering the differences in funding allocated to ZANU-PF compared to MDC A as per the Political Parties Finance Act, and the subsequent use of state resources, it is clear that ZANU-PF youth candidates had an upper hand in their campaigns opposed to their counterparts. More so, youth candidates in smaller parties were thus at a bigger disadvantage. Youth independent candidates further found themselves at a precarious position. This was aptly highlighted by one 2018YP 3 when answering the question; How do political parties assist in financing campaigns for parliamentary elections, he responded;

> It is only the ruling party that assists its candidates not the opposition. The only assistance I got from the party were the 800 presidential poster and nomination court fees. In 2018, polling agents were not paid; the party should have paid them, but we, the candidates, paid them. We were just given the soft copy of the poster and you would do the rest for yourself.

On the other hand, both 2018YP 1 and 2018YP 2 were grateful and enthusiastic about the financial assistance they received from their party. They both indicated that they were given party vehicles to use for campaigns, presidential posters and their own parliamentarian posters. The party even assisted them in initiating community development projects. Therefore, the experiences of youths in relation to financing campaigns is differentiated by party affiliation with youth affiliated to the incumbent party better placed to finance their campaigns. In relation to democracy,

the issue persists regarding the extent to which affiliation to the incumbent party, ZANU-PF is informed by a free and open choice and not the material benefits that one gets first as a party member and or candidate. This reflects the dilemma of democracy in an environment where vote buying and abuse of state resources is rampant.

The foregoing section has confirmed the campaign rung on the Pyramid of youth participation. Youths constitute a large share of the campaigners during elections who at times are subjected to violent acts. In return, they get material benefits. In relation to their campaigns as candidates, youths from well-resourced political parties usually incumbents are better resourced and accordingly able to conduct successful campaigns.

4.2.5 VOTING

The second rung of the Pyramid on Youth participation focuses on voting. The relatively high numbers of youth registrants for the 2018 elections confirm the Pyramid for youth political participation. After the first rung of the Pyramid, the concentrated number of youths participating in campaigns, voting is the other political activity where youth actively and increasingly participate in. However, there is no consensus in literature over youth participation in this activity, on the one hand, there are narratives of apathy amongst the youth while others point to high interest among the youth to vote during elections.

Findings from the surveyed literature revealed a dominant notion of youth apathy. The apathy model is common in African literature (Lekalake and Gyimah-Boadi, 2016) and Southern Africa (EISA, 2015), where it has been argued that youth report lower rates of political engagement than their elders on various indicators, including voting. The apathy perspective claims that young people tend to be disengaged from political life (Zvaita and Tshuma, 2019), and they vote less (Desnick and Casale, 2011: 2; UNDP, 2013) when compared to the older generation (Chikwanha & Masunungure, 2007). The general assumption is that young people ignore politics during the initial phases of their lives and only involve themselves with it at a later stage (Rampedi, 2017: 130). Chikwanha and Masunungure (2007: iv) concurs by arguing that youth are shy to participate in politics and this is manifest throughout the Afrobarometer countries where they record lower levels of participation than their elders.

Closely related to the apathy perspective on youth participation is cynicism. Cynicism is based on the general thinking that the youth do not want to participate in politics (Kimberlee, 2002 as cited in Cammaerts, *et al.*, 2006: 11). According to Zvaita and Tshuma (2019: 25) youths are cynical about politics and have a low level of confidence in the country's democracy. Although young people might demonstrate interest and involvement with significant issues within their political systems, they also perceive that the political opportunities available do not align with their needs for participation. Booysen (2015) in a study Youth and Political Participation in South Africa's Democracy, found that unemployment among the youth is a common challenge and the youth themselves were cynical about the prospects of getting jobs without political connections, despite having good educational qualifications. Although the general interpretation of that situation would be non or low disengagement of the youth in political activities, Booysen argued youth indeed participate or vote unfortunately for the sake of getting that feeling of contentment where they can appreciate that they have done what they could do. In line with these findings, it can be argued that in relation to the Zimbabwean 2018 elections, the interest of youths to vote might have been sparked by hope for a changed and brighter future following the change of leadership. In this way, a youth's participation in the subsequent elections is hinged on the extent to which the current election fulfilled their hopes. Implied from this narrative is that youth participation is directly influenced by the environment, thus, apathy or active participation are but responses to the broader economic, social and political context prevailing at a time.

Findings from the Election Resource Centre (ERC) (2013) reported general voter apathy in Zimbabwean elections. In relation to the youths, the RAU (2017) analysis of the 2013 elections was that the youths make up about 41% of the eligible voters but only constituted 14 % of the registered voters in Zimbabwe[41]. Zimbabwean electoral environment until 2013 conformed to the general trend of apathy including amongst the youth. Yet context also matters in accounting for apathy, its continuance and or sustenance. Thus, the changed political milieu following the 2017 transition witnessed increased numbers of youth registering to vote. For instance, Muleya argued that, for the first time since gaining independence in 1980, young people have the power to

[41] These statistics serve as anecdotal evidence derived from a mixture of unofficial assessments of the 2013 voters roll of the Zimbabwean population (RAU, 2017: 2).

determine the country's leadership, assuming there is no rigging or fraud… this indicates that the next election winner must have strategies and tactics to secure the support of the youth vote (The Independent, 2 March 2018).

One unexpected finding of the study which contrasts the above dominant narratives on youth participation reveal increased number of youth registrants for the 2018 elections. This contradicts the apathy perspective and confirms that context matters in shaping youth participation and voting in particular.

The high levels of statistics on youth registration for the 2018 elections as shown in the table below confirms this narrative

Table 4. 3 Voter Registration for the 2018 Harmonised Elections by Age

Age Group	Males	Female	Total	Percentage of total registrants
18- 34 years	1,182,793	1,323,881	2 506 674	44 %
35- 64 years	1,232,142	1,462,918	2 695 060	47 %
65 years and above	207,584	286,388	493 972	9 %
Total			**5 695 706**	**100 %**

Source: ZEC (2018).

Findings of the study as tabulated above reveal that youths constituted almost 44 % of the people registered to vote, second place from the 35-64 years age group. This translates to a difference of 3 % only. Therefore, for the 2018 elections, youths constituted a large share of the electorate in Zimbabwe. This is in line with the rung on Voting on the Pyramid for youth participation. ZEC (2018c) report attributes the increased number of youths who voted in the 2018 general elections to four fundamental factors which are; a tranquil atmosphere leading up to the elections, engaging young people to rally together, the optimism of a fresh start, and education on civic responsibilities. Therefore, the dramatic increase of youth registering to vote for the 2018 elections is significant. First, it points to the importance of change in leadership as a means of improving the electoral context. Secondly, it shows that

youths are indeed interested in institutionalised political participation including voting, where they show less interest, there might be other factors curtailing their participation.

4.2.6 CANDIDATURE

Youth participation as conceptualised in this study, goes beyond the ballot box. It also includes youth candidature. Youth are equally eligible citizens who should stand as electoral candidates for democratic rule to prevail in Zimbabwe. This was confirmed by Fadzayi Mahere, one independent and young candidate for the 2018 elections, during an interview when she argued that,

> We frequently discuss the importance of youth engagement, often emphasising the necessity of voter registration. However, when it comes to ensuring our opinions are included in discussions, we seem to be absent. Therefore, we desire a scenario where the youth, who represent the largest segment of the eligible voting population, can turn our significant numbers into a meaningful voice that is respected within the formal political sphere, (Charamba, 2017).

Therefore, it is crucial to note that in relation to youth participation, the youths themselves in Zimbabwe, want to participate as candidates and to be elected into political office because that is where real power lies. This understanding thus confirms the four rungs of the Pyramid on youth participation which recognises youth candidature and election as top tier level activities where the youth have to be incorporated.

Section 67(3) provides for political rights for every citizen of Zimbabwe. In subsection 3 it states that every citizen of Zimbabwe aged 18 or older is entitled to vote and run for public office (Paragraph (a) and (b)). Yet, one can only be a national assembly candidate if they are 21 years of age and above (ZEC 2018b). Thus, the discrepancy of the voting age and candidature for election into parliament compromises youth citizenship. This confirms ZESN (2018c)'s observation that "Youths remain socially excluded group without a voice over their rights…Given that youths are allowed to vote for their selected candidates at the age of 18 years, it is concerning that the current constitution allows for discrimination against young individuals seeking to run as candidates in local, parliamentary and presidential elections".

Findings from IPU reports reveal that Zimbabwe is amongst the countries where the youths have to wait for some years after acquiring the right to vote prior to qualifying

for parliamentary office (IPU, 2016: 15). The legal barriers relating to assuming political office are expected to almost 69. 7 percent of the sampled parliaments where the minimum age to hold political office is higher than the voting age (IPU, 2023: 11). The legal barriers are also compounded by the attitudes of older politicians who believe that young people are immature and incompetent to hold political office (Bidadanure, 2021). Young people are therefore viewed as a politically apathetic social group with no interest in formal politics (IPU, 2023: 11).

The findings of the study also reveal a lack of statistical information regarding youth candidates in elections. In the case of the 2018 general elections in Zimbabwe, most of the observer reports, both local and international, reported about the total number of candidates for the elections. Similarly, they highlighted the increased number of independent candidates, some of whom were said to be youths, yet the aggregation reported is on sex. The ZESN (2018c) report confirms this narrative by noting that the 2018 electoral environment in Zimbabwe was characterised by the highest number of independents, most of whom were youths who had been affected by internal party structures that do not give agency to the youth despite having youth wings. Again, the nomination court candidate report for national assembly candidates in Zimbabwe presents the candidates' sex and party. Therefore, gender appears to be the overarching factor that matters with age being considered a peripheral issue. This complicates research on youth candidature and prospective representation in Parliament. It remains oblique to know the number of young candidates that political parties fielded or those who contested the election as independents.

Findings of the study both from literature review and interviews revealed that youth candidature was strongly determined by party politics. According to Raleigh (2018), because of the highly factionalised internal leadership contest within the main political parties, almost 15 per cent (248 out of 1 649) of candidates are running as independents. In relation to ZANU PF, Raleigh (2018) observed that there was a high turnover of candidates during the primary elections with Mashonaland West, Mugabe's home province, the most affected province due to intra-party tension following the November coup. 100 percent of the young parliamentarians serving in the 9th Parliament confirmed the influence of factionalism on youth candidature. The

youth's chances of becoming party candidates are higher if they are aligned to the powerful faction in the party. This is usually accentuated by the fact that at times, party leadership, apart from factionalism imposes candidates.

One interesting finding on candidature relates to the dynamics of party politics and how young people can exhibit agency against seasoned party members. This relates to candidature for the opposition party, MDC Alliance for Harare West constituency. The incumbent MP, a woman withdrew her candidature and contested as an independent after she alleged that, young Joanah Mamombe was being supported by party officials against her. She argued that,

> Recently, I have encountered a significant amount of hostility, discrimination, and disrespect from party officials, primarily via social media. This all indicates to me that I am no longer a valued member of the party. We were promised by the party, as well as by the new president, Nelson Chamisa, that our positions would be secure, (Nkululeko, 2018).

In a separate interview, the young candidate, Joanah Mamombe, insisted that, the guidelines of the party specify that all leaders must undergo validation and that members have the freedom to run for office. Consequently, Mamombe stood as the party candidate and won with 64 per cent of the total vote while the incumbent contesting as an independent got 13 per cent of the vote (ZEC, 2018b). Therefore, in some instances, youths have the potential to contest and win primary elections, even against seasoned party members and politicians.

The study's findings from the literature also revealed the increased number of independent candidates for the 2018 general elections, some of whom are believed to be youths (ZESN, 2018c). Sithole and Makumbe (1997: 130) trace the issue of independent candidates to the 1995 parliamentary elections, where the number had significantly increased compared to twelve independent candidates for the previous elections (1990). They highlighted that no independent candidates existed for the three preceding elections (1985, 1980 and 1979). Thus, the number of independent candidates rose from twelve in 1990 to thirty in 1995 (IPU, 1995; Sithole & Makumbe, 1995). Consequently, for the 2018 general elections, 248 of the 1 649 parliamentary candidates ran as independents. They included the youths and disgruntled ZANU-PF and MDC Alliance members, and others like Fadzayi Mahere who just wanted to stand for what they believe in without being constrained by

matters that political parties influence, the dynamics of faction X, faction Y, and the politics involved in attempting to establish a stance (Charamba, 2017). Unfortunately, for young independent candidates, Zimbabwean electoral history reveals that independent candidates have not been successful (e.g. Raleigh 2018, points out that there were only two independent MPs in the 8th Parliament). Therefore, the prospects of the election are marginal for young independent candidates. Party affiliation matters for subsequent election into National Parliament.

4.2.7 YOUTH ELECTION AND REPRESENTATION IN THE 9TH PARLIAMENT

Findings of the study reveal limited representation of youth in the 9th Parliament. The legislature is bicameral, consisting of the National Assembly (the lower chamber) and the Senate (the upper Chamber). As stated in Section 143 (1) of Zimbabwe's Constitution, the Parliament's duration is five years, commencing from the date the president-elect takes the oath of office. Following the 2018 general elections, the president-elect was sworn in on 26 August 2018, marking the commencement of the 9th Parliament, which was dissolved on 22 August 2023 ahead of the 2023 harmonised elections. This section therefore presents findings on youth election in the 2018 general elections and discusses their subsequent representation in the 9th Parliament.

The study found that youth are underrepresented in the Senate in Zimbabwe. Unlike the lower house where some youths are eligible to be elected or appointed through the party list, the youth are ineligible to be members of the Senate. Section 121 (1) (b) of the Constitution limits Senate candidates to at least 40 years. Thus, with youth ranging from 18- 34 years, it implies that there is need for waiting for almost 6 years from the age of 34 for one to qualify as a Senate candidate. IPU reports on youth participation corroborate this finding. In particular, the IPU (2016) report observed that youth underrepresentation in parliament is common, especially in the upper house; mostly, this is caused by the higher minimum age required to run for office compared to the voting age, which usually requires waiting until 25, 35 or even 45.

Findings from literature and interviews revealed contesting views on the eligibility age for candidature in parliament, especially, the upper house. Within the reviewed literature, on the one hand, some argue that positions in the upper house of

parliament should be occupied by the mature and seasoned politicians not the young. Philosophically, this line of argument supports Plato, who argued that “the philosophical maturity of leadership was not achieved until the age of 50” (Mckee & Barber, 2001). This can be inferred from Money and Tsebelis’s (1992) view that the primary function of the upper house is to serve as a “learned” group that can safeguard the state's Constitution. Implied from this viewpoint is the idea that the members of the upper houses, who in most instances are middle and older politicians, are better placed and “learned” enough to be able to safeguard the Constitution than the young. In contrast, Phillips (1995) argued that the “dominant presence of the elderly in legislatures cannot be justified on the basis of their ‘natural superiority of talent.’”

More so, findings from the interviews revealed the contentious nature of the subject of age in relation to eligibility in the Upper Houses of Parliament. In Zimbabwe, as discussed above, the eligibility age for senatorial positions is 40. Using Plato’s standard, it means the prospective senatorial candidates in Zimbabwe aged 40 still would not have gained the philosophical maturity of leadership. However, most of the participants in this study (academics and officials from the parliament of Zimbabwe) concurred on the importance of experience and maturity as the motivating factors for having 40 as the eligibility age for senatorial positions in the country. For instance, participants from the Parliament of Zimbabwe first argued that the age of 40 is legally provided for in the constitution. Hence, it is a legal matter which cannot change unless the Constitution is amended. For these participants, the motivation for this law is that the prospective senatorial candidates are mature and wise, exhibiting the experience required for the office. In support of this, A6 argued that,

> At 40, the anticipation is that one would be mature. They would have gained experience from various walks of life, including industry. As it is said, age comes with wisdom, so these people are balanced and are better placed to make decisions guided by rationality and not emotions. For instance, the Constitution of Zimbabwe also reserves some seats for chiefs. These chiefs are the custodians of culture and can guide policy-making by our culture. The underlying factors that must be emphasised are experience and wisdom, which are the basis for the constitutional regulation of setting 40 as the minimum age for senatorial positions.

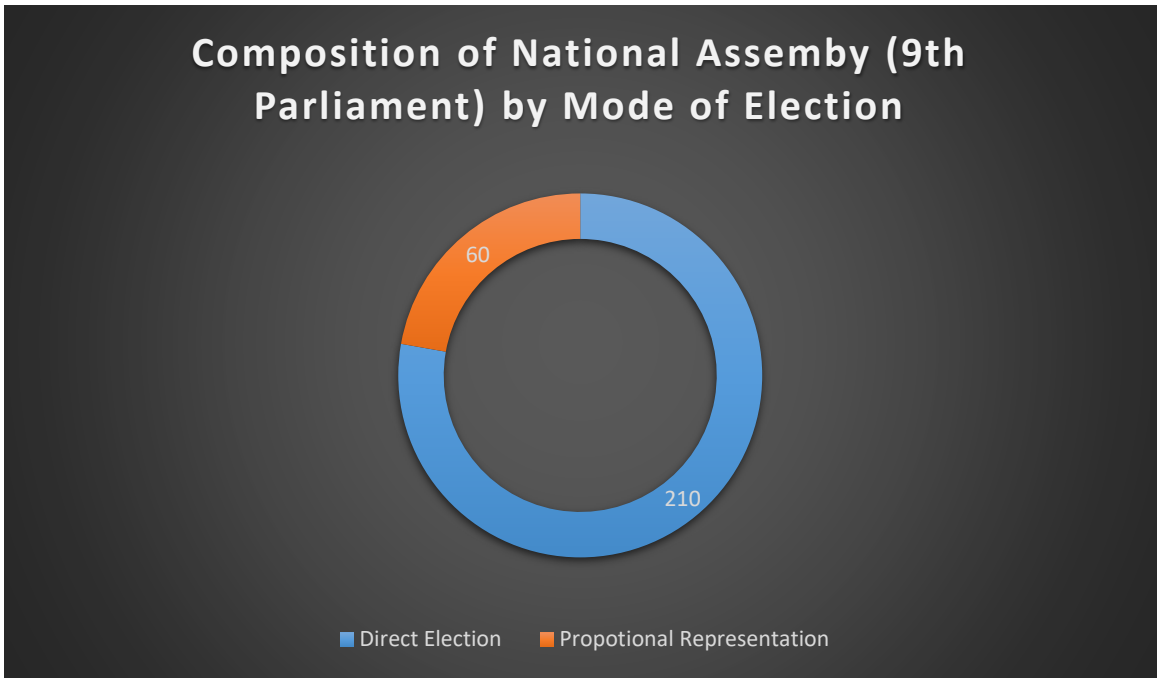
Therefore, it can be argued that the legal threshold for candidature for the upper house in Zimbabwe and other cases, as reported by the IPU, is exclusionary and keeps the youth far from political office based on experience and the wisdom factor. Rather than apathy, the legal frameworks in countries such as Zimbabwe circumscribe the extent to which youths should go regarding institutionalised participation. In support of Murray (2014), it can be concluded that "the narrow composition of legislatures suggests either that certain groups within society are less capable of representing others or that something has gone awry in the recruitment process." Regarding the Pyramid of youth participation, youths are only tolerated if they participate at the lower rungs of the pyramid—during campaigning and voting only.

In addition, the study also found youth underrepresentation in the National Assembly. Section 125 (1) (b) of the Constitution sets the minimum age for candidature in the National Assembly at 21. Implied from this is that only the 18–20-year-old youths are excluded from standing as National Assembly candidates. In accounting for this waiting period, A 6 raised fundamental issues on eligibility age. He argued that,

> It might appear as exclusionary to have the 18–20-year-olds excluded from running for National Assembly seats in Zimbabwe. However, if we consider carefully, we may see that the constitutional provision is okay. For instance, it is not prudent to vote into office someone who in the case of the 18-year-olds, lacks political experience. An 18-year-old is a first-time voter and it is not possible to vote that person into office. Also, mostly this group constitute in most instance tertiary students, without the requisite finances to fund campaigns. Having them in office is possible, but it means they would be speaking on behalf of their sponsors; hence this waiting period is necessary.

Therefore, for National Assembly seats, the group of youth eligible to contest for election are the 21- 34-year-olds. Accordingly, for the 9th Parliament, there were two main ways through which youths could become members of parliament, the first was through direct election for the 210 contested constituencies and through the proportional representation system for 60 seats reserved for women (only applying to young women) (PO1 during an interview for the study, 2024). The figure below presents the composition of the National Assembly in Zimbabwe;

Figure 4. 1 Composition of the 9th National Assembly by Mode of Election



Source: Author's Compilation from the Constitution of Zimbabwe.

From the figure above, it can be observed, that youths have more chances of getting into the National Assembly through direct election (78%) as opposed to through proportional representation (22%) albeit for young women.

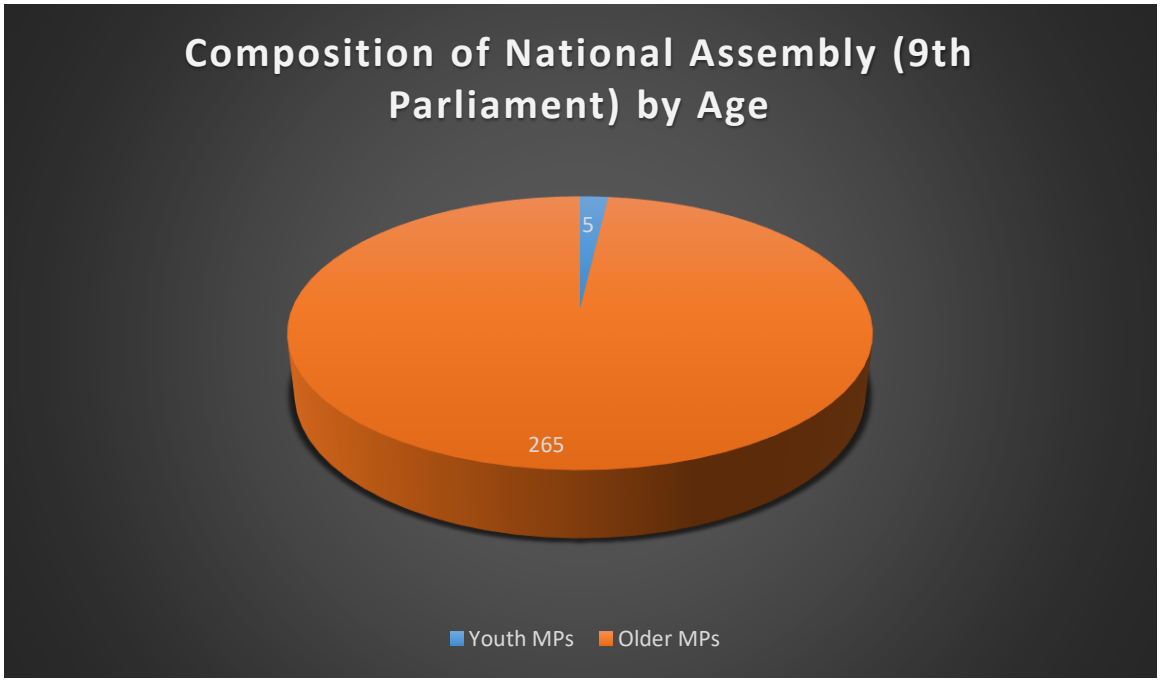
The above finding on the modes through which youths could get into national parliament reveal the lack of mechanisms that promotes youth representation in National Parliament. The proportional representation system (the 60 seats reserved for women under the quota system[42]) is used as a Temporal Special Measure (TSM) for addressing the challenge of women's under-representation in national parliament. According to the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1979) Article 4, TSM are a means of "accelerating the de facto equality between men and women." Yet there is no such measure for the youth who also constitute a large share of the Zimbabwean population. Therefore, the democratic project in Zimbabwe remains incomplete if there are no constitutional guarantees just

[42] Section 124 (1) (b) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe as Amended through Constitutional Amendment No. 2, Act, 2021 provides for women's reserved seats for the first four parliaments after the adoption of the new constitution. This means that the women's quota is set to expire in 2033.

as the women's case and measures that ensure the representation of the youths in National Parliament.

The findings of the study indicate that out of the 270 members of the National Assembly, there were only 5 youths. The figure presents the composition of the National Assembly by age;

Figure 4.2 Composition of the 9th National Assembly by Age



Source: Parliament of Zimbabwe 2024[43].

Findings of the study as shown in the figure above reveal that, out of the five seats taken by youths, only three were won by youths from the 210 contested constituencies (Parliament of Zimbabwe 2024 (interview data)). The other two seats were taken by youths (young women) through proportional representation (women's quota). Consequently, of the 5[44] young parliamentarians in the 9th parliament, 60 percent of the youth were female (three out of five) because young

[43] Data obtained from interviews conducted at the Parliament of Zimbabwe.

[44] The total number of young parliamentarians can become 6 if considering the re-elections that took place after the death of incumbent MPs, thus in 2019, Vincent Tsvangirai (24) became the youngest parliamentarian following the death of Vimbai Tsvangirai-Java, MP for Glen View South.

women could either get into parliament through direct election and or the women's quota.

The concerning low number of youths who were elected into parliament, which is 3 out of 210 (almost 1 percent) reveals first the importance of party affiliation and lack of internal party regulations which advances the youth agenda, through increased youth candidates for elections. In relation to party affiliation, of the three youths who were elected into parliament, all of them belonged to the main political parties, ZANU-PF and MDC Alliance. No young independent candidate managed to win the election. In fact, out of the 210 contested constituencies, only one was won by an independent candidate[45]. This confirms the unpopularity of independent candidates in Zimbabwean electoral discourse. Interestingly, the table below presents the per cent share of votes obtained by independent candidates in the constituencies won by youth;

[45] The winning candidate is a former ZANU-PF member and a popular politician Temba Mliswa.

Table 4. 4 Percent share of votes obtained by independent candidates

Table 4.i Muzvezve Constituency

Main Parties	% share of votes obtained
ZANU PF	72
MDC Alliance	21
Independent Candidate	0.63
Other Parties share combined	6

Table 4.ii Mazowe North

Main Parties	% share of votes obtained
ZANU PF	79
MDC Alliance (One)	7
MDC Alliance (Two)	9
Independent Candidate	1
Other Parties share combined	4

Table 4. iii Harare West

Main Parties	% share of votes obtained
MDC Alliance	65
ZANU PF	16
Independent one	13
Independent two	1
Other Parties share combined	5

* The independent candidate obtaining 13 votes in Table 4.iii was the former incumbent from MDC Alliance, who accused the party of throwing her under the bus by allowing a primary election contesting with a youth.

Source: Author's Compilation from ZEC (2018a).

From the election results of the three constituencies that were won by youths, two seemingly important findings can be discerned. The first is that party affiliation is the means to election into the National Assembly. Secondly, as once stated by A3, being independent in Zimbabwe does not pay. The statistics obtained by the independent candidates in Muzvezve (0.63 %), Mazowe North (1 %) and Harare West (1 % for independent two) attest to this unpopularity. It can be argued that Independent one in Harare West might have managed to garner 13 % of the total vote because she was the incumbent and a founding member of the MDC who for previously had managed to get political clout, which however, without party

affiliation could not allow her to win the election. Therefore, youths have better chances of being elected into the National Assembly if they are aligned to one of the two major political parties, either ZANU-PF or MDC Alliance.

Similarly, the young and energetic Fadzayi Mahere (independent candidate for Mount Pleasant constituency) did not manage to win the election. She managed to get 22 per cent of the votes casted against the winning candidate who scooped 47 %[46] (ZEC, 2018b). This confirms Raleigh's (2018) observation that independent candidates have little chances of winning elections in Zimbabwe as historically confirmed. For the youths, it means that they stand better chances of election if they are aligned not to any political party, but the main parties in Zimbabwe. Structurally, it implies that political parties are crucial for candidate selection and promoting their election into political office.

One of the unexpected findings on youth representation also reveal that more youths, four out of the five young people in the 9th Parliament, came from ZANU PF. Of the four ZANU-PF young parliamentarians, two were directly elected while the other two were elected through the party list of the proportional representation system (P1 interview 2024). On the other hand, the only MDC Alliance parliamentarian was directly elected. These findings both confirms and contrast Jaji's (2020) analysis of youth in gerontocratic parties such as ZANU PF. This study confirms Jaji's observation that parties like ZANU-PF thrive on rewarding the loyalty of youths, yet for Jaji, this loyalty only comes through material rewards like government jobs and small-scale projects. However, in contrast, this study argues that where necessary and convenient, youth can also be rewarded through parliamentary seats. This is possible especially under the 'new dispensation' where there have been purges of older politicians most of whom were aligned to the former president. It is thus possible that where older politicians were expelled from the party and others precluded from participating in primary elections, some loyal youths got the chance and were co-opted into leadership. Like Jaji, however, it can be argued that,

[46] These percentages were calculated by the researcher using the number of votes cast as produced by ZEC 2018 national assembly results for Harare Province, and Mount Pleasant constituency in particular.

> This situation has led to a scenario of mutual dependence, exploitation, and collaboration between young people and older men, while also punishing youths who are considered disrespectful and non-conformist (2020: 79).

While the findings have revealed an unpopular trend, it still can be maintained that having four young parliamentarians in the 9th Parliament does not show ZANU PF's commitment to youth representation. This is because, internally, the party does not have structures and rules that favours youth election. Similarly, for the opposition, the youthful face and appeal has not translated to the opening up of space for youth election and representation in national parliament. In confirmation of the Afrobarometer Policy briefs cited earlier, age alone is not the best indicator for determining youth voting patterns, other factors such as education and location matters. The reports further indicate that rural electorates favour ZANU-PF, while, the urban ones are likely to vote for the opposition. The results thus confirm the dominant trend on Zimbabwean voting patterns as observed in the Afrobarometer reports. As such, until and unless there are fundamental changes on Zimbabwean political culture, youth representation will remain marginal.

In relation to political culture, and in particular the significance of the military-assisted transition on youth participation, more than half of the academics were sceptical of any positive influence. The participants believed that political culture in Zimbabwe has remained intact notwithstanding the momentous transition that took place. As such, there are no significant changes that should be expected in relation to youth political participation. In responding to the question; 'How does the post-military transition political environment influence youth participation in national parliament? A2 argued that,

> The November 2017 coup was like a volcano, it could have registered a momentous revolutionary change in political culture yet change then was suppressed. The culture slid back to default mode… where there are risk-averse and risk-takers. One riot police lorry is sufficient to dispel any gathering because of such culture *kuti upinde mupolitics* (for one to get into politics) you must be risk-taking, so the conflict-ridden environment dispels youth from participating. Risk-taking attitude requires courage *kupinda muground* (to get on the ground) in the deeply polarized environment. If you participate, you participate by supporting other candidates, supporting the elders**.**

Therefore, the respondent concluded that

> In Zimbabwe, irrespective of age the dominant political culture is risk-averse. People including youth internalized the view that politics is a dirty game. They thus disenfranchise themselves, alienate themselves.

Subsequently, the respondent continued,

> For the year 2018, the trend[47] could be attributed to leadership which in a way wanted to separate itself from Mugabe's patterns. Yet the pattern has been constant, and violence is a solidified feature of Zimbabwean elections which inhibits youth participation.

The above resonates with 2018YP3's view that despite the relatively peaceful electoral environment for the 2018 general election, "The harvest of fear[48] affected youth participation." These results therefore reveal that while significant in influencing youth to register in their numbers for the 2018 elections, the key political developments ushering in new leadership did nothing to change the pillars of Zimbabwean political culture which historically produced risk-averse and risk-takers among the electorate, with the majority being risk-averse citizens. The youth are therefore, part of the majority in the risk-averse category. The 2018 elections therefore could not result in significant high numbers of young parliamentarians due to this solidified political culture.

4.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter presented findings on youth participation during the 2018 harmonised elections and the prospects for their representation in the 9th parliament. These findings were presented against the Pyramid on Youth participation which was used in Chapter 2 in conceptualising how participation is understood in this study. The Pyramid focuses on four main activities which are campaigning, voting, candidature and election.

The results of the research indicated the peculiarity of the 2018 environment as a key aspect that had the potential of influencing youth participation. The change of leadership in ZANU-PF and the MDC Alliance where Mnangagwa and Chamisa stood as presidential candidates for these elections respectively was interesting. The presidential contest as symbolised by these two leaders implied a generational contest between the old and young. Consequently, the 'new dispensation' declared by

[47] The trend on high youth voter registrations

[48] The term 'harvest of fear' means the use of 'threats of violence' based on past experiences. Thus, it does not involve the actual use of violence.

Mnangagwa, Chamisa's youthful appeal, new BVR system and relatively peaceful electoral environment witnessed increased number of youth registrants for the election. The youth category stood as the second highest social group registered for the election. However, while the increased voter registrations by the youth revealed the primacy of context in shaping youth participation in elections by contrasting the apathy perspective, it nonetheless did not translate to a win for the youthful presidential candidate. This means that demographics such as education and location matter in relation to youth participatory behaviour. Bratton and Masunungure underscored this aspect by pointing out that the majority of youth registered where mainly found in the rural areas thereby pointing to ZANU-PF affiliation and win. It nonetheless, should be pointed out that the youth appeal manifest during the 2018 election in Zimbabwe has been fundamental. More so, the dominant political culture in Zimbabwe producing risk-averse and risk-takers has remained intact despite the leadership change. Youth political participation in campaigns and voting therefore did not yield significant gains for their representation due to this ingrained and solid political culture.

While the youth showed interest in participating in all the four rungs of the Pyramid on participation, it should be noted that the findings of the study revealed low youth representation in the National Assembly. There is no youth representation in the Senate (upper house) in Zimbabwe due to age restrictions. The findings revealed that first, the age restriction for the upper house, same as the lower, are constitutionally backed. The motivating factors for such an arrangement are that the youths are deemed immature and inexperienced to make rationale and learned decisions, especially in the upper house, the Senate.

Accordingly, out of the 210 contested constituencies only three youths won the elections coupled with two other young women who were appointed members of parliament under the proportional representation system. Therefore, in the 9th Parliament, there were only 5 out of 270 young parliamentarians. This may also be caused by lack of TSM like the women's quota. At the national level, it can therefore be argued that there is lack of political will to ensure youth representation in national parliament. Notwithstanding this, interestingly, four of the five young parliamentarians came from ZANU-PF while the MDC Alliance had one. These findings reveal that first,

political parties' internal processes and candidate selection processes are not open and do not facilitate youth participation at the candidature stage. Secondly, from the findings, while ZANU-PF had more youths (four out of 5), this does not mean that there are deliberate measures within the party for promoting youth election and representation in national parliament. It could just have been defaulting election of the youth. The 'new dispensation' can thus be viewed as a continuation of the old gerontocratic party structures in ZANU-PF and the MDC Alliance which are not open to youth candidature and representation in parliament. Also, the youthfulness of Chamisa did not translate into more youthful candidates in the MDC Alliance nor their election into parliament. Therefore, party structures and processes matter in determining youth participation and election into parliament.

The chapter also concludes that party affiliation matters in terms of youth candidature and election. While there were increased numbers of independent candidates for the 2018 general elections, some of whom were young people, Zimbabwean politics is party-based. This can be attested by the fact that only one independent candidate managed to win the parliamentary elections. Also, statistics reveal that, at most independent candidates usually garner around 1 per cent of the total votes casted. Furthermore, independence candidature is not favourable for the youths due to the prospects of financing campaigns. Alignment with the dominant political parties, ensure that at least some campaign costs may be shouldered by the party and this increases one's chance of reaching out to the electorate and subsequently being voted into office. Notwithstanding factional politics, political parties are the vehicle through which youth election into national parliament in Zimbabwe can be ensured.

The findings as presented in this chapter therefore, reveal that youth participation is concentrated at the lower rungs of the Pyramid of Youth Participation. Youth are mainly involved in campaigning and at times during the campaigns, some youths may be used in perpetrating violence against opponents either within the party or inter-party opponents. As the Pyramid shows, youth participation at the highest level in activities such as candidature and election is minimal, it decreases. This is caused by various structural elements such as the eligibility requirements which in Zimbabwe is exclusionary of some youths, both for the National Assembly and worse in the Senate. Also, undemocratic candidate selection processes, violence and the use of a PR

electoral system for women only and not the youths, makes youth representation a challenge in Zimbabwe. Therefore, there is need for a participatory democracy with safeguards for youth participation for improved youth representation in parliament in Zimbabwe. The next chapter also presents findings on youth participation in the 2023 general elections and the prospects for their representation in the 10th Parliament.

CHAPTER 5
DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS ON THE 2023 HARMONISED ELECTIONS
5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented findings on youth participation during the 2018 harmonised elections and their subsequent representation in the 9th Parliament. Using the four activities on the Pyramid of youth participation first presented in Chapter 2, the findings revealed youths were mainly involved in campaigns and voting. More youths were registered to vote during the 2018 general elections compared to 2013. The increased youth voter registration may partly be explained by the 'New dispensation' as a transitionary period where the Zimbabweans and the youths, in particular, hoped for change through elections. The hope was that such a change might have the power to transform the political and socio-economic status of the citizens. Unfortunately, while more youths were registered to vote, few participated as candidates. Thus, only three youths were directly elected into the 9th Parliament.

Overall, there were only five youths out of the 270-member National Assembly. Youth are structurally prevented from participating in the Senate, the upper house of parliament. The eligibility age for participating is 40, beyond the youth age range. Therefore, the euphoria characterising the 'new dispensation' and the youthful opposition presidential candidate did not yield any significant change in youth election and representation in the national parliament. Interestingly, out of the five MPs in the national assembly for the 9th Parliament, four came from ZANU PF, the party mostly accused of gerontocracy. The chapter concluded that despite the changed electoral environment signified by Mnangagwa's presidency, the 'New Dispensation' is just a continuation of Zimbabwean political history with limited space for youth representation in the National Parliament.

This chapter presents and analyses findings on youth participation in the 2023 general elections and their subsequent representation in the 10th Parliament of Zimbabwe. These findings are again presented against the four rungs on the Pyramid of Youth Participation.

The findings presented in this chapter were gathered using an extensive literature review supplemented by interviews with academics, young parliamentarians, and officials from the Parliament of Zimbabwe. Ten interviews were conducted with young

parliamentarians in the 10th Parliament. Thus overall, twelve youths were interviewed for this study (three from the 9th Parliament and nine from the 10th one). These participants are coded differently by the year they were elected into parliament. Two different interviews were conducted at the Parliament of Zimbabwe, each focused on the 9th and 10th Parliaments, respectively. Six interviews were conducted with academics. Research participants were coded. Academics were coded as A1 up to A6. The young parliamentarians are coded as 2023YP 1 up to nine, with 2023 representing the year the parliamentarian was elected.

5.2 THE 2023 HARMONISED ELECTORAL CONTEXT

Based on the literature, the study's findings reveal the adoption of progressive legislation and programmes ahead of the 2023 harmonised elections in the country that sought to engender youth participation. This is evident first through the revision of the National Youth Policy. The third policy, the National Youth Policy (2020-2025), is an updated version of the first and second introduced in 2000 and 2013, respectively. The government under the Second Republic commits itself to "prioritise resource mobilisation towards the youth, especially in the areas of education and skills development, employment and entrepreneurship, youth leadership development and their active participation in decision-making processes as well as their health and well-being," National Youth Policy (2020: 1). In particular, thematic area three of the policy focuses on youth governance and participation. It is guided by the objective of empowering youth to participate in and lead the nation's development (National Youth Policy, 2020: 11).

Findings also reveal the adoption of a voluntary youth caucus in the Zimbabwean parliament as another instrumental development to advance the youth cause. The Youth Caucus was established in 2022 to foster and aid in designing youth-friendly policies and legislation (IPU, 2023b). Paragraph 6.4 of the concept note for the Youth Caucus titled Youth Participation and Governance provides that the Caucus aims "to ensure that youth participate in all decisions that affect them directly or indirectly, contributing to national development" (Parliamentary Youth Caucus Concept Note, 2021). Additionally, the concept note stipulates the need to engage youths in Zimbabwe in shaping decisions that affect them and developing mechanisms to promote an enabling environment for youth engagement. It can thus be argued that

the caucus and youth quota are some of the mechanisms adopted for youth engagement.

In addition to the above developments, the government of Zimbabwe adopted quotas through Amendment Number 2 of the Constitution in 2021. The constitutional amendment extended the women's quota to expire in 2023 by another ten years[49]. It also introduced a youth quota. According to Section 124 (1) (c), ten seats shall be reserved for youth members aged twenty-one to thirty-five years, one from each of the provinces in Zimbabwe, elected under a party-list proportional representation system. More than half of the academic participants in the study pointed to the youth quota as a progressive measure that the government adopted before the elections. This was supported by an official from the Parliament of Zimbabwe who, during an interview stated that,

> The youth factor in the Zimbabwean parliament came through the introduction of the youth quota. Food has glucose, meaning it has sugar, but it cannot replace the need for real sugar. Similarly, before the introduction of the youth quota, some youth made it to parliament (and they represent glucose), but the quota, as the real sugar, makes things sweet (P1, during an interview 2024).

The above participant's response implies that youth representation in the national parliament in Zimbabwe originates in the youth quota. Therefore, while previous Parliaments had some youths, the 10th Parliament is the focal point for considering youth representation due to the introduction of the youth quota.

Apart from the progressive policy and legal developments that directly influence youth participation and governance, findings also reveal the presence of repressive legislation being adopted towards the 2023 general elections. For instance, the presidential assent to the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Amendment Bill, also known as the 'Patriotic Bill' into an Act of Parliament can be viewed from this perspective. The Act has provisions that criminalise participation in meetings where sanctions and military interventions are considered or the planning of subverting and overthrowing the government (ZESN, 2023c: 2). Critics are wary that the law seeks to curtail freedom of assembly and freedom of the press (ZESN, 2023c: 2). Given the adoption of repressive legislation, it can thus be concluded that, "the aspirations for a

[49] Section 124 (1) (c) (ii) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe as Amended provides urges political parties to ensure that ten of the sixty women members are under the age of 35.

smooth transition towards democracy were met with disappointment," (Chamadike, 2023: 6).

Therefore, youth participation in the 2023 harmonised elections in Zimbabwe should be understood within the context of a hopscotch of progressive and anti-progressive laws. One constant factor in the 2023 elections was the presidential contest between the incumbent Emmerson Mnangagwa of ZANU-PF and Nelson Chamisa, who led the newly formed Citizen's Coalition for Change (CCC). Other scholars and activists continued viewing the contest regarding the old guard against the new blood (EUOM, 2023; ZESN, 2023a).

5.3 FINDINGS ON THE PYRAMID OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN THE 2023 HARMONISED ELECTIONS

This section thematically presents the findings on youth participation in the 2023 general elections with the prospects for their representation in the 10th Parliament. The findings are presented under the broad themes of the four rungs of the pyramid of youth participation, first introduced in the second chapter. The four rungs of the pyramid, which are campaign, voting, candidature and election, are in tandem with the critical research questions for the interviews with academics and young parliamentarians.

The study results presented in this chapter are based on the 2023 general elections. The chapter is based on the subsequent research questions;

- What is the nature of youth participation and representation in Zimbabwe's 10th Parliament?
- What mechanisms and structures are in place to promote youth participation in Zimbabwe's national Parliament?
- What challenges hinder increased youth participation in parliament in Zimbabwe?

The above were the central questions upon which sub-questions were developed and administered during the interviews conducted with officials from the parliament of Zimbabwe, academics, and young parliamentarians who served under the 10th Parliament.

5.3.1 PARTIES CONTESTING THE 2023 HARMONISED ELECTIONS AND PRIMARY ELECTIONS

As established in the previous chapter, Zimbabwean politics is party-based. This means that party affiliation is essential and largely influences the election of prospective candidates. This section thus presents findings on the parties that contested the 2023 general and primary elections. This serves as a background for examining youth participation during campaigns, voting, candidature and election into the 10th Parliament.

The study's findings from the literature review show a decrease in the number of political parties that fielded candidates for the 2023 elections compared to the previous election. According to the EUOM (2023: 17), fourteen[50] parties fielded 590 National Assembly candidates, while 67 were independents. Again, just like the 2018 elections, the major contest was between ZANU-PF and incumbent president Emmerson Mnangagwa, with Nelson Chamisa leading the CCC.

5.3.2 CAMPAIGNS

The study's findings from the literature reveal four dominant trends regarding the 2023 election campaigns. The first finding points to clientelism as the primary strategy political parties and candidates use during campaigns. In most instances, clientelism is exhibited by a clientelist party, which can be defined as a party that provides a material benefit to the supporters to gain their votes (ZESN, 2023a: 32; ZESN, 2023c: 14). These parties are commonly found in countries with high levels of poverty, and they provide material benefits which include, party regalia, food among other forms of assistance (ZESN, 2023c: 14). Pswarayi (2023: 3) refers to the clientelist approach as “marination.” He views the electoral period as when the electorate is ‘marinated’ and given few resources to start-up projects. Youths were requested to set up entrepreneurship initiatives and were provided with broiler chickens and pigs to start their projects.[51] Therefore, clientelism and margination both refer to processes of providing incentives or material benefits to prospective voters in return for their votes.

[50] This contrasts the 55 that successfully contested the 2018 election after an initial record of 133 parties that sought to register (ZESN, 2018a). Possible reasons will be discussed in the following sections.

[51] Pswarayi (2023) further highlights the politicking through the use of material benefits to the youth using the example of Cowdray Park constituency where ZANU-PF candidate, the finance minister, Mthuli Ncube offered to the youth a course in a Red Cross first aid programme, coupled with promises of assistance to secure jobs in the diaspora.

The study found that youth are the most vulnerable to the clientelistic approach used during the 2023 election campaigns. The Afrobarometer survey on Zimbabwe revealed that, on average, Zimbabwean youth are more educated than their elders, with almost nine out of ten (90%) having secondary or post-secondary education. Yet, most youths are unemployed (Mpako & Moyo-Nyede, 2023). The youth tend to be opportunistic and make the most of the election time to gain material benefits from the offers by parties and candidates. This was emphasised by almost 50 per cent of academics during interviews. For instance, A5 and A6 referred to Zimbabwean electoral politics as 'politics of the belly.' Politics of the belly is a phrase that describes the benefits, both material and food items, that the electorate expects from political parties and the candidates. A1 underscored an exciting version of the 'politics of the belly' phenomenon during an interview for the study. He argued that,

> Youth participation in Zimbabwean electoral politics can also be understood from the perspective of 'politics of the belly.' In this phenomenon, we see the majority of the youth who have just made money through unscrupulous means, perhaps to increase their wealth or to shield themselves from the law, getting active in politics. These youths tend to align themselves with the incumbent party.

From this perspective, it can be argued that youth's vulnerability to unemployment and lack of resources force them to participate in politics in peripheral roles that allow them to survive through benefits extended to them by patronage systems (Mutasa & Ndawana, 2024: 10). Participating in peripheral electoral activities such as campaigns preclude youth from ascending the ladder on youth participation where they can participate in meaningful activities such as candidature which leads to representation in the National Parliament.

More so, the youth candidate's experiences confirm the 'marination' perspective and the 'politics of the belly' phenomenon. All the young parliamentarians interviewed for the study (12[52], 100 per cent) agreed that the electorate usually expects material and monetary rewards during the campaign. The research participants argued that

> *Mayouth vanoda zveipapo ipapo kwete zvekuvapromiser. Saka unofanirwa kuvatsvagira chekubata, chingave chikafu kana mari, chikuru kuvapa chimwe chinhu* (Youths are concerned about instant benefits, not promises. Hence, as a

[52] 12 is the total number of all the young parliamentarians who were interviewed for the study both for the 9th and 10th Parliament.

> candidate, you must give them something tangible, either food or money, what is important is to give them something) (2023YP, 1).
>
> Many youths from poor backgrounds come to the opposition party wanting to assist in the campaign process, hoping that the candidate will provide them with money or food items; however, if you do not have such resources, it is a problem. Either they will stop supporting and assisting in your campaigns or move to candidates with resources (2023YP, 4).
>
> Youths are active during campaigns; they are energetic and are the foot soldiers that make the campaigns successful. However, it can be observed that long ago, they used to engage in campaigns out of passion, but now, it's a form of employment. They will be expecting some stipends. As a candidate, when you go to campaigns, you must 'stand the test'; *vanoda kutombokusvuta* (they need to milk you) (2023YP, 2).

While Pswarayi (2023: 6) suggests that many youths in rural regions are inclined to support the candidate who offers them some incentives or rewards, the above feedback from young parliamentarians shows that the issue of 'politics of the belly' goes beyond the rural areas. It is a common feature in both urban and rural areas. The conclusion that can be made on this is that the nature of the campaign environment in Zimbabwe is an opportune time for clientelism, where some youth strategically carve out economic survival strategies by 'milking' the candidates in exchange for their support and assistance during campaigns. This impacts participatory democracy, where the unresourced youth who wish to be voted for are relegated to the periphery. In contrast, the resourced ones have the potential to participate in all four activities on the ladder of youth participation. Therefore, politics of the belly and marination activities streamline the youth by ordering the candidates to be on one side and campaigners to be on the other. This phenomenon, therefore, shapes youth participatory behaviour.

The second finding about campaigns is that parties have unequal and unmatched resources at their disposal during campaigns. This trend was first observed during the 2018 general elections. The IRI/NDI (2018) observation report pointed to a resource gap between the governing party and the various opposition parties. According to the Political Parties Finance Act, any party that secured 5 per cent of the votes in the last election is eligible to receive government funding in proportion to the votes garnered by its candidates, still, ZANU-PF is reported to have relied more on the advantage of incumbency through the use of state resources during party business. The EUOM reported that ZANU-PF used many state resources for the party's campaign, and the

party directly bore the campaign finances (2023: 15, 20). On the other hand, the CCC had limited resources, and its contestants bore the campaign costs (EUOM, 2023: 20). The resource disparity was also evident during interviews where young parliamentarians reported on the assistance they received from their respective parties. The following are responses from ZANU-PF young candidates during interviews:

> My party assisted my campaigns by providing finances, T-shirts, and vehicles. I also received moral support when the party leaders from the headquarters came to reinforce my candidature (2023YP, 7).

> We were given USD$10 000 for campaign costs and twin cabs and were sometimes provided with fuel (2023YP, 9).

> While my party assisted us with finances and regalia for distribution, it is important to note that in most instances, *mari idzi dzainonoka kuuya, saka waitotora yako yemuhomwe. Mari dzeparty dzainyanyouya* 2 weeks before election, *saka kumirira* it will be too late*. Chimwe chinhu campaign yakafanana nekuita project yekuvaka, you can never fully prepare for it, too many unhidden costs. For instance, ukatsikwa nevakuru from the HQ, hazviite kuti vabve ari maoko, saka unofanirwa kutomhanya mhanya* (The monies were disbursed late, so you had to use your own money. The money from the party came 2 weeks before the election, so to wait for it could be too late. Another thing a campaign is like a building project (implying that there are a lot of unforeseen costs), if the leaders from the headquarters visit you, it is not good for them to leave empty-handed, so you have to do something) *(*2023YP, 6*).*

On the other hand, some youth from the opposition indicated the party did not assist much in financing their campaigns. For instance, 2023YP 3 indicated that,

> My party did not assist much in financing my campaigns; instead, I managed to secure USD 40.000 from sponsors. While I had this money, it was not enough because I was contesting against a sitting MP from the ruling party who almost spent USD 100,000 on his campaigns.

From the above response, it can be noted that youth candidates from the opposition sometimes had to rely on sponsors to finance their campaigns. The respondent shared an experience that revealed some challenges young candidates face, especially when they have limited resources. The respondent shared that,

> One interesting thing that happened close to election day was that we woke up to find that my posters had been covered by my opponents'. There was no visibility whatsoever. To make matters worse, we did not have the resources to make other fliers. It was a crazy campaign! (2023YP, 3).

Therefore, while there was a considerable disparity in financial and material support for young candidates, mainly between ZANU-PF candidates and the opposition, especially CCC, two crucial factors can be discerned. The first relates to the timely provision of such resources; the second factor is using personal resources to support or supplement one's campaign. While there was a disparity in resource provision by ZANU-PF and CCC, it can be argued that, at times, this disparity was obscure in the case of the former candidates using their personal resources. It then all ends with an individual financial status. Therefore, one's economic status is crucial to support and sustain a campaign, which can be challenging for most youths. This can contribute to the limited number of youthful candidates for Zimbabwe's National Assembly elections. Notably, the overwhelming disparity in resources creates an uneven playing field, which mars the essence of elections as a means for choosing political leaders.

Findings also point to intra-party disparities in resource allocation and moral support. This phenomenon was common in both ZANU-PF and CCC but seemed intense in the latter party. Among the young parliamentarian participants from ZANU PF, some received more material, such as T-shirts and other party regalia and fuel, than others. This was articulated by 2023YP 7 who, about moral support, argued that;

> Priorities will differ. Some candidates were visited earlier by senior party members to reinforce the campaign process, and others were visited late. In some instances, juniors were sent as opposed to senior party members. Also, it sometimes depends on the particular candidate and constituency. The party can avail all the necessary cards for targeted constituencies to ensure the candidate wins. So, there are different types of support; some can be financial, logistical and moral support... if you do not have much support from the party, you have to look for your own.

In a similar perspective, respondents from the CCC stated that,

> Our party needed a transparent funding model. It is believed that some candidates received money and I did not. It is alleged that some candidates received calls from party officials asking for proof of their nomination fee receipts so that party officials would show them to donors. So, it means the party had some money but it was diverted. I only got presidential posters and support with the design of the posters, something which can cost US10 (2023YP, 8).

> I was only assisted with the nomination fees. Rural candidates were mostly assisted, but they did not get much (2023YP, 1).

Therefore, from the above experiences, it is evident that political parties are instrumental in supporting candidates in various ways. Yet the support is usually unevenly distributed. This can have negative effects for youthful candidates, especially, if they are not contesting in 'the targeted' constituencies and maybe are not related to affluent politicians. As a result, the number of youth candidates will remain low, and youth will continue to be concentrated in marginal political activities, which may not influence their representation in the National Parliament.

In addition to the above, the study found that due to ZANU PF's advantage in state resources, it used third-party campaigners. For the 2023 elections, it was observed that First Lady Auxillia Mnangagwa, through her Angel of Hope Foundation, organised joint events with ZANU-PF in different communities across the country. Also, the "4ED[53]" groups of social unions and professionals were formed during the campaign period, including Teachers 4ED, Students 4ED, Lawyers 4ED, Vapostori 4ED, Vendors 4ED, and Young Women 4ED, among others. These groups campaigned for Emmerson Mnangagwa's candidacy throughout the country (EUOM, 2023: 26), raising the party's banner high and making it more visible than other parties.

From another perspective, the 4ED groupings can be seen as a 'soft coercive' measure of vote buying. Instead of using physical violence, these groupings worked to solicit loyalty and act as a protection shield for the members. For instance, Vendors 4ED. This grouping is mainly composed of informal vendors operating in urban centres. When it's convenient, such as at election time, they are appeased and allowed to operate, yet their usual experience is the 'cat and mouse' chase with local authorities. In an article featured in New Zimbabwe, the spokesperson for Bulawayo Vendors for ED, Soul Jere, lamented that,

> As ED for Vendors, we are currently not happy with the way the council is treating vendors. Municipal police confiscate our wares every day without accounting for those goods. We have given the council an ultimatum to stop seizing our goods until they respond to our concerns (New Zimbabwe, 2022).

The 4 ED associational groups, thus, to some extent, can be viewed as soft measures for coercing or soliciting support. The prevalence of these groupings, which include different professions and social groups such as Students 4ED,

[53] '4ED' stands for both the incumbent's initials Emmerson Mnangagwa and economic development (EUOM, 2023: 26).

creates a binary categorisation of them and us. Not associating with a group means one might not benefit from specific initiatives, which may be given under the association yet essential for survival. Regarding the implications of this on democracy, coerced participation is not participation at all. Free will is a fundamental principle that makes democracy thrive and participation meaningful.

The third finding on campaigns is that youths constitute the majority of campaigners. This finding confirms the ladder of youth participation developed in this study, where the broad base represents campaign activities. From the foregoing discussion, it can be argued that one factor that accounts for such a state of affairs is the potential benefits that accrue to the youth when they assist during campaigns. The findings from the interviews cement the role of the youth in campaigns. According to 2018YP 3, during an interview for the study, “Youth are the wheels of political mobilisation. They are instrumental during campaigns.” Similarly, A4 concurred by stating that the youth are mainly used for mobilising people. Pswarayi (2023: 5) concurs with the above point by arguing that party leaders view youth as foot soldiers who must rally support for the party. Youths may be targeted to perform campaign activities because most are unemployed and hence are vulnerable to the clientelist approach adopted by most parties and candidates. To reveal their agency, the youths will make the most of the ‘politics of the belly’ discourse, exchanging their energy and loyalty for material benefits. Such an approach reveals the fragility of democracy in Zimbabwe and the challenges associated with meaningful youth political participation.

The fourth important finding about campaigns is that they revolved around personalities and thus were not issue-based. ZESN (2023a: 32) observed that the campaigns were not issue-based, and this could be seen in the cases where the major parties did not release manifestos at all or released them late. The report argued that most parties were personality-based and popularised the single leader by promoting the leader's images to appeal to voters (ZESN, 2023a: 32). A personality-based party can be defined as a party that is characterised by the popularity of a single leader, mainly focusing on promoting the image of the leader and seeks to appeal to voter’s emotions (ZESN, 2023c: 14). The theme of personality-based parties was confirmed by 60 percent of the academics interviewed for the study. In support of this theme, A5 argued that,

> Personality cults are an enduring dimension of Zimbabwean political culture that was visible during the 2023 election campaigns. During the campaigns, the regalia that was worn had big images of the party president, meaning that the face of the party was the face of the president.

In support of the above, A2 argued that,

> Youth political participation is limited by authoritarianism within the state. This tendency is expressed through centralising power within party leaders, both in the ruling and opposition parties. Party presidents are very powerful, and party National Executive committees are powerful, too. Such a culture does not provide space for representativeness and accountability within parties. Consequently, youth are only brought into an active manner, mostly during campaigns.

Therefore, youth participation during campaigns within the context of authoritarian party leadership and personality cults is permissible because it is strategic. Beyond campaigns, youth are not considered an important social group.

This section has discussed findings on campaigns in light of the ladder of youth participation. The subsequent section presents findings on youth participation on the ladder's second rung: voting.

5.3.3 VOTING

The study's findings reveal that many youths remain politically disengaged despite the high voter registration rate recorded for the 2023 general election. Out of the 6,623 511 registered voters for the 2023 harmonised elections (ZESN, 2023a: 9), 44 percent (almost 2. 9 million) were youth (EUOM, 2023: 29). The Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTATS, 2022) estimated that one million youths who were not eligible to vote in the previous election were 18 years and above in 2023. Some of these youths could be part of the one-sixth first-time voters among the 6, 6 million registered voters. Despite the relatively high numbers of youth registered to vote, they do not match the 70 percent youth population as reported by ZIMSTATS after the 2022 census. While the disparity between the total youth population and the registered youth voters is apparent, there is no consensus in the literature over such a state of affairs.

Another crucial finding of the study is the constant number of youths who registered to vote for the two elections after Robert Mugabe's removal from power. Both for the 2018 and 2023 elections, the percentage of youth registered to vote was 44 per

cent (ZESN, 2023a; ZESN, 2018). While for the 2018 elections, 44 per cent translated to 2.5 million youth registrants, in the 2023 elections, the total number of registrants was 2.9 million; it can be observed that there was not much improvement, which tallies with the total youth population in Zimbabwe. Despite this stagnancy, Mutasa and Ndawana (2024: 6) argue that despite the low participation of youth in electoral processes, especially voting, when compared to their vast numbers, it should be acknowledged that some improvements were recorded in the last two elections, which call for analysis.

One crucial factor explaining the constant number of youths registered to vote for the two elections under study is the essential issues pushing youth to vote. According to the Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 630 on Zimbabwe, policy preferences emerged as the most crucial factor affecting voter decisions, such that 83 per cent of citizens indicated that they would vote for candidates whose policies they agree with (Mpako & Moyo-Nyede, 2023a: 1). Other reports observed that Zimbabweans perceive a miserable outlook on the state of the economy with young Zimbabweans saying that the government is falling short on employment and the economy (Mutasa & Ndawana, 2024, Mpako & Nyede, 2023b; 2023c). Consequently, due to the persistence of unemployment and poor performing economy after the coming of the Second Republic, it can be argued that some youths chose to abstain from registering to vote, with some first-time voters covering that gap. This is supported by reviewed literature showing that, despite being the largest group in the country, the youth are less likely than their elders to vote (Mpako & Moyo-Nyede, 2023c, Kubatana, 2021).

The statistical data on voter turnout are closely related to the above issue. Voter turnout for the 2023 elections stood at 68.9 percent, compared to 82.5 percent (ZESN, 2023a: 9). Voter turnout decreased by 14.2 percent. The decrease in voter turnout can be explained by the broader political trajectory obtained after Mugabe's removal, whether there have been continuities or discontinuities in the country's governance. Noyes (2020: 6), citing a respondent to his study, referred to the campaign period for the 2018 elections as a period of “unprecedented freedoms”, succeeded by superficial political changes that allowed for minimal progress in

aspects of elections, legislation, and the partisan characteristics of governmental institutions.

In addition to the above, Helliker and Murisa (2020) argue that Mnangagwa's call for a 'break with the past', if ever observable in Zimbabwe, might be from the economic front, not political. They cite the killing of seven protesters with live ammunition soon after the 2018 elections as just but one of the continuances on the use of violence and the clampdown of protests as evidence of little or no reforms in the Second Republic. As such, high voter turnout for the 2018 elections can be understood in the context of "unprecedented freedoms" and the sliding back in 2023 as the effects of what Noyes (2020: vii) considers a lack of political reforms configuring Zimbabwe's autocratic system.' This can also be related to youth participation, where the number of youth registrants remained the same due to the lack of political reforms that give them space in the political arena. Thus, among other things, "low voter turnout for the 2023 elections was attributed to people losing trust in elections" (ZESN, 2023a: 12).

The study findings also reveal that several factors influence youth participation in voting. These factors can be categorised as administrative issues related to voter registration, apathy and lack of civic education. Administrative issues relate to frustrations over the registration process. According to Pswarayi (2023: 5), the voter registration process in the 2023 elections posed additional challenges for the youth, and that registration at centres that are not strategically located required some extra $2 for transport to and from. Further, registration involves time, which some youths might not have as they would use that time to engage in their entrepreneurial activities rather than registering to vote. Further, on administrative factors, CCC spokesperson Fadzayi Mahere argued that,

> It is evident that ZEC is pursuing a strategy to suppress voter registration, which is hindering youths from participating in next year's elections. When young people attempt to register, they receive inadequate explanations, such as claims of no electricity, non-functioning machines, or that the building is renovating. These are the challenges youths are encountering, and we hold ZEC accountable for the low registration turnout (Nyangani & Buwerimwe, 2023).

More so, Pswarayi (2023) argued that the Private Voluntary Organisations (PVO) Amendment Bill restricted civil society organisations' voter education programs as

they faced challenges related to potential shutdowns and reduced financial support. Kubatana (2023) observed that voter apathy among the youth is caused by insufficient information on the process and difficulty in accessing identity documents needed for registering to vote in Zimbabwe.

Voting, as symbolised by the second and broad rung on the Pyramid of Youth participation, remains one of the political activities that youth engage in in large numbers after campaigns. However, the youth's limited involvement at this stage is not sufficiently accounted for by apathy but rather by "various structural and institutionalised barriers" (Pswarayi, 2023: 3). Therefore, the establishment of safeguards is crucial as a means of engendering youth participation in voting and the broader pyramid to ensure equal representation in the National Parliament.

5.3.4 CANDIDATURE

Youth political participation, as depicted by Pyramid A, shows minimal youth participation as candidates during elections. Yet in Pyramid B, youth political participation should go beyond campaigns and voting in order for them to be represented in the national parliament. Therefore, this rung of youth political participation is crucial as it facilitates what Macpherson (1977) described as "democratising already existing political institutions."

The study's findings reveal three dominant trends in youth participation on this rung of the ladder of youth participation. The first trend relates to the lower number of political parties that fielded candidates for the election and candidates who filed nomination papers. ZESN's (2023a: 8) report highlighted that only 19 political parties fielded candidates for the various polls, marking a 36-point reduction from 55 parties that contested the 2018 elections. Similarly, 637 National Assembly candidates competed for the 210 single-member constituencies (ZESN, 2023a: 8), a significant drop compared to the 2018 electoral candidates. This number was a third of the contestants recorded during the previous election. In terms of fielding candidates, ZANU-PF dominated. The CCC came second (ZESN, 2023a: 8). The number of independent candidates also drastically lowered from 248 in 2018 to 67 for the 2023 election (AU, 2023: 6; ZESN, 2018;). It can, therefore, be argued that the 2018 electoral environment was superficially opened, yet the imposition of some administrative measures during 2023 constricted the environment thereby reducing

the number of parties and candidates contesting the 2023 general polls. Youths as a social group was greatly affected by the administrative measures.

The study revealed that exorbitant nomination fees were one of the first administrative challenge to youth candidature for the election. The nomination fees were set through Statutory Instrument (SI) 144 of 2022, which required presidential contestants to pay US$20,000.00, up from US$1000.00, MPs US$1000, up from US$80.00, and Senate US$200.00, up from US$100.00 (ZESN, 2023: 4). Literature findings underscore the impact of the higher nomination fees on participatory democracy. The increased nomination fees precluded youth and women from standing as candidates during the election, yet they constitute the majority of voters (Commonwealth, 2023; ZESN, 2023b). Similarly**,** Veritas described the nomination fees in the following way:

> The measures were deemed “unreasonable” and stated to have been implemented for an inappropriate purpose: specifically, to deter individuals from running for election and to hinder opposition parties, which did not receive state funding, from fielding candidates. These measures were unconstitutional as they contradicted the principles of multiparty democracy and restricted citizens’ fundamental rights to stand for election (2023).

This study concurs with the EUOM (2023) report’s conclusion that high nomination fees resulted in over one-fifth of individuals looking to run for president and parliament not being accepted for the electoral contest. It can be argued that some of these aspiring candidates were young.

Furthermore, the enactment of the PVO Bill impacted the operations of political parties.

The study also found that several challenges affected youth candidature for the election, including the candidate selection process. It was discovered that political parties do not prioritise young candidates. Almost 60 percent of the young parliamentarians who were interviewed agreed that political parties do not prioritise youth candidature. In particular, 2023YP 7 from ZANU-PF argued that

> The candidate selection process does not necessarily prioritise youths; it’s a simple winner-takes-all approach whether one is a man, a woman or a youth.

In addition, 2023YP 8 from CCC argued that,

> I have to admit that with the departure from MDC A to CCC, we departed from the system we used to have of reserving specific constituencies for the youth. We no longer have such a system, and youth are left to contest openly with other contestants.

In contrast, 20 percent (2) of young parliamentarians from ZANU-PF and CCC believed their parties prioritise youths in their candidate selection processes. In this regard, 2023YP 2 argued that ZANU-PF has provisions for the women's PR list that provide a certain number of young women (the participant, however, was unsure about the specified number or definite document that provides that). On the same note, 2023YP 8 from CCC argued that their party follows the constitution and puts up youth for the quota, though the number of youths from the party would be determined by the party's performance in the election. Overall, however, it can be argued that currently, political parties do not prioritise youth candidature. As a result, there is "limited participation of youths in elections as candidates" (YETT, 2019: 2).

Apart from lack of prioritisation during candidate selection processes, it was also found that the candidate selection processes also have shortcomings that can affect the candidature of other social groups, including youths. For instance, all the CCC young parliamentarians who participated in the study (4) argued that the selection process used by their party left room for manipulation. They argued that some consensus-building selection process stages needed to be clearer and open to public scrutiny. In particular, in the first stage, where people living in certain streets in constituencies had to indicate their preferred candidate, there were no street registers so that numbers could be inflated. Also, the second stage, where stakeholders were consulted on their preferred candidate, had room for manipulation because there were no clear strategies for identifying the stakeholders. Furthermore, results from the stakeholders were not publicised. This, coupled with the clear disbandment of successful candidates who finally were not approved by the party, indicates the shortcomings of the process. Therefore, it can be argued that while the idea behind the consensus-building process used by CCC was ideal theoretically, the implementation of the process left room for manipulation, which disadvantaged other candidates, which may include the youth.

Youth candidature is also affected by a lack of resources, that is, financial and social capital. Most research participants, academics and young parliamentarians

concurred that financial resources matter in determining one's electoral victory. 2023YP 9 argued that "campaigns are capital intensive; if you want to stand as a candidate, you must have money and a social base or huge following." 2023YP 2 also argued that; "What matters in our politics is money. You will realise *kuti mu youth ano winner ndiye ane mari* (The youth who wins is the one who has money). When asked whether he had the money, he responded that his church followers helped him win the election. In this regard, money and social capital are essential for the youth to win the elections. In their analysis, Mutasa and Ndawana (2024) argued that youth exhibited materialist and post-materialist tendencies as they participated as parliamentary candidates. They argued that some candidates like Joana Mamombe exhibited materialist tendencies after being imposed as the preferred party candidate while getting favours from senior politicians. Therefore, there are political economy implications and connotations on youth candidature in elections, which some youth can use to their advantage or impede some from participating as candidates.

Factionalism was also another challenge that affected youth candidature in elections. Internal party fights were rampant in the dominant parties that contested the polls. Most of the young parliamentarians interviewed for the study concurred that factionalism can either facilitate or hinder young people's prospects of becoming candidates. According to 2023YP 4;

> "You will realise that depending on the one who is at the helm (that is, party president) if a particular youth is not towing the factional position of the one who is at the helm, he or she will not be selected even if that person was a strong candidate."

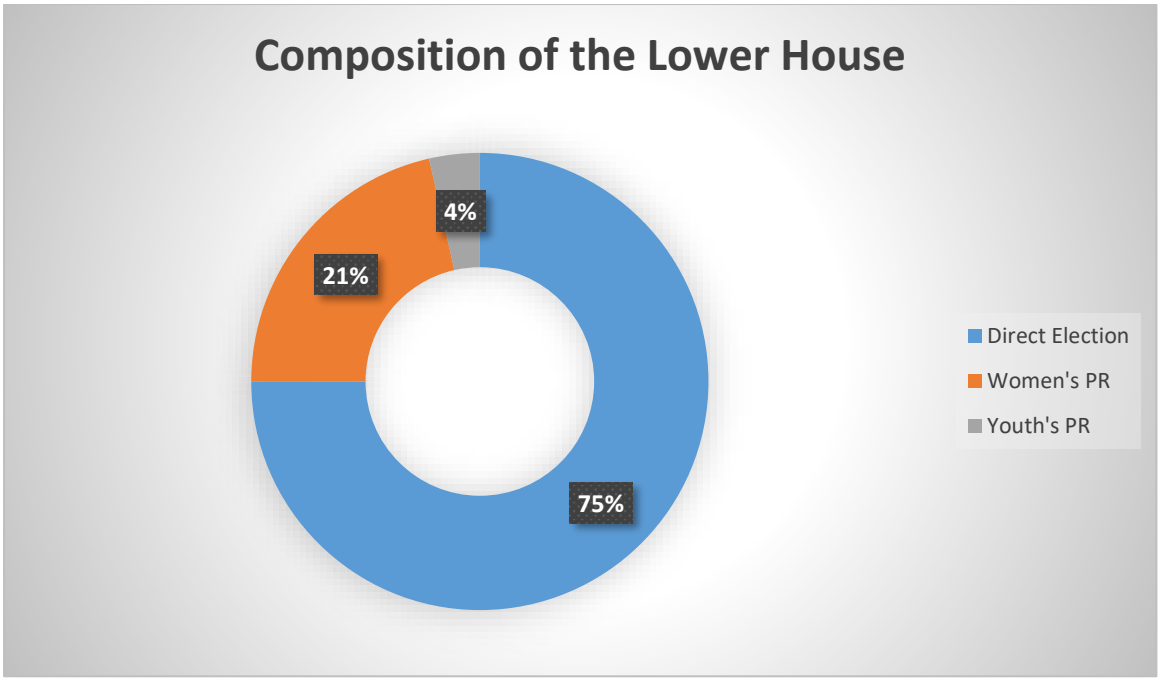
Also, 2023YP 2 concurred and argued that "it is possible that one can be de-campaigned from within the party. *Unogona kungoburitswa* netechnical knock-out (You can be booted out through a technical knock-out)."

Therefore, factionalism can facilitate or hinder youth candidature. It is important to emphasise that youth are not a homogenous group; hence, some have the agency to make factional fights work to their advantage, while others might be scared and back off from politics, especially when the factional fights turn violent.

5.3.4 YOUTH ELECTION AND REPRESENTATION IN THE 10TH PARLIAMENT

For the 2023 elections, 210 constituencies were open for contestation, while 60 and another 10 seats were reserved for the women's and youth proportional representation system, respectively. Therefore, following Constitutional Amendment No. 2 of 2021, the women's quota system set to expire in 2023 was extended by another ten years. The Amendment further introduced a youth quota reserving ten seats for the youth, each to be elected from the ten provinces into which Zimbabwe is divided (Constitutional Amendment No. 2 of2021, Section 124 (1) (c)). Subsequently, the structure of the 10th Parliament changed. The figure below shows the composition of the 10th Parliament as informed by Constitutional Amendment No. 2.

Figure 5. 1 Composition of the 10th Parliament (National Assembly) by Mode of Election



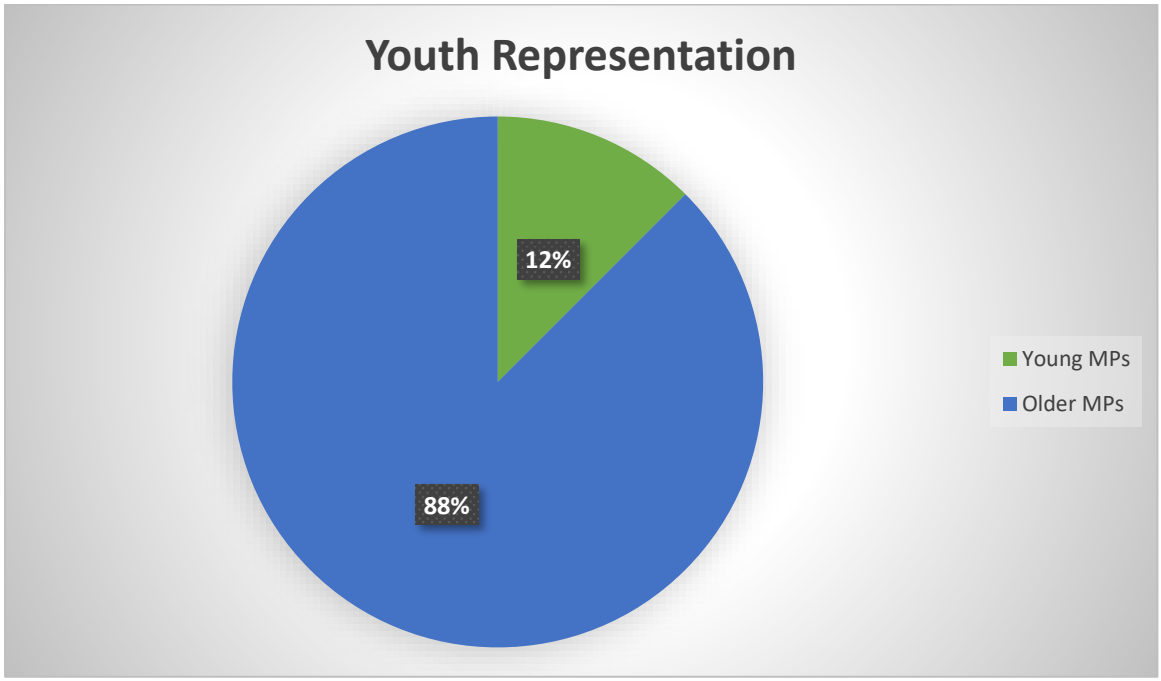
Source: Author's Compilation

The figure above shows that the total membership of the lower house, the National Assembly, increased to 280 members. Therefore, youths had the opportunity to be elected into parliament through direct election, youth, and women's quotas (the latter specifically open to young women). This way, the entry point for youth into the lower house of the national parliament was broadened. However, no changes were

made on the Senate. It therefore remains a closed space for the youth due to the eligibility age which is beyond the youth age range. The current constitutional provisions therefore only left the lower house as the potential site for youth participation between the two houses of parliament.

The study's findings revealed an increased number of youths elected into the 10th Parliament. 35 youths were elected into the National Assembly (Parliament of Zimbabwe interview data). Among the 35 youths in the 10th Parliament, 17 were directly elected, ten came through the youth quota, and eight through the women's quota. The figure below shows the composition of the Tenth Parliament, including youth representation.

Figure 5.2 Youth Representation in the 10th Parliament



Source: Author's Compilation from Interview Data at Parliament of Zimbabwe (2024).

The figure above shows that youth representation increased to 13 percent in the 10th parliament, up from 2 percent in the 9th Parliament.

Findings on youth representation in the 10th Parliament revealed that ZANU-PF had more youths than CCC. This is shown in the table below;

Table 5. 1 Youth Representation in the 10th Parliament by Party

Mode of Election	Party	Female	Male	Total
Direct Election	ZANU PF	0	9	9
	CCC	1	7	8
Youth Quota	ZANU PF	1	6	7
	CCC	2	1	3
Women's Quota	ZANU PF	8	0	8
	CCC	0	0	0
TOTAL		**12**	**23**	**35**

Source: Author's Compilation from Interview Data at Parliament of Zimbabwe (2024).

The findings as presented above are interesting. First, they reveal that for the 10th Parliament, there were three ways through which young people could be elected into Parliament. These are through direct election (for the 210 contested constituencies) and youth and women's quotas (for young women). This implies that young women had more opportunities to get into Parliament, yet they were the least represented compared to their male counterparts. ZANU-PF did well on the women's proportional representation system with eight young women. The trend is, however, reversed in terms of direct election and youth quota, whereas in the former, there is no young woman, and only one was elected using the latter method of election.

Several factors may account for ZANU PF's dominance in youth representation in this Parliament. First, the quota listing is based on party performance. Based on ZANU PF's win (135 seats out of 210), it got seven of the ten quota seats. Secondly, ZANU PF's win facilitated its dominance for women's proportional representation[54]. However, it is concerning that of the 27 women's proportional representation seats that CCC gained, none of them was occupied by a young woman. Secondly, and in line with the politics of the belly phenomenon, it might be that ZANU-PF presented more material benefits to the youth than CCC. Mutasa and Ndawana's (2024: 5)

[54] It secured 33 seats out of 60 women's PR seats.

materialist and post-materialist assessment of youth participation revealed that "ZANU-PF uses patronage in the informal economy to recruit well-educated youth…while some youth willingly join it hoping 'to access material benefits and career opportunities.'" This was confirmed by the study findings, where some academics argued that some youth align with ZANU-PF as a protection measure where they seek to be protected from the illegal activities they engage in. Therefore, all these factors might have conspired to influence ZANU PF's increased youth representation in the National Parliament.

Interestingly, the findings presented in the table above show that CCC recorded low youth representation in Parliament. These findings contrasted the popular view among the academics and young parliamentarians interviewed for the study. There were interesting varied responses to the question, 'Which party do you think has more youths getting elected than the other?'

> Generally, the opposition has been having more youths participating and getting elected. It is not that they are necessarily prioritised, but as young people with nothing to lose, they tend to associate with the opposition (2023YP, 6).

> From its inception, the opposition has been dominated by young people like Nelson Chamisa, Learnmore Jongwe, Job Sikhala to mention a few. Therefore, it's a party that attracts young people (2023YP, 4)

In support of the above, 50 percent of the academics also supported the above narrative. For instance, A6 during an interview argued that, 'Young people find little space in the opposition where they are given opportunities to stand for the party. ZANU PF, on the other hand, is dominated by older men.

In a different view, one ZANU-PF parliamentarian argued that,

> The ZANU-PF government introduced the youth quota, and the ripple effect is that more youths are courageous enough to stand as party candidates. ZANU-PF has more youths due to the party's leadership desire for the youth to take up the movement and ensure sustainability (2023YP, 7).

Similarly, in terms of the above responses, literature is divided on the same notion. According to Adams (2023), "young voters often demonstrate higher backing for the CCC", however, Mukonza contended that "urban voters are typically more vocal on social media and during opposition events, creating the illusion that their numbers are larger than they actually are (as cited in Adams, 2023). It can be argued that

the opposition is young in outlook, as seen through the young presidential candidate who inspires youth to attend and participate in rallies. Yet, the party is not prioritising the youth in terms of making them candidates to ensure their representation in parliament. Whether by design or default, ZANU-PF did well regarding youth representation in the National Parliament. The question remains on the sustainability of this trend for future elections.

The most important development in youth representation in the 10th Parliament is the introduction of the youth quota system. The Commonwealth (2023) report welcomed the inclusion of the 10 percent youth quota in the lower house in parliament. Mutasa and Ndawana (2024: 5) further argued that the youth quota has accelerated youth candidature. Also, more than 50 per cent (4) of the academics who were interviewed celebrated the youth quota as a 'good start' on youth representation in Parliament. Some academics argue that the quota provides an open political field for the youth to access leadership positions, which are not easily accessible through the party route given the culture within the parties. Others hailed the quota as a training ground for the youth. For instance, it was argued that Tatenda Mavetera from ZANU-PF became an MP in 2018 through the women's PR and was successfully elected during the 2023 elections. Also, some youths have been appointed to ministerial positions; Tatenda Mavetera is an example. She was appointed the Minister of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in 2023. Therefore, these are some of the important contributions of the youth quota on youth participatory behaviour.

On the other hand, some literature presented contrary views. For instance, the YETT (2020) report questioned the extent to which political parties through the party-list system could be relied upon to alter the dynamics of youth political engagement in the country. More so, during a post-election evaluation workshop, the YETT director argued that the quota ignored gender parity and that young people in political parties lamented tokenism as a hindrance to the selection of candidates. ZESN (2024) reported that only three of the ten youth quota members are women. However, it can be argued that constitutionalising the youth quota is a progressive matter. Gender issues can be addressed by the women's quota, where young women also tend to stand a chance of being elected.

The fundamental question on the quota is that it provides for a limited number of youths in a country where the youth constitute a large share of the population. This was supported by a youth quota parliamentarian interviewed for the study who argued that there is a need to increase the number of quota seats even to equal the number of women's PR seats. On the same note, Masunungure, a political analyst, argued that, the establishment of 10 youth quota seats in parliament unintentionally highlights the imbalanced demographic representation within a legislature in a country where young people make up the majority of the adult demographic (Business Times 2020). Though progressive, the youth quota falls short of ensuring youth representation under the too-small number of seats it provides. Therefore, Zimbabwean political ground remains a contest of the fittest, requiring safeguards to ensure meaningful youth representation.

One striking finding on factional politics and youth participation was seen through the internal fights in CCC. As argued in the previous and current chapter, factionalism can have negative and positive effects depending on one's alignment and whether one is aligned with a powerful group. There were severe internal fights in CCC which pitied the presidential candidate Chamisa and one Tshabangu, the alleged self-made Secretary General. The latter wrote letters to the Clerk of parliament recalling some members believed to have been imposed and aligned to the former. As a result, one elected young parliamentarian from CCC was recalled. Another one who was directly elected resigned, citing a toxic environment. This follows after the failure of court attempts to ignore Tshabangu's recalls. Therefore, this experience underscores the dynamics of Zimbabwean politics, which the youth find themselves in, which affects their representation in parliament even after securing seats.

5.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has presented the findings on youth participation during the 2023 harmonised elections and their representation in the 10th Parliament. In terms of the four rungs on youth participation, the study revealed that youth participation during campaigns is the highest compared to other rungs. This was informed by the clientelist approach used by parties and candidates where they used 'marination' to lure support from the youth whom most are oriented towards 'politics of the belly.' Clientelism, margination and politics of the belly thrives because the majority of the

youth are educated yet are unemployed. Therefore, such vulnerability makes opportunists during election times where they can benefit from politicians who will be seeking for votes. This sad scenario reveals the dynamics of real participation for the youth. A clientelistic system thrives on abundant resources which then limits youth interest to stand as candidates.

The chapter revealed that the percentage of youth registered to vote remained 44 per cent, which is the same as in 2018. This implies that some youth who registered to vote last election may have yet to do so for the 2023 election, with first-time voters filling the gap. The reason for apathy is the frustration over the failure of the 2018 transition to facilitate the first-ever anticipated electoral change in the country. On candidature, the number of youths improved relatively. This was informed by developments such as the youth caucus introduced in Parliament, the extension of the women's quota, and the introduction of a youth quota. As such, the ripple effects of the youth quota were seen in the increased number of candidates elected into the 10th Parliament. However, it was argued by most youth participants that political parties do not have regulations for prioritising youth candidates. As such, until such a culture is dismantled, the efforts of the quota, considering the low number it reserves for the youth, will never result in increased youth representation in the national parliament which is sustainable.

The study reveals that for both the elections that have occurred under the second republic, the case for youth representation in the national parliament in Zimbabwe only applies to the lower house. For the upper house, the Senate, youths are structural inhibited from participating or being represented through the set eligibility age. The study therefore found that the number of youths in the National Assembly rose from five in 2018 to 35 in 2023. Of the 35, 17 were directly elected, 10 came through the youth quota and eight through the women's quota. Surprisingly, ZANU-PF has more youth in parliament, 24 compared to 11 CCC young parliamentarians. Therefore, CCC is young in outlook but is the more closed of the two dominant parties when it comes to youth participation. ZANU PF, while dominantly the gerontocratic party, has found some relatively little space for the young, though with male dominance. This can be attributed to the youth quota and the party's overall performance during the election which allowed it to have more PR women including

young women. ZANU-PF has eight young women under the youth quota. Therefore, of the two parties, ZANU-PF seems to be progressive and opening up space for the young. Over and above, the 10th Parliament has improved youth representation, and what remains to be seen is the extent to which this parliament will ensure sustainability in terms of youth representation.

It has also been discussed that apart from the progressive quota and youth caucus, the autocratic and repressive legislation and measures such as the PVO Bill and unreasonable increased nomination fees imposed towards the 2023 elections show the regime's unwillingness to create a free and open electoral environment. Therefore, the reforms that are being implemented under the Second Republic are superficial and are yet to facilitate a transformed electoral environment that encourages free and open political environment. In such an environment, there remains need for safeguards which can promote youth political participation beyond campaigns and voting to ensure their representation in the national parliament.

The proceeding chapter presents a summary of the findings, conclusions and the safeguards that may be adopted to facilitate youth representation in the national parliament in Zimbabwe guided by participatory democratic theory.

CHAPTER 6
THEORY DEVELOPMENT
6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the theory of participatory democracy with safeguards for youth participation introduced in Chapter 1. The theory was developed to answer the research question of how more youths can be elected into the national parliament in Zimbabwe. Participatory democracy with safeguards for youth participation is taken as a theoretical construct that builds on participatory democracy. Unlike Pateman's participatory democracy that focused on the workplace as the sector of participation that needs to be democratised, this new theory focuses on the National Parliament. The new theory recognises four main political activities for ensuring youth representation in the National Parliament.

The four key political activities underscored in the new theory are fundamental for institutionalised youth political participation. It however should be appreciated while the examination of youth participation across the four activities can be generalised to any sector, of the national parliament, the safeguards, are dependent on the ecosystem influencing youth participatory behaviour in the particular electoral environment. Consequently, the safeguards or recommendations coming out of this study are relevant to the Zimbabwean context, the country case study in this context.

6. 2 METHODOLOGY FOR THEORY DEVELOPMENT

The study used a literature review as a vital instrument for theory development. Webster and Watson (2002) endorse using a literature review for theory-building, claiming that a well-conducted review as a research approach provides a solid platform for expanding knowledge and aiding theory creation. According to Synder (2019), a literature review can address research problems with greater power than a single study since it integrates findings and viewpoints from numerous empirical studies. Furthermore, Synder (2019) stated that a literature review is a good technique for synthesising study findings to illustrate findings at a higher level and pinpoint aspects that need further investigation, which is crucial for creating theoretical frameworks and conceptual models.

In building participatory democracy with safeguards for youth participation, the study analysed the literature on the definition and scope of political participation, which is a significant idea in the study. Empirical evidence was also used to support the scope

of political participation that most studies focus on. Thus, the reviewed journal articles, reports of democracy-oriented organisations such as the IPU, election observer reports and books on political participation from Google Scholar, Jstor, and the IPU website, among others, were reviewed to build this new theory of participatory democracy with safeguards for youth participation.

6.3 LITERATURE REVIEW FOR THEORY DEVELOPMENT

There is no consensus among democratic theories about the scope of political participation. For democratic elitism, participation includes voting in frequent elections to determine who will hold political offices (Schumpeter, 1947). This understanding of participation stems from how the elitists perceives the political system. They perceive the political system as constituted by two groups: the elite, skilled at ruling, and the citizens or apolitical masses, who are not knowledgeable about political affairs and are not interested in participating (Walker, 1966). The role and political power of the average citizen is to vote during elections. In contrast, participatory democrats underscore the need for participation in decision-making institutions. Pateman's (1970) participatory democracy focuses on the workplace as a sector of participation where the workers should be accorded significant roles in decision-making across all tiers of the firm. Extending participatory democracy to the broader political system, citizens should also be accorded opportunities to participate at all levels in decision-making institutions. Participation in this sense goes beyond voting to include partaking in decision-making.

Apart from the theoretical lexicon, political participation is variedly defined in academic and policy contexts. Political participation can be understood as activities that shape, affect, and involve the political sphere (EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership, 2020, as cited in Council of Europe, 2021: 11). The literature does not agree on the scope of the activities under political participation. Wajzer (2015: 12) contends that political participation has become "a catch-all term" as, in some instances, it is being used as a synonym of "social participation" in part or entirely. This can confirm Deth's (2001: 7) observation that since the late 20th century, the range of actions regarded as political participation has broadened to include 70 different types of activities. This diverse range of political activities raises concerns over choosing theories that suitably account for the host of the purportedly political activities. The myriad activities also

allow for the development of new theories that can identify some related political activities so that researchers can study political phenomena within specific contexts without limitations.

Literature confirms the diversity of activities that are grouped as political participation. For instance, Verba and Nie (1987) define political participation as four main activities: voting, campaign activity, outreach initiated by citizens, and collaborative efforts. Parry et al. (1992: 51-53) suggest that political participation consists of six types of activities, including voting, party campaign, contacting, collective action, direct action and political violence. These diverse activities are categorised differently, with scholars like Ekman and Amana (2012) differentiating between ‘formal’ or ‘informal’, ‘legal’ and ‘illegal’ political participation. On the other hand, Deth (2001: 14) and Saunders (2014) identified conventional and unconventional forms of political participation. As a result, most scholars classify voting, party campaigning, joining a party, contacting officials, and other customary and permissible political behaviours as 'legal', 'formal', or 'conventional' types of engagement (Sairambay, 2020: 122).

More recently, technological advancement has facilitated increased interconnectivity and the fast transmission of information across world regions. In the democratic discourse, the digital world has enabled the straightforward organisation and mobilisation of different societal groups and the transmission of political news that traditional media platforms could never do. Instead of physical meetings such as the Tiananmen Square gatherings, social media networks, including Twitter and Facebook, have allowed for the ‘Twi-square’ and ‘Facebook square’ where the plebiscites have had opportunities to seek accountable leadership. This has precipitated another category of the forms of political participation, that is, ‘online’ and ‘offline’ participation (Sairambay, 2020: 123). It can, therefore, be argued that the concept of political participation is still evolving, and this, combined with its complexity, allows for the development of new theories to supplement the already existing democratic theories.

Literature reveals several studies that have been conducted on youth political participation in Zimbabwe and the different political activities they focus on. For instance, Masunda’s Doctoral thesis titled *Urban Youth Political Participation in*

Bulawayo, Zimbabwe (2022) focused on electoral participation such as voting, joining a political party, voter registration, attending political rallies, party membership as well as involvement in advocacy, boycotts and strikes. The study combined an examination of both institutionalized and non-institutionalised participation. It also did not focus on youth candidature which is crucial for youth representation in the national parliament. In addition, Pswarayi's (2023)'s article titled Between Rocks and Hard Places-Zimbabwean Youth and the Challenges of Political Participation concluded that youth in Zimbabwe are marginalised in political processes and institutions. The article focused on voting and party membership as the political activities where this marginalisation occurs. Therefore, the new theory covers the gap of systematically focusing on political activities that lead to representation in governance institutions.

The new theory of participatory democracy, which safeguards youth participation, is built from participatory democracy. Participatory democracy theory anticipates the fullest involvement of citizens in their self-governance, especially in sections of society that are not typically perceived to be political (Hilmer, 2010: 43). In this instance, Pateman, a prominent participatory democrat identified the workplace as a sector which needed to be democratised. According to Backrack and Botwinick (1992), Pateman singled out the workplace specifically for participatory restructuring since it is the environment where most individuals dedicate a considerable part of their working life. Yet, within the workplace, the workers are powerless, cannot determine their welfare, and are constantly haunted by job insecurities.

Worker participation in workplace decision-making is fundamental to influencing a satisfactory life (See Chapter 2). In the same manner, youth participation in the national parliament is essential in allowing them to share a voice in making policies that affect their lives. For participatory democrats, the goal of participatory democracy is not to democratise the workplace for its own sake but to transform it into a strategic point that facilitates a fairer distribution of power, leading to an increased democratisation of the broader political system (Backrack and Botwinick, See Chapter 2). In pursuit of this perspective, participatory democrats distinguished between sectors and sites for participation. Similarly, regarding the sectors and sites for participation, Macpherson called for 'democratising the already existing political institutions.' Implied from this, and fundamental to the study, is that participatory

democracy is not exclusive to the workplace. Several sectors of participation can be identified; what is essential is the objective of democratising such a sector. Therefore, from its birthplace, participatory democracy left room for developing new theories focusing on other sectors as identified. In this regard, the new theory focuses on the national parliament as a crucial step in democratising the broad democratic process in Zimbabwe through youth representation in the National Parliament.

Given the elasticity of the concept of political participation and the varied activities that fall under it, it becomes difficult for participatory democracy to account for the democratisation of sectors other than the workplace fully. Furthermore, it can be argued that democracy as a broad concept is still evolving. While it was concerned about the franchise in the early stages, today, the main focus is ensuring inclusivity and representation of minority and previously excluded social groups. Therefore, within this context, the study uses the national parliament as a sector of participation that needs restructuring by ensuring that the youth have an equal say in making decisions that affect their lives. To realise youth representation in the National Parliament, the study identified four main political activities: crucial, including campaigning, voting, participation as candidates and election into political office.

6.4 PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY WITH SAFEGUARDS FOR YOUTH PARTICIPATION

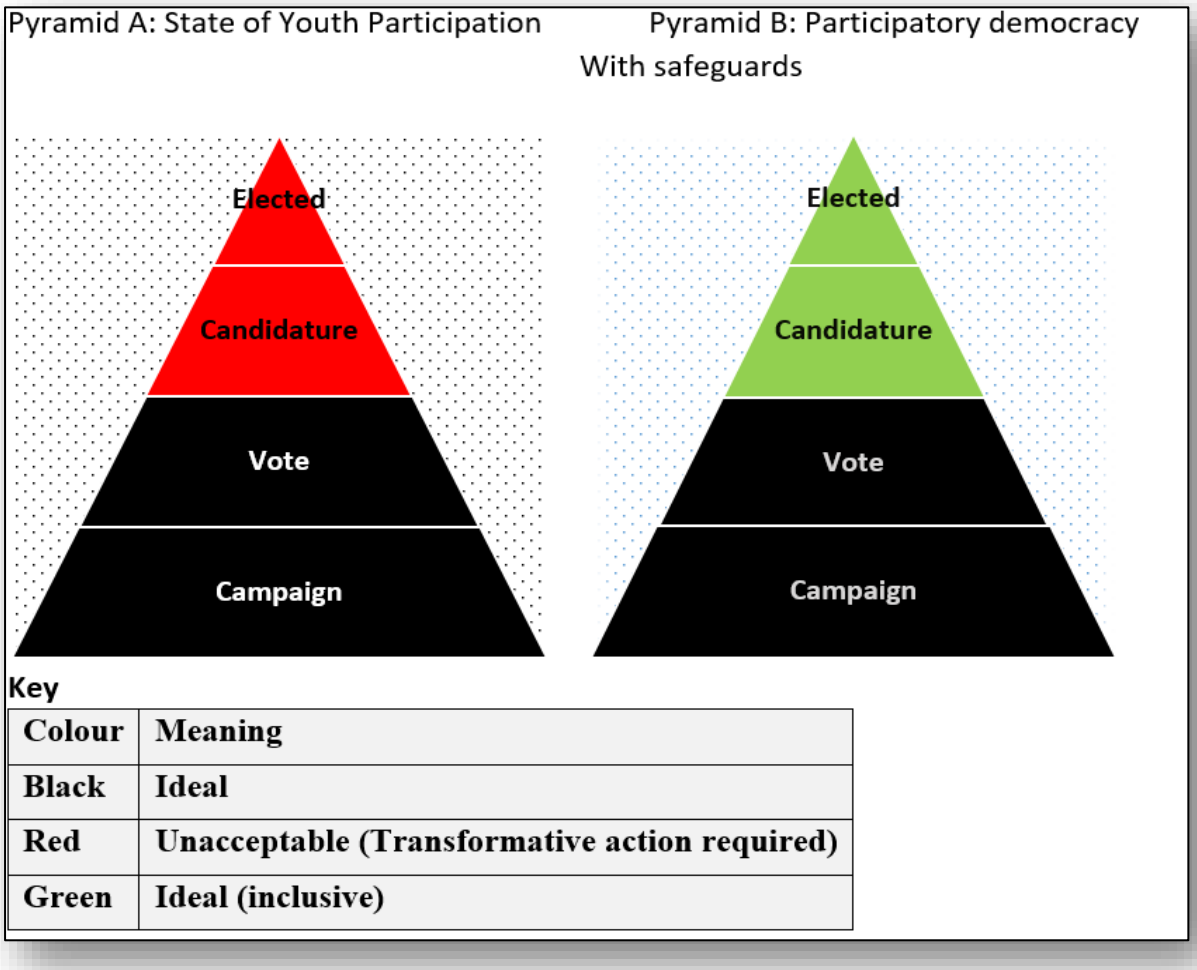
The new theory of participatory democracy with safeguards for youth participation focuses on the national parliament as a participation sector. The national parliament is an important sector where decisions affecting the citizens' lives, including the youth, are made. Youth representation in the national parliament is, therefore, essential. That youth representation is crucial is an undisputed fact. Several international conventions in place set forth this right. Yet despite these conventions, youth representation in national parliaments worldwide remains low. Therefore, this new theory focuses on four critical political activities crucial for youth representation.

Youth participation and representation in decision-making institutions is a right that finds support in various international, continental and regional instruments of which Zimbabwe is a member. There is, therefore, consensus in international conventions on the need to ensure a level playing field and, at times, to take affirmative action, facilitating youth participation leading to representation in decision-making institutions,

including the national parliament. However, the study, through reviewed literature and interviews, revealed that there remain various structural, legal and administrative barriers along the pyramid of youth participation such that youth participation remains concentrated on the first two rungs of the ladder, on campaigns and voting. Going up the ladder, youth participation as candidates and elected officials is minimal, close to non-existent. This is depicted in Pyramid A. Through participatory democracy with safeguards for youth participation, youth representation can be improved to reverse the skewed demographic representation.

The new theory has been based on empirical evidence of youth participation in the Zimbabwean electoral process.

Figure 6.1 Restatement of Figure 2.1 (Youth Political Participation)



Key

Colour	Meaning
Black	Ideal
Red	Unacceptable (Transformative action required)
Green	Ideal (inclusive)

The study's findings revealed that youth mainly participate in campaigns and voting. Pyramid A representing the empirical case for youth participation in the 2018 and 2023 harmonised elections, reveals that youths participate in peripheral political activities which do not give them power to influence decision making. Youths are thus an 'excluded majority' when it comes to meaningful representation in the National Parliament. Pyramid B illustrates how the situation could be changed so that, with protections for youth involvement, youth involvement at all levels—from the lowest to the highest—would be proportionate to their respective demographics.

For the envisaged change to occur, the various structural limitations that affect youth participation should be identified and addressed. In the Zimbabwean context, they include, age-based restrictions, candidate selection processes within political parties,

financing and other administrative challenges associated with the electoral process, such as registering to vote. Therefore, to ensure youth participation beyond voting, the new theory advocates safeguards to address the challenges affecting youth participation.

6.4.1 SAFEGUARDS FOR YOUTH PARTICIPATION

To address the structural limitations hindering youth participation across the four main activities identified in this study in the Zimbabwean context, the following safeguards are recommended as instrumental changes to foster youth representation in the National Parliament.

6.4.2 ELECTORAL SYSTEM

The study in Chapter 3 established that electoral systems are important in that they set the rules through which candidates are elected into office. More importantly, they determine the nature of democracy in a country. As such, some electoral systems give primacy to accountability (majoritarian systems) while others ensure representatives (PR systems). The study also revealed that no one electoral system can ensure accountability, representativeness and promote a durable government among other aims of electoral systems. Therefore, the choice of an electoral system determines whether the resultant governance institutions are representative or not.

The study of the various elections that were conducted in Zimbabwe revealed that the dominant use of the FPTP system has not resulted in representative parliaments. The case of women representation relatively improved with the introduction of a PR list system in 2013. Therefore, to ensure youth representation, it is recommended that the electoral system should be changed to a purely PR system. This change would not only foster youth representation, but facilitate the inclusion of other minority groups, such as people living with disabilities.

6.4.3 POLITICAL FREEDOMS

The study findings revealed that the increased voter registration and other political indicators of electoral candidates increased following the ‘unprecedented political freedoms’ that characterised the 2018 electoral environment. This implies that youth apathy can be accounted for by restrictive political contexts. As such, for youth participation across the four main activities, there must be an open electoral

environment characterised by political freedoms, including freedom of expression, assembly and association which previously were restricted.

6.4.4 ALIGNMENT OF LAWS ON THE ELIGIBILITY AGE TO RUN FOR POLITICAL OFFICE

The alignment of laws on the eligibility age to run for political office is another safeguard advanced in the new theory developed in this study. As noted in Chapter 4, there is no consensus both from literature and the interviews that were conducted over the age to run for political office. The key argument advanced on a higher age range first, philosophically from Plato, is that at 50 an individual would have acquired the philosophical maturity for leadership. Other literature backed by the interviews is that, the eligibility for Senatorial positions set at 40 in Zimbabwe while a constitutional requirement is motivated by the need to ensure that the office holders are mature and experienced to stand up to the responsibilities of the office. Thus, the argument for high age range is the need for maturity and experience. This was supported by the maxim that; wisdom comes with age. Yet, the challenge with such perspectives is that they ignore the different interests that may be advanced both by the elderly and the youths in parliament thereby complementing each other at the same time ensuring representation of diverse interests for the fulfilment of democratic principles. As such, it is in the interest of advancing democracy that these age requirements should be aligned.

Accordingly, the Constitution of Zimbabwe needs to be aligned to ensure that young people's political rights can be fully realised. The voting age, of 18, should be the same age for standing as a candidate in the national Assembly. The age should be changed from 21 to 18. Similarly, the eligibility for Senatorial positions should be reduced from 40 to an age range that accommodates the youth. It can be set at an age between 30-34 to ensure that the youth, one of the larger social groups is not excluded in governance matters. This in turn, improves Zimbabwean democratic standing.

6.4.5 YOUTH QUOTA SYSTEM

Though progressive in some ways, the youth quota is far from addressing the question of youth representation in the national parliament. There is need for increasing the number of seats reserved for the youth. The benchmark for this argument is the women's quota, which reserves 60 seats for women. Therefore, the criteria to

determine the number of seats can be a proportion of the demographics of the particular social group: women or youth.

6.4.6 POLITICAL PARTIES

The findings of the study revealed that Zimbabwean politics is party-based. This implies that political parties in Zimbabwe play a fundamental role in influencing youth participation in campaigns, voting, candidature and election into the national parliament. Therefore, the level of youth representation at the governmental level reflects the empirical reality of the party level status. The first step is to foster internal party democracy. Such an approach will include youth representation in various critical party structures. Once this is achieved, other key changes will inform candidate selection processes that prioritise the youth to ensure their candidature and subsequent election into political office. Internal party democracy also influences open and equal financing models, prioritising all party candidates, including the youth.

6.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has presented the new theory of participatory democracy with safeguards for youth participation. The theory was developed through an intensive literature review. Through the reviewed literature, the study established that participatory democracy focused on the workplace as a sector of participation which could be democratised as part of the process of democratising the entire political process. Following the need to ensure youth representation as provided for in various international conventions, the study identified the national parliament as a sector of youth participation that also needs to be democratised.

Given the elasticity and multidimensionality of the concept of political participation, the new theory used four main activities as essential for ensuring youth representation. These are campaign, vote, candidature and election into political office. No previous studies had systematically focused on these activities. The theory makes a contribution on identifying the parliament as a sector, systematically selecting key political activities crucial for youth representation. Although the theory provides fundamental safeguards for ensuring youth representation, these safeguards cannot be generalised to other country case studies. Therefore, the methodology of using the four identified activities may be used, and it is possible that different structural challenges may be found that call for different safeguards.

The next chapter presents a summary of the findings and conclusions.

CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSIONS
7.1 INTRODUCTION

This study examined youth participation in Zimbabwe from 2017 to 2023 and the prospects for their representation in the national parliament. The two elections conducted in 2018 and 2023 were used as case studies to examine youth participation across the four activities described in the new theory developed in the study. This was done to understand the youth's opportunities for subsequent representation in the national parliament.

Literature findings revealed that an FPTP electoral system dominated electoral politics in Zimbabwe during the first three decades after independence. This electoral system emphasises accountability over representativeness. This, coupled with the nationalist party that dominated parliament and the use of presidential appointments, resulted in unrepresentative parliaments. Within this period, the ZANU-PF party's narrative focused on entrenching nationalist sentiments using patriotic history. Violence was the dominant strategy for electoral politics, with the youth mainly used to unleash violence against opposition parties. Even with the emergence of a strong opposition in the late 1990s, ZANU PF's politicking revolved around constructing the opposition as enemies of the state. The government did not give space to the non-conforming youths. Thus, apathy fostered through violence and a deteriorating economy in an environment where violence-guided electoral conduct produced more risk-averse citizens than risk-takers. Youth were, hence, part of the risk-averse political actors. Despite the new constitution adopted in 2013 for youth participation in governance processes, no clear strategies were set to operationalise this provision. Instead, the question of inclusivity and representative politics focused on women, not the youth. A PR system reserving 60 seats for women was introduced.

Following the removal of Robert Mugabe from power in November 2017, the new government led by Mnangagwa sought to disengage itself from Mugabe's rule by framing itself as a new dispensation. Therefore, this study, guided by the primary objective, sought to examine the extent to which the legal, political and cultural factors under the new dispensation influence youth participation in Zimbabwe. The period under study marked by new political leadership presented an opportunity for a democratic transition in the country, which could have the potential to introduce

reforms and lead the country towards a democratic course, ensuring youth representation in the national parliament. Democratising the national parliament through youth inclusion and representation is one facet upon which the second republic can be assessed to have constituted an actual departure from the previous government.

The following objectives, therefore, guided the study;

- To examine the state of youth participation and representation in the 9th and 10th Parliaments in Zimbabwe.
- To identify and evaluate the mechanisms and structures to promote youth participation in Zimbabwe's National Parliament.
- To discuss the challenges that hinder increased youth participation in parliament in Zimbabwe.
- To determine mechanisms of engendering the election of more youths into the national parliament in Zimbabwe.

7.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The study assessed the electoral environment as a key determinant of youth participatory behaviour during Zimbabwe's 2018 and 2023 harmonised elections.

The 2018 elections were the first to be conducted under Mnangagwa's administration and the removal of Mugabe through a military-assisted transition. For the opposition, it was the first election under Chamisa's leadership following the death of Tsvangirai. Chamisa, the opposition leader, was the first youthful candidate to contest the presidency in Zimbabwe. Masunungure (2018) referred to these mega political changes as a 'three-level "new dispensation" in the country, ZANU-PF and the MDC A. Voter registration, including among the youth, increased. The number of political parties and independent candidates contesting during the elections also increased. Afrobarometer reports indicated that economic issues drove the youth to register to vote. Notwithstanding these changes, the number of youths elected into the national parliament was low, five out of 270. Three of these five were directly elected, while two were appointed through the women's PR system. ZANU-PF had more youths in the 9th Parliament. Out of the five young parliamentarians, four came from ZANU PF.

The implications of youth representation in the 9th Parliament are crucial for understanding political participation in Zimbabwe and the broader democratic project in the country. First, the purported transition that was imminent in Zimbabwe following the leadership change did not occur. Structures and political processes remain unchanged, hence the low representation of the youth. Concerning the new theory on participatory democracy with safeguards for youth participation, it can be argued that the needful transition from Pyramid A with concerning levels of youth participation beyond voting to Pyramid B representing the ideal scenario never took place. Youth participation remained static and concentrated at the lower levels of the pyramid. This points to the urgent need for structural changes that can foster youth participation beyond voting.

Also, the study's findings imply that the opposition's youthful presidential candidate, though an inspiring and charismatic leader, did not influence youth election into the National Parliament. While young in outlook, the opposition outcome of having only one elected young parliamentarian pointed to the primacy of fundamental structural changes within political parties and the candidate selection processes to ensure youth election and representation into the national parliament. Meanwhile, ZANU-PF managed to have four young parliamentarians elected into the national parliament but did not get such results through fundamental and deliberate structural changes that foster youth participation. Thus, the 2018 electoral environment revealed nothing but a recession in the old system of governance that characterised Mugabe's rule.

Findings on the 2023 electoral environment revealed some progressive legal measures adopted. This was done through Constitutional Amendment No. 2, which extended the women's quota and introduced a youth quota system. Also, a youth caucus was adopted in the national parliament. However, a retrogressive bill, the PVO bill, was also adopted. Overall, youth participation improved. As a result, the number of youths who were elected into parliament was 35. Of the 35 young parliamentarians in the 10th Parliament, 10 came through the youth quota, eight from the women's PR system, and 17 were directly elected. Despite this relative increase, youth representation is low considering their demographics. Masunungure termed it, 'skewed demographic representation.' Compounding the 'skewed representation' is the notion that the age limit for eligibility in the Senate, the upper house, is 40 years of

age. This means that youth are structurally excluded from being represented in this upper house.

The implications of youth representation in the 10th Parliament are that some relative progresses were been made. In relation to the new theory that was developed in this study, it can be argued superficially that the ideal scenario depicted in Pyramid B where youth participate as candidates and gets elected into political office was achieved. However, as stated, the relative changes recorded are superficial because they are not informed by transformative structural changes (or safeguards) that sustains the Zimbabwean democratic project in respect of being inclusive especially of the youth.

Though progressive, the youth quota offers little in seeking to reconfigure and transform youth representation in the national parliament. Again, ZANU-PF dominates youth representation in this Parliament, having 24 of the 35 young parliamentarians. Again, this mainly came through dominance in the number of youth quota seats and the women's PR system, where it had eight young women. Again, it dominated the directly elected seats. Therefore, the opposition is young in outlook, and ZANU-PF has more youth in parliament not because of genuinely transformed structural arrangements. Therefore, the case of youth representation points to the absence of genuine political reforms under the new dispensation, which could foster democratic principles of inclusion and representation of the youth. The key factors determining youth participatory behaviour across the four main political activities are discussed below.

The overall implications of the study's findings and the new theory that was developed is that, the ideal scenario of having relative changes on youth participation as candidates and their prospective election into political office as depicted in Pyramid B can be achieved. Youth representation in the Zimbabwean 10th Parliament improved from five to thirty-five. On paper, this change might call for celebrations because in deed it is positive change. However, the fundamental issue is whether such change is informed by structural changes which will guarantee and protect the nation from a slide back in the proceeding elections. Broadly, in relation to the governance system in the country and the purported 'Second Republic, ' the superficial change on youth representation in the 10th Parliament points to the absence of substantive political

reforms that shape the Zimbabwean's electoral behaviour. As such, the momentous events of 2017 took the country to an 'interregnum', yet the much-anticipated transition to democratic governance did not occur. Instead of a new era, the governance system remained the same as that of the 'old' republic. Therefore, the new theory developed in the study underscores the importance of the safeguards outlined in Chapter 6 as the foundational and indispensable measures that should anchor youth representation in the national parliament in Zimbabwe as a means towards broader democratic governance in the country.

7.2.1 ELECTORAL SYSTEM

The study revealed that electoral systems are crucial in determining outcomes and fulfilling different democratic principles. PR systems are mostly suited for ensuring representative parliaments, while majoritarian systems mainly foster accountability. While Zimbabwe under the new dispensation is using the mixed electoral system, that is, FPTP and PR, it can be noted that the PR of ten seats for the youth constituting a large share of the population is but a tokenistic measure which is not sustainable and efficient in ensuring youth representation. There is, therefore, a need for increased youth seats in the PR system. Alternatively, the country can desist from using FPTP and adopt a purely PR system. This would cure all the maladies of misrepresentation of the youth and other socially excluded groups. (See chapter 3).

7.2.2 POLITICAL FREEDOMS

As discussed in Chapter 3, voter apathy was dominant in the various elections conducted under Mugabe's administration. However, for the 2018 and 2023 elections, voter registration increased significantly among the youths, a social group popularly considered apathetic in literature. According to literature and election observation reports, the 'unprecedented political freedoms' that characterised the 2018 electoral environment under Mnangagwa's 'Second Republic' were part of a strategy to portray a break from the past. In this context, youth voter registration for the two elections stood at 44 percent of the total registrants. Reviewed literature from election observation reports indicated that the four factors that account for increased youth voter registration for the 2018 elections are a peaceful pre-election environment, youth-to-youth mobilisation, hope for a transition and civic education.

The implications of the unprecedented political freedoms on youth participation in the four main activities and possible representation in the national parliament are telling. First, the relatively high number of youth registrants for the elections confirms the narrative that youth are interested in participating in elections. The high number of youths who registered to vote following the removal of Mugabe shows that the youths are keen for a democratic change. Secondly, registering to vote was a way of attempting to ensure political change in Zimbabwe through elections. However, the enactment of draconian legislation such as the PVO bill and other administrative challenges on registering to vote implied the continuation of the previous form of governance, albeit under new leadership. It thus means youth voting patterns are likely to decline since the two elections under the new dispensation failed to usher in democratic change through peaceful, free, and fair elections. Zimbabwean political terrain, instead of opening up, is further shutting the previously promising democratic turn and restricting youth inclusion in the national parliament. The enactment of the PVO bill is one clear example that attests to this.

7.2.3 ELIGIBILITY AGE TO RUN FOR POLITICAL OFFICE

The findings revealed a misalignment of the eligibility age to vote and run for parliamentary seats. The Constitution sets the voting age at 18, yet one can only run for a national assembly seat at 21. Also, the eligibility age for senatorial seats is set at 40. Youth are, therefore, structurally precluded from fully participating in parliamentary governance structures. In particular, they are prevented from standing as candidates before they reach 21 years of age. Culturally, this implies that the constitution's drafters questioned the youth's potential and capability to occupy political office. Yet, they trusted their ability to vote for leaders at 18. This structural arrangement has the effect of relegating youth to peripheral political activities such as voting. The alignment of these laws is essential for improved youth participation and representation in the National Parliament.

7.2.4 POLITICAL PARTIES

Through literature and interviews, the study concurred on the importance of political parties as vehicles for ensuing youth election into political office. The study found that politics in Zimbabwean politics is party-based. This means that party alignment is essential for facilitating one's election into political office. The study's findings revealed that for the 2018 elections, despite the increased number of independent candidates,

only one was elected into the national assembly. Also, despite charisma and vibrancy, independent and youthful candidate Fadzayi Mahere lost the election only to win in 2023 when she contested under CCC. For the 2023 general elections, no independent candidate won the election. Youth in Zimbabwe, therefore, stand a chance of getting elected into the national parliament if they are aligned with political parties, not just any party, but particularly the dominant parties ZANU-PF and the CCC (the initial MDC formed in the late 1990s, now named the CCC).

Factionalism within political parties also hinders youth participation. The study findings revealed that factionalism negatively and positively affects youth political participation. The adverse effects are seen when youths are aligned with the weaker faction. It means that their prospects for ascending the political ladder would be minimal. On the other hand, the positive effects suggest that when they are aligned with the more substantial factional group, their survival and ascendancy in politics are assured. The highest level of the negative impact of factionalism was observed after the 2023 harmonised elections when the Tshabangu faction in the opposition recalled some elected members of Parliament. One youth was recalled from office, while another resigned, citing a toxic working environment. Thus, factionalism impedes youth participation and representation in the National Parliament.

7.2.5 CANDIDATE SELECTION PROCESSES

Zimbabwean party-based politics implies that democratic principles on inclusion and representation in the national parliament mirror the nature of internal party democracy. Findings of the study from both literature and the interviews revealed that the parties' candidate selection processes do not prioritise the youth. Instead of consolidating inclusivity, the opposition party backslided during the 2023 elections. Research participants, academics and young parliamentarians from the opposition indicated that before the 2023 elections, the party had some constituencies reserved for women and the youths. Yet, the reserve system was disbanded with the new candidate selection process introduced in 2023.

Furthermore, the use of vote buying and violence during primary elections affects youth participation. One academic participant argued that the dominant use of violence during elections in Zimbabwe resulted in a culture of primarily risk-averse citizens. Thus, even with reduced incidences of violence for the two elections understudy, just

the ‘harvest of fear’ is enough to deter most people, including the youths, from participating in politics. So, political culture also determines youth participatory behaviour.

7.2.6 POLITICAL PARTIES FINANCING

Political party financing is provided for in the Political Parties Finance Act. Parties are only financed if they manage to secure 5% of the vote in the previous election. As Zimbabwean electoral politics characterised by representation in the national parliament is dominated by ZANU-PF and the opposition in terms of MDC-A transformed into CCC for the 2018 and 2023 elections respectively, these are the parties that have managed to secure funding through the Act. However, findings from the literature including election observer reports indicated that ZANU-PF uses the advantage of incumbency and use state resources for its campaigns. This includes the use of infrastructure, financial resources, human resources and vehicles. Since political parties are instrumental in advancing the campaigns of individual candidates, it then follows that ZANU-PF candidates usually occupies an advantaged position in terms of campaign finances.

Findings from the interviews that were conducted with young parliamentarians for both elections confirmed this disparity. ZANU-PF young parliamentarians were generally satisfied with the campaign support they were given including nomination fees and vehicles. On the other hand, young parliamentarians from the opposition generally indicated that the party gives minimal or little financial support. Mostly the candidates indicated that they were given presidential posters and the designs they had to use for their printers. In this case, some had to rely on sponsors to finance their campaigns. Notwithstanding the support extended to ZANU-PF candidates, some indicated that the support came late such that they had to use their own resources and use party support as compensation to their costs. This underscores the fact that despite one’s party affiliation, participation in campaigns and strengthening one’s candidature requires a strong financial background. With the parties’ use of clientelist strategies and the ‘marination’ or ‘milking’ approach by the large group of youth who assist in campaigns, it therefore follows that financial and or economic status determines who get to stand as a candidate and who will campaign on behalf of others. Youth participation across the four activities therefore is important in determining the youth participation across the four rungs on the ladder of youth participation.

7.2.7 YOUTH QUOTA

The study's findings revealed that the key mechanism that promotes youth participation or election into the national parliament is the Constitutional Amendment No. 2 provision on the youth quota. This Amendment introduced in 2021 was first applied during the 2023 harmonised elections. The amendment extended the women's quota system, which was set to expire in 2023, by another ten years. This meant that the 'youth factor', argued by one study participant, was introduced in the Zimbabwean political lexicon by the youth quota. The effect of this measure is that youth could get into national parliament through the youth quota, women's quota (for young women) and direct election. This measure, as stated by most research participants is a good start and a progressive measure on engendering youth participation and representation in national parliament.

Though a progressive measure, some research participants were not satisfied first with the scope of the measure and its outcome. Some reviewed literature showed concern from youth activists including YETT, who were concerned about the issues of tokenism that were associated with the implementation of the quota. Other local election observation reports raised gender inequality especially considering that only three out of the ten seats were occupied by young women. Furthermore, academic like Masunungure were concerned about the 'skewed demographic representation' of the youth where in a country with a youthful population only ten seats get reserved for them. In a contrast, women also constitute a large share of the population yet 60 seats are reserved for them. It can therefore be argued that, though progressive, the youth quota is far from addressing the question of youth participation and representation in Zimbabwean parliament.

It can therefore be argued that the youth quota is the key measure that seeks to operationalise the already existing laws in the country on youth participation yet it falls short of doing this as it too small to reflect the demographics of this social groups. There therefore remains need for a holistic approach that includes initiatives and strategies by political parties to ensure youth participation and candidature in elections. Also, the electoral system can play a role in facilitating youth participation beyond voting.

7.2.8 ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

The study revealed some administrative challenges the youth encounter is relating to voter registration. The process is cumbersome and in particular during the 2023 general elections, the delimitation exercise resulted in some changes on constituency borders. In some instances, this caused some registration centres to be remote centred thereby making the process cumbersome. Also, the ques and delays are a challenge to the youth. Furthermore, the increased nomination fees for the 2023 candidates affected many youths who aspired to contest the elections as candidates. Several election observer missions showed concern over the price hikes as a setback to the equal and full participation of special social groups such as the youth and women.

7.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study's contribution to scientific knowledge is based on two levels. First, it developed a new theory of participatory democracy with safeguards on youth participation. Participatory theorists, including Pateman (1970), identified sectors of involvement which can be democratised as part of the broader process of democratising the political process. In this manner, Pateman identified the workplace as a sector of participation. The new theory developed in this study focuses on the national parliament as a sector of participation that may be democratised through youth representation. The theory identified four main political activities to ensure youth representation: campaigning, voting, candidature and election into the Parliament.

According to the new theory, participation occurs in an ecosystem of rules, institutions, and processes that may hinder it. Rules such as eligibility age, candidate selection processes, and campaign financing are contextual factors that may influence participation across the four activities. Therefore, for meaningful youth participation to take place, which includes their representation, there is a need for safeguards that address the limiting ecosystem variables. These safeguards should be emphasised, but they cannot be generalised. They only apply to the country case study where this new theoretical approach would have been applied. What is generalised, however, is the systematic approach of examining youth political participation across the four main activities to understand the contextual factors that facilitate or hinder youth representation in the National Parliament.

The study secondly contributed to the generation of scientific knowledge on youth political participation and their chances of representation in governance institutions under the Second Republic in Zimbabwe. Following the military-assisted transition and the coming in of Mnangagwa's administration, the country underwent a momentous political change with the chance to transform the governance system. Defining the moment, Kaulemu (2019) observed that,

> Zimbabwe is today in a transition. It is now located in what Antonio Gramsci called an interregnum- A place in between. This is a place where old ways of dealing with things no longer work and yet new ways are not invented and articulated.

The empirical case of youth participation during the 2018 and 2023 general elections and their representation in the 9th and 10th Parliament, respectively, has been used in this study to demonstrate the democratic backsliding. Instead of the political changes leading to an open political space with genuine and sustained political freedoms fostering inclusion and representativeness in national parliament, the recorded changes have just been tokenistic. Therefore, this study has systematically analysed the potential transitionary period.

7.4 FURTHER STUDIES

This study focused on the four main activities that are crucial for ensuring youth election into the national parliament. It did not focus on the actual contributions made by the young parliamentarians. There is therefore need for further studies that focus on the contributions made by the young parliamentarians both in the policy arena, in terms of the policies they pushed for in the national parliament and the developmental projects they initiated in their various constituencies as a means of determining the import of youth representation on the well-being of the youth as a broad social group.

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APPENDIX A

Interview No:

Date Conducted:

Venue:

Time:

Preamble

This research is being conducted by **Ms. Oripha Chimwara,** a PhD student at the North-West University, Faculty of Humanities, and School of Government Studies. The thesis title is **Youth Political Participation in Zimbabwe and the prospects for representation in the National Parliament (2017-2023).** Your cooperation towards the completion of this research is sincerely appreciated. You are also assured that your responses will be treated exclusively and confidential. Your contribution is extensively acknowledged in this study.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Email: oriphachimwara@gmail.com

Cell: +263773019195

1. What is the role of the youth in Zimbabwean electoral politics?
2. How does the post-military transition political environment influence youth participation in national parliament?
3. Have any critical political and economic events in Zimbabwe from 2018 to 2023 influenced the youth election into parliament?
4. What is the role of political parties in facilitating youth candidature for primary and parliamentary elections?
5. To what extent do political parties determine one's candidature and subsequent election into national parliament?
6. How did political party ideologies and manifestos from 2018 to 2023 influence youth candidature in elections?
7. How has internal-party politics from 2018-2023 facilitated or hindered youth candidature in elections?
8. How has the electoral system in Zimbabwe's 2018 and 2023 parliamentary elections influenced youth election into the national parliament?
9. What are the main challenges that youth candidates face during campaigns?
10. What should be done to promote youth election into the national parliament?

Thank you for taking the time to assist.

APPENDIX B

Interview No:

Date Conducted:

Venue:

Time:

Preamble

This research is being conducted by **Ms. Oripha Chimwara,** a PhD student at the North-West University, Faculty of Humanities, and School of Government Studies. The thesis title is **Youth Political Participation in Zimbabwe and the prospects for representation in the National Parliament (2017-2023).** Your cooperation towards the completion of this research is sincerely appreciated. You are also assured that your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Your contribution is extensively acknowledged in this study.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Oripha Chimwara
+263773019195
oriphachimwara@gmail.com

1. How old were you when you were elected into parliament?
2. What is the nature of the process for selecting party candidates in your party?
3. How does the generational gap play out during the primary and parliamentary elections?
4. What is the role of political parties in determining youth candidature for elections?
5. Did you receive funding from your political party to assist in financing your campaigns for a parliamentary seat?
6. What form of assistance did you receive from your political party to assist in your campaigns?
7. How did political party ideologies and manifestos from 2018 to 2023 influence youth election into the national parliament?
8. How did internal party politics from 2018 to 2023 facilitate or hinder youth candidature for elections in Zimbabwe?
9. What is the likelihood or potential of youth winning primary and parliamentary elections in Zimbabwe?
10. What are the main challenges that you encountered during campaigns?
11. What should be done to increase the chances of youth winning parliamentary elections?

Thank you for participating in my study.

APPENDIX C

Interview No:

Date Conducted:

Venue:

Time:

Preamble

This research is being conducted by **Ms. Oripha Chimwara,** a PhD student at the North-West University, Faculty of Humanities, and School of Government Studies. The thesis title is **Youth Political Participation in Zimbabwe and the prospects for representation in the National Parliament (2017-2023).**. Your cooperation towards the completion of this research is sincerely appreciated. You are also assured that your responses will be treated exclusively and confidential. Your contribution is extensively acknowledged in this study.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Email: oriphachimwara@gmail.com

Cell: +263773019195

Questions based on the 10th Parliament (or outcome of the 2023 Harmonised Elections)

Question 1

How many young parliamentarians are in the 10th Parliament of Zimbabwe?

Question 2

Which political party had the most significant number of young parliamentarians?

Question 3

Which political party had the least number of young parliamentarians?

Question 4

Were there any independent young parliamentarians? If yes, how many were they?

Question 5

How many young parliamentarians came to this Parliament through the quota system?

Question 6

Could you please provide their names and party affiliations?

Question 7

Who was the youngest MP for this Parliament?

Question 8

How many young people were there in the Senate?

Question 9

Who was the youngest Senator?

Question 10

Are there any legal or structural measures that exist to ensure the election of young parliamentarians? If so, kindly describe them.

Question 11

Are there any other initiatives taken in the country to promote youth representation in the national Parliament?

Question 12

Is there a caucus or network dealing with youth issues within Parliament?

Question 13

Are there any parliamentary bodies dealing with youth issues?

Question 14

What are some of the challenges that young Parliamentarians face as they participate in national Parliament?

Questions based on the 9th Parliament (or outcome of the 2018 Harmonised Elections)

Question 1

How many young parliamentarians were in the 9th Parliament of Zimbabwe?

Question 2

Which political party had the most significant number of young parliamentarians?

Question 3

Which political party had the least number of young parliamentarians?

Question 4

Were there any independent young parliamentarians? If yes, how many were they?

Question 5

How many young parliamentarians came to this Parliament through the quota system?

Question 6

Could you please provide their names and party affiliations?

Question 7

Who was the youngest MP for this Parliament?

Question 8

How many young people were there in the Senate?

Question 9

Who was the youngest Senator?

Question 10

Are there any legal or structural measures that exist to ensure the election of young parliamentarians? If so, kindly describe them.

Question 11

Are there any other initiatives taken in the country to promote youth representation in the national Parliament?

Question 12

Is there a caucus or network dealing with youth issues within Parliament?

Question 13

Are there any parliamentary bodies dealing with youth issues?

Question 14

What are some of the challenges that young Parliamentarians face as they participate in national Parliament?

Thank you for taking the time to assist.

APPENDIX D

Basic Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC)

DATE: 11 October 2023

BaSSREC Authorisation

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM

Title of the research project	Youth Political Participation in Zimbabwe and the Prospects for Representation in the National Parliament (2017-2023).
Ethics number	**NWU-01053-23-S7**
Principal investigator	Oripha Chimwara
Student number	34372466
Address	166B Harava Close CA St Marys Chitungwiza Harare Zimbabwe
Email address	oriphachimwara@gmail.com
Contact number	+263773019195

You are being invited to take part in a research project that forms part of my PhD in Political Studies program requirement. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project. Please ask the researcher any questions about any part of this project you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research is about and how you could be involved. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to decline participation. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part. Prior to publication of the study's results (or the point that publication is in process), you may also withdraw the data you generate.

This study has been approved by the **Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC) of the Faculty of Humanities of the North-West University (NWU, South Africa)** and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the international Singapore Statement on Research Integrity (2010) and the ethical guidelines of the National Health Research Ethics Council. It might be necessary for the research ethics committee members or relevant authorities to inspect the research records to make sure that we (the researchers) are conducting research in an ethical manner.

What is this research study all about?

This study examines the prospects of youth election into the national parliament in the post-2017 military-assisted transition in Zimbabwe. The study examines how the institutional and political context fosters or inhibits youth participation in the national parliament. The study will use qualitative research methods, literature searches, and interviews. The researcher has been trained to use the methods mentioned in the previous sentence. The research participants for this study include young parliamentarians who served under the 9^{th} and 10^{th} Parliament, academics, and some administrative staff at the Parliament of Zimbabwe.

The objectives of this research are:

Primary Research Objectives

To examine the influence of the legal, political, and cultural factors in youth participation in the Zimbabwe national parliament?

Specific research objectives

To examine the state of youth participation and representation in the 9th and 10th Parliaments in Zimbabwe.

To identify and evaluate the mechanisms and structures to promote youth participation in Zimbabwe's national parliament.

To discuss the challenges that hinder increased youth participation in parliament in Zimbabwe.

To determine mechanisms of engendering the election of more youths into the national parliament in Zimbabwe.

Why have you been invited to participate?

Participation in this study is based on one's experience working at the Parliament of Zimbabwe, serving under the 9th and 10th Parliament of Zimbabwe as a young person (aged 21-35 years), being an academic writing on Zimbabwean electoral politics, democratization, and civic participation. Age is the main inclusion criteria for the young parliamentarians. You have been invited to participate because you fall under the above-stated categories. Sex is not used as an inclusion and exclusion criterion for participation in this study.

You will be excluded if you are not an administrative staff at the Parliament of Zimbabwe, did not serve under the 9th and 10th Parliament as a young parliamentarian, and are not an academic who publishes on Zimbabwean electoral politics.

What will your responsibilities be?

You will be invited to participate in this study through face-to-face interviews. The interviews may also be telephone-based, depending on your availability and method of preference. You are also free to choose an e-mail-based interview. You will initially be contacted through email. After this initial communication, you may highlight your preferred method of participation in the study. You will have ten days or a week to indicate whether you would be willing to

participate. You will be requested to sign this Informed Consent Statement before the commencement of the study.

Will you benefit from taking part in this research?

There are no direct benefits to participating in this study. The indirect benefit will probably be contributing to knowledge generation and the advancement youth political participation and subsequent representation in national parliament.

Are there risks involved in your taking part in this research and how will these be managed?

The possible risks in this study, and how these will be managed, are summarised in the table below:

Possible risk	**Mitigation strategy**
COVID-19 risk during face-to-face interviews.	Due to the potential of COVID-19 infection, the researcher will observe the following rules during in-person/face-to-face data collection: • If the current COVID-19 restriction levels do not allow for such in-person meetings, the interviews will not take place. • The researcher will seek to interview fully vaccinated participants. Those who are not fully vaccinated will not be interviewed. • Researcher will provide sanitizers (with 70% alcohol content) before, during, and after the interview. • Social distancing will be done NB- The above mitigation measures will only apply during the height of COVID-19 restrictions. Currently, there are no restrictions in place in Zimbabwe.
Tiredness and discomfort	Comfort breaks of about 5-10 minutes will be taken.

- *However, we do believe that the benefits to you and to science (as noted in the previous section) outweigh the risks we have listed. If you disagree, then please feel free not to participate in this study. We will respect your decision.*
- *Should we learn, in the course of the research, that someone is harming you, or that you are intending to harm someone, then we must tell someone who can help you/warn the person you are intending to harm.*

Who will have access to the data?

The following procedures will be observed in line with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA):

Principle	How will this be done?	When will this be done?
Anonymity	Anonymity will be ensured by the use of codes. I the researcher will assign a code that will be used for future references to your responses.	Before the interview commences.
Confidentiality	Confidentiality will include the use of codes for participants. It involves not disclosing any information gained from an interviewee deliberately or accidentally in ways that might identify the research participant.	During the analysis and the write-up of findings. During the reporting of findings. During the publication of findings in the form of articles, books and conference proceedings.
De-identification of data	All identifiable personal information will be de-identified to ensure that no information identifies any participants.	Before data analysis and the write-up of findings start.
Data storage	All data collected for the purpose of the research will be stored safely in electronic format/hardcopy format for a period of five years after which it will be destroyed. The primary investigator will ensure data that both hard-(printed) and soft copy (electronic) are safely locked away and password-protected, respectively. Only approved people in my research team (*if applicable*) will/may have access to my raw data where the need arises. At the analysis stage, as will be the case throughout, the use of coding will reinforce participants' non-identification, hence upholding the assurance of confidentiality and anonymity.	During the fieldwork. After the fieldwork has been completed During analysis and the write-up of findings. During the reporting of findings. During the publication of findings in the form of articles, books, conference proceedings, etc.
Privacy	*Privacy* will be ensured by not probing unnecessarily if you do not wish to discuss particular matters.	During the fieldwork. During follow-up fieldwork.
Transcription/coding of data	I will/will not use a *transcriber* for the purpose of the transcripts after the interview. I will/will not use a *statistician/coder* for the purpose of the transcripts after the interview.	The primary investigator will be responsible for transcribing the data. Therefore, no other person will have access to the data. The primary investigator signed an NWU Confidentiality Agreement before the study commenced. Therefore, no other person will have access to the data.
Translation/interpreter services	I will not use a *translator/interpreter* for the purpose of the interviews/explaining the informed consent.	The study does not involve the use of a translator/interpreter for the purposes of the interviews/explaining the informed consent.

Collection of only relevant personal information:

Collection of only relevant personal information	I, the principal investigator will only collect personal biographical and opinion-related data about the topic I am studying.	Below is the biographical and opinion-related (main themes) information that will be collected for the purpose of the study. **-**Age of the youngest parliamentarian under the 9th and 10th Parliament -Number of young parliamentarians in the 9th and 10th Parliament -Experiences of young parliamentarians within their political parties and national Parliament -challenges faced by young parliamentarians **-**Role of youth in Zimbabwean politics -factors influencing youth participation in the election -role of political parties in promoting youth participation -strategies for enhancing youth election into the national Parliament

What will happen to the data?

The data from this study will be reported in the thesis to be submitted to the NWU. It will be published as part of the library information. Some of the research results will be published in accredited journals as journal articles or book chapters. Also, some will be presented during workshops that may be conducted at NWU or other academic spaces. In all of this reporting, you will not be personally identified. This means the reporting will not include your name or details that will help others know that you participated.

Will you be paid/compensated to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?

There is no compensation to be given to research participants. The researcher will ensure that there are no financial obligations on the part of the participants by ensuring that the interviews take place at the participant's places of convenience.

How will you know about the findings?

The general findings of the research will be shared with you by email or as a hard copy. If you would like feedback on your results, the researcher will provide extracts in your preferred format.

Is there anything else that you should know or do?

- You can contact the researcher at +263773019195 and email address; oriphachimwara@gmail.com if you have any further queries or encounter any problems.
- You can contact the chair of the Basic Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (Prof Erharbor Idemudia) at 018 389 2899 or Erhabor.Idemudia@nwu.ac.za if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the researcher.
- You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.

Declaration by participant

By signing below, I _____ agree to take part in a research study entitled: **Youth Political Participation in Zimbabwe and the Prospects for Representation in the National Parliament (2017-2023)**

I declare that:

- I provide *informed consent.*
  - Thus, I have read and understood this information and consent form and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
  - Thus, I have had a chance to ask questions to both the person obtaining consent, as well as the researcher (if this is a different person), and all my questions have been adequately answered.

- I provide *voluntary consent.*
  - Thus, I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and I have not been pressurised to take part.
  - Thus, I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
  - Thus, I am aware of the fact that I may request that the researcher does not continue with said recording if I request it.

- I provide *specific consent.*
  - Thus, I understand that what I contribute (what I report/say/write/draw/produce visually) could be reproduced publically and/or quoted, but without reference to my personal identity.
  - I provide *specific consent.* Thus, I consent to an audio and/or audio-visual recording of the interview to be reproduced without reference to my personal identity.

Signed at (*place*) _____ on (*date*) _____ 20 _____

_____

Signature of participant

- You may contact me again ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**
- I would like a summary of the findings of this research ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**
- I would like feedback on my functioning/wellbeing as reflected in the questionnaires I completed ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

The best way to reach me is:

Name & Surname: _____

Postal Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone Number: _____

Cell Phone Number: _____

In case the above details change, please contact the following person who knows me well and who does not live with me and who will help you to contact me:

Name & Surname: _____

Phone/ Cell Phone Number /Email: _____

_____

Declaration by researcher/primary investigator

I *(name)* _____ declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to _____
- I encouraged them to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that they adequately understand all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I did/did not use an interpreter.

Signed at (*place*) _____ on (*date*) _____20 _____

Signature of researcher

Declaration by researcher and participant

Personal face-to-face interviews during Covid-19 restrictions (*if applicable*)

Additional declaration by participant in those instances where the participant requests to participate in a personal face-to-face semi-structured interview:

By signing below, I _____, acknowledge the following information related to the required measures regarding Covid-19:

I declare that:

- It is my personal choice and preference to participate in a personal face-to-face semi-structured interview with the researcher.
- This requires that I consent to the following strict measures to safeguard the personal health and safety of myself and that of the researcher/interviewer/primary investigator:

  - I consent to the researcher taking my temperature before the interview using a thermometer. ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**
  - I confirm that my temperature measured at _____ degrees. ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**
  - I consent to use the three-ply mask provided by the researcher. ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**
  - I consent to wear the three-ply mask for the full duration of the interview. ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**
  - I consent to the researcher sanitising the interview context using a sanitiser with an 80% alcohol content before the commencement of the interview. ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**
  - I consent to the researcher using a sanitiser with an 80% alcohol content before and during the interview if required. ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

Signed at (*place*) _____ on (*date*) _____ 20 ____

_____ _____

Signature of participant **Signature of researcher**

APPENDIX E

MACQUARIE University
SYDNEY·AUSTRALIA

Certificate

March 17, 2023

This is to certify that Ms. Oripha Chimwara has successfully completed the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Online Training Module for the Social Sciences and Humanities.

Macquarie University

NWU®

Faculty of Humanities

CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE

This certificate is awarded to
Oripha Chimwara

In recognition of attending the Faculty of Humanities' Ethics Training Session on Friday, 15 September 2023

Professor Mirna Nel
Deputy Dean Research and Innovation
Faculty of Humanities

Professor Susan Coetzee van Rooy
Deputy Chairperson: ECLM

Professor Erhabor Idemudia
Chairperson: BaSSREC, HSSREC and EMELTENREC

15 September 2023
Date

NWU®
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Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC)

Faculty of Humanities Ethics Office for Research, Training and Support
Tel: 018 285 2457

Email: Erhabor.Idemudia@nwu.ac.za

Senate Committee for Research Ethics
Tel: 016 103 4446
Email: Feziwe.Mseleni@nwu.ac.za

8 April 2024

ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by the **Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC)** on **02/04/2024**, the Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee hereby **approves** your study as indicated below. This implies that the North-West University Senate Committee for Research Ethics (NWU-SERC) grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Study title: Youth Political Participation in Zimbabwe and the prospects for representation in the National Parliament (2017-2023).

Study Leader/Supervisor (Principal Investigator)/Researcher: Dr. P. Heydenrych

Student/Research Team: O. Chimwara (34372466)

Ethics number:

N	W	U	-	0	1	0	5	3	-	2	3	-	A	7
Institution				Study Number						Year			Status	

Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation

Application Type: Single Study

Commencement date: 02/04/2024

Expiry date: 02/04/2025

Risk: Low risk

Approval of the study is initially provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation.

Special in process conditions of the research for approval (if applicable):

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:

- *The study leader/supervisor (principal investigator)/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the BaSSREC:*
  - *annually (or as otherwise requested) on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided, and upon completion of the study; and*
  - *without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.*

- *The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the study leader/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the BaSSREC, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.*
- *Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for an external audit.*
- *The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.*
- *In the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-SCRE and BaSSREC reserves the right to:*
  - *request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;*
  - *to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process;*
  - *withdraw or postpone approval if:*
    - *any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected;*
    - *it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the BaSSREC or that information has been false or misrepresented;*
    - *submission of the annual (or otherwise stipulated) monitoring report, the required amendments, or reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately; and / or*
    - *new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.*
- *BaSSREC can be contacted for further information or any report templates via* BaSSREC-Admin@nwu.ac.za.

The BaSSREC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the BaSSREC or the NWU-SCRE for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely

Prof. E. Idemudia

Chairperson NWU Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

All communications should be addressed to:
CLERK OF PARLIAMENT

Fax: 252935

Ref: 12

PARLIAMENT OF ZIMBABWE
P.O. Box CY 298
Causeway
Zimbabwe
Telephone: 700181-8, 252931
252936/7, 252940/2
252945/6, 708923

Monday, 22 May 2023

Ms. Oripha Chimwara
52 Nehanda Close
CA St. Mary's
CHITUNGWIZA

Dear. Ms. Chimwara

RE: REQUEST FOR AUTHORITY TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Reference is made to your letter dated 02 May 2023, wherein you requested for permission to conduct research, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Doctorate degree programme you are currently doing.

Please be advised that the Clerk of Parliament has granted you authority to conduct the said research. You are requested to report to the Human Resources Department before you proceed with the research work.

We wish you all the best in your research.

Yours faithfully

Mutamba M. L. (Mrs.)
A/Director Human Resources
For: CLERK OF PARLIAMENT

PARLIAMENT OF ZIMBABWE
HUMAN RESOURCES
22 MAY 2023
P.O. BOX CY 298 CAUSEWAY,
HARARE, ZIMBABWE