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INVESTIGATING THE EFFECTS OF GERONTOCRATIC
POLITICAL LEADERSHIP ON YOUTH MARGINALIZATION IN
ZIMBABWE

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work, except where it is stated by way of reference or acknowledgment, and has not been presented to any University for academic credit.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all young people in Zimbabwe whose participation in decision-making processes is not fully represented. To all who studied and could not be employed, those who were forced to leave their motherland in search of greener pastures, and all political or economic asylum seekers.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AU	African Union
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
NYS	National Youth Service
OAU	Organization of African Union
OAUS	Occupy Africa Unity Square
PYM	Pan African Youth Movement
SADC	Southern African Development Community
UN	United Nations
UNECA	United Nations Economic Transition
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union- Patriotic Front
ZHRC	Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission
ZIMASSET	Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of gerontocratic political leadership on youth marginalization in Zimbabwe with a view to finding solutions that impact positively in the progressive political participation and political transformational growth of the youth and the country. The research's specific objectives included to find out the impact of gerontocracy on the young people in political leadership, to determine reasons for political marginalization of the youth and to explore how young people can participate progressively in political leadership. The target population comprised of the youth groups registered by the Ministry of Youth the year 2019, the Zimbabwe Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture and religious leaders within Harare in Zimbabwe. The study implored stratified random sampling technique. The sample size of the study was 160 respondents who were randomly selected. The study used primary data collected by administering questionnaires and interviews. The data was analyzed using quantitative and qualitative techniques. Quantitative data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 program while qualitative was analyzed through narrative descriptions. The study results revealed that youth in Zimbabwe have limited opportunities to participate in the formulation of youth policies. The results also revealed that the youth are excluded from the implementation process of their policies. The study concluded that the main causes for youth political exclusion in Zimbabwe from participation in political leadership was the practice of political patronage, cultural dictates and poverty, in fact majority of young people, in Zimbabwe are unemployed. Therefore, the study recommends that youth ought to be included in political leadership. It recommends the government of Zimbabwe to support youth participation in inclusive political processes and democratic practices. This can be achieved through promoting youth skills and building capacities to actively participate in democratic practices such as leadership training, training in elections and governance processes, and promotion of both genders to participate in political positions and decision-making at all levels.

CHAPTER ONE

Historically, political leadership has been considered a realm of the experienced and experience has been attributed to age (Eyerman, & Turner, 1998). This dates to the Greek city-states system where the *gerousia* (the elders) had the mantle to lead the state. According to the classical philosopher, Plato, the elder men had to rule while the younger had to submit (Bytheway, 1995). Chinese Communist party during the time of the legend of Eight Immortals, leadership was led by the elders in their eighties. Similarly, in the 1970s, the USSR had gerontocratic leadership. On the other hand, general observation indicates that gerontocracy was prevalent in mostly communist states such as Albania, Bulgaria, North Korea, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Cuba. In the same way, theocratic nations such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the Vatican (Korbonski, 1976), supported gerontocracy

In the British monarchical system, the age factor is still important, especially given that the royal queen is enthroned for life. In democratic states such as the United States of America, even though gerontocracy is not enshrined in their constitution, history has demonstrated that most American leaders have been elderly (Mulligan, & Sala-i-Martin, 1999). For example, the American senate is constituted by people very advanced in age. One typical example is Strom Thurmond, a former senator of South Carolina who left office when he was 100years old. Currently, Italy itself is still considered to be a gerontocratic state with a septuagenarian incumbent president and the two octogenarian predecessors.

In Africa, gerontocracy (rule by the elders) was mostly cultural and based on the philosophy that wisdom comes with age. In its purest form, gerontocracy comprised a body of elders who oversaw the affairs of a given community (Comaroff, & Comaroff, 2004). In traditional Africa, generational age was an honor and it had respect attached to it. The current example which is cited by many scholars is the one of the Samburu tribes of Kenya (Spencer & Spencer, 2013).

However, contrary to the honorary gerontocracy of traditional Africa, there emerged another form of gerontocracy born of conventional political forms of leadership. From the colonial period to post-independence, Africa's traditional structures of leadership were transformed (Sharma, 2005). The Founding Fathers were the first leaders of the independent African states by virtue of fighting or negotiating their independence. According to Thong (2012), the difference between traditional and modern gerontocracies is that the traditional was honourable while the modern is dominating and autocratic. Over time, with the development of new forms of leadership, gerontocracy proved wanting. New scholarship has shown that leadership is not only a natural endowment but an acquired skill (Thieux, 2019). Therefore, young people are also capable of leading. Subsequently, this study seeks to establish the impact of gerontocratic political leadership on youth marginalization.

Consequently, this study is undertaken on the assumption that gerontocratic political leadership has a negative impact on the young people. The effect is experience in the exclusion of the youth in decision making processes. Seemingly, there emerge a conflict between the young and the gerontocrats causing a destructive gap in the socio-cultural, political and economic processes.

This work is divided into five chapters. Chapter one concerns with the thesis plan. Chapter two deals with the literature review of essential works from different sources which are related to this study. Chapter three explains the methodology of the study which this work used in collecting data, highlighting the research design, methods and instruments, population, and sampling. Field data collection process, research site and time frame, reliability, and validity of the instrument as well as data analysis will be captured. Chapter four presents data analysis as obtained from the field and the last chapter gives the conclusion, summary, and recommendations from the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

The republic of Zimbabwe is a southern African state with a population of 16 million people. According to the 2012 census, 55% of the population is young people under the age of 25 years and those who fall in the bracket of youth constitute 67.7% of the Zimbabwe's population. The Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (20) Act 2013 Section 20, states that those who are defined as youth are people whose age is between the ages of 15-35 years; this age bracket reflects the Africa Youth Charter. This population is rising gradually, giving the impression that the youth population will also rise significantly. Due to patriarchal and hierarchical structures, this 'youth bulge' is presenting challenges in Zimbabwe, with issues like unemployment, high disease burden, and limited space to engage in socio-economic and political spaces as major factors (Nhapi & Mathende, 2019). This population demographic structure which is on the rise is recorded in many African countries thereby deeming Africa a young continent.

Zimbabwe attained its political independence from Britain in 1980. Since then, it has been on different trajectories in as far as socio-political and economic issues are concerned. History attests that Zimbabwe inherited a healthy economy which helped her to develop the essential sectors to a commendable status of having good education system, operational health system and functional infrastructure (Marazanye, 2016). In relation to the youth and economic empowerment, Zimbabwe did not have specific economic strategies for the youth in the first two decades. The youth did not feature in the national budget of the country.

The first National Youth Fund was created in 2006 and it coincided with the formation and establishment of National Youth Service which played a role in the shaping of Zimbabwe's youth narrative in Zimbabwe (Ooesterom & Gukurume, 2019). From the year 2006 until 2017, there have been youth projects which were implemented by the government for economic empowerment such as Youth Empowerment Fund which was directly linked to the national's Indigenization and Economic Empowerment Act and policy. Youth were also made part of the government's 2013 initiative called Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET), whose goal was to empower the citizens economically.

In the year 2017, the New Dispensation accommodated the youth, emphasizing their instrumental value and responsibility in economic development (Ooesterom & Gukurume, 2019). In addition, a bank was established to empower economic development and income generating projects were initiated with the youth being included. However, it is important to note that even though the youth were mentioned in various programmes of the state, their involvement was of manipulation, decoration or

tokenism and all developmental projects were partisan and exclusive in nature (Sana, 2011). The politics of patronage and enabling dominated over the economic empowerment programs.

Consequently, Zimbabwe faces slowing economic growth, financial crisis, particularly liquidity crunch, increasingly erratic weather patterns, raising poverty and inequality and a political legitimacy crisis (Nhapi & Mathende, 2019). There is a visible imbalance between the youth and the elders. The elders have more wealth and various means to amass wealth when compared to the inexperienced young people. The difference in wealth weighs heavier on the youth because they find themselves incapacitated to do anything productive because they lack the capital (Blumstein, 1995). The economy is unable to meet the needs of the ballooning urban youth community. Introspectively, this lack of resources and means, disadvantages the youth from being involved in politics because the patrons use their wealth to lure the voters. On the other hand, the impoverished youth fail to contribute accordingly because the job market is flooded. High rate of unemployment is a threat to any economic growth. Sebola, (2017) argues that unemployed youth have become a source of concern regionally where several of them have suffered xenophobic attacks from the neighbouring South Africa and others have joined the dangerous routes across the oceans into other foreign territories in search of a livelihood.

Politically, Zimbabwe has been under the leadership of the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union- Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) for the last forty years. The overstay of the ruling party has been alleged to have caused democratic malpractices which have left Zimbabwean political leadership in a quandary (Mpondi, 2015). The

most outstanding challenges that bedevilled Zimbabwe few years after independence include corruption, poverty, poor service delivery, unemployment, poor economic performance, policy inconsistency, lack of independence of the judiciary, lack of rule of law, human rights abuse, dictatorship, reduced voter confidence and electoral credibility (Kachembere, 2017).

The political participation of the youth in Zimbabwe constitutes a narrative that is between being manipulated and being kept at bay. In the first decade after independence, the youth were co-opted into brigades and militias whose duty was to perpetuate the ideology of the ruling party ZANU PF. Any opposing voice was met with heavy-handedness. As the country embarked on the structural adjustment programs in the early 1990's and was followed by country's participation in the Democratic Republic of Congo War, there were dissenting voices at home disparaging about the deterioration of the situation. The youth, through students' unions protested this deterioration and once again, the government cracked them down and labelled them enemies of the state.

The murky political repression in the country forced the birth of an opposition party, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in 1999. The formation came as a response to the disintegration of socio-economic and political structures in the country. This became an outlet to the youth who were kept in the peripheries of decisions for a very long time. In response to the resistance, which was brought by the opposition, the ruling party, ZANU PF embarked on a program of instilling patriotism in the "born after independence" generation. National Youth Service (NYS) took over the program of indoctrinating the youth and castigating those who were supporting the opposition party. To win the hearts of the young people, the ruling party, ZANU PF for the first time

created a Ministry of Youth and Development and Employment Creation in 2008. However, this initiative was dominated by politics of patronage.

Youth participation was never viewed as a right but a token of appreciation which in turn made the youth to be the blind vanguards of the political patrons of the ruling party. They committed violence in their name so that they keep the gerontocratic leadership in power. This has been the trajectory of the government and the ruling party since the formation of the contesting opposition, MDC. The youth are functionally involved but not for their benefit but for the benefit of the ruling elite. Their role both in government and the ruling party has been of a pawn in the game of chess. On the other hand, those who joined the opposition are not much different from their friends because politics of patronage is cutting across the political spectrum. Additionally, the youth in opposition are mostly reactive than being proactive. Even though the president of one of the strongest opposition parties is young, it does not reflect the party's narrative in favour of the youth, rather it was by default. Hodzi (2014) noted that the outstanding duty of the youth in the main political parties was merely to perpetuate the voice of the party leadership.

Even though the history of African states and Zimbabwe confirms that young people played a very pivotal role in liberating most states in Africa; there is no trace of the same young people participating positively or being co-opted as key members of the self-rule African governments. Zimbabwe, which is a member of Southern African Development Community (SADC), is not very different from her neighbours who also share the same plight but on different levels. The exclusion of the young people from the political responsibilities has disenfranchised the youth so much that most of them have

lost trust in their political leaders. The youth feel misrepresented, and their concerns and needs are not attended to whilst at the same time they feel used to vanguard the self-gratifying political interest of the gerontocrats. This is not a Zimbabwean problem per se, but it is a problem that finds many references globally.

The Arab Spring of 2011 is an example of how youth are experiencing this political exclusion (Honwana, 2013). Worldwide, youth unemployment is rampant and in some African countries, access to education by the young people has proved to be difficult. Zimbabwe has seen a big number of young capable men and women leaving the country going abroad or into neighbouring South Africa in search of employment. This exodus of young people has created a professional gap in Zimbabwe, and it has also disturbed the social fibre of family cohesion.

Since local industries have no capacity to employ the number of young people who are leaving tertiary institutions, this has generated many misfits from the idle youth. The young people are “forced into the oversaturated informal economy or they become informal workers in the formal sector (Eze, 2015). For them to earn a living, many young people have accepted any act that gives them something to survive no matter how immoral the activity could be. For those who leave the country as economic refugees, they are met with tough laws of immigration in different countries and once again they find themselves on the wrong side of the law since some join networks of criminals and some go into prostitution.

The intergenerational disparity between the youth and the elders has led to political contestation between the generations. The older generation which currently comprises of those in leadership has deliberately employed politics of patronage as a way

of keeping out the younger generation whom they fear because of their compatible capabilities (Forti and Maina, 2012). The younger generation can apply the modern offers of technology into their leadership system thereby improving or makes the leadership style compatible to the wave of globalization. Unfortunately, such a development is not taken positively by the gerontocrats. They see it as subversion or inversion of their political space. To that extend, the youth are kept at bay from the political deliberations. Mutukura (2019) summed it well when he noted. Therefore, the closing out of political space for youth triggers the modus operandi of youth deprivation socio-economically and render them susceptible to exploitation and control by elites that access and control the means of production within the political hierarchy and thereby end up purchasing the energy of the youth.

From the foregoing, the Zimbabwean socio-economic and political situation is somehow like what is experienced regionally but on different magnitude. Most of the states in the region are battling with unemployment, youth bulge and youth inclusivity in decision- making processes. Continentally, there are varied degrees of youth exclusion from political leadership. Notably, countries like Ghana, Nigeria and Rwanda have tried their best to open political spaces for the youth. With the immanence of globalization, it is investable to experience reciprocal impact of the same situation in different countries because there is easy exchange of ideas and information through technological advancement. Globalization helps in the spread of youth cultures, and it can also be a source of revolutionary waves among the youth.

The general outlook of youth political participation can be summed as ranging from roles as agents and instruments for the development of democracy to their activities

as purveyors of political conflict and violence (Gyampo, & Nana, 2019). This is supported and emphasized by Ahwoi (2008), when they noted that, “political parties and governments in Africa often exclude young people from meaningful participation in government systems but recruit them to fight dangerous wars” (p. 32).

In response to the preceding situation, several policies, programmes have been put in place in one hand and advocacy and activism on the other hand. Both the government and the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have responded differently to the youth situation. The Zimbabwe Youth Policy which was enacted by the government in 2013 aimed at youth empowerment and youth participation. This policy includes “economic, cultural, social, political, environmental and technological issues” (Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission, ZHRC, 2018, p. 3). On the other hand, the CSOs, in line with the African Union agenda 2063 launched a program called *Leave No Youth Behind* which was aimed at supporting the youth “to realize all their rights by providing information, capacities, resources and solidarity” (ZHRC, p. 8). This program is financed by the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe.

On the other hand, the youth in Zimbabwe have of late started to raise their voices against the historic socio-economic and political injustices in the country. Notably, apart from the youth wings of political parties, there emerge several youths CSOs which are speaking out against the government of Zimbabwe. The message of these groups is a call for socio-economic and political transformation. Worth mentioning on the youth activism in Zimbabwe are movements such as Occupy Africa Unity Square (OAUS), *#Thisflag* Movement and the *Tajamuka/ Sesjikile* Campaign. The OAUS movement was based on the understanding that the voices of the young can be heard through a constitutional fight.

The concerns of this movement were to denounce corruption and economic mismanagement (Nhapi & Mathende, 2010).

The founder of the group Itai Dzamara was abducted, and he disappeared to date. Another outstanding movement was the *#Thisflag*, which was basically a social media force. A young pastor Evan Mawarire posted his self-videos denouncing corruption, increased government transparency, and accountability, the creation of platforms between the government and the citizens and the failure of the government to provide the basics for citizens. Mutsvairo, and Sirks, (2015) argue that symbol of the movement was the national emblem. Through this social media campaign, many Zimbabweans all over the world took hold and the movement attracted a large following. Subsequently, the movement called for several stay-aways which were successful. This youth cyber activism attracted a big following and it mobilized many young people into action against government led injustice and corruption.

Concurrent to *#Thisflag* movement, there emerged a coalition of different youth groups and organisations from both political and civil society organisations. This group had no particular leader, but it was a youth initiative, the code named it *Tajamuka/Sesijikile* meaning we have gone berserk (Anheier, & Themudo, 2002). Predominant in this group was the call for mass protests the government's repressive laws and against the deterioration of essential services but above all, the alarming unemployment rate was the main concern. At this same time, different youth groups emerged from different towns and cities such as *Tasvinura* (We are now awake) youth led group from Masvingo, *#Thisgraduate*, which was predominantly comprised of youthful unemployed graduates and *#Generational Consensus* which was operating

under the main opposition party MDC and was inspired by the youthful leader of the party, Nelson Chamisa. The vision of the movement #Generational Consensus was to advocate for change, and it believed that it was time for the post generation to lead (Nhapi & Mathende, 2010).

Interestingly, almost all the movements that emanated around 2015 onwards did not have any physical structures; they mobilized each other through social media platforms. In as much as there was a lot of mobilization and motivation, the execution was always found wanting. Secondly, their disunity as youth groups expressed lack of commitment to their goals thereby easily decimated.

1.2 Statement of the problem

This study proposed to analyze the effects of gerontocratic political leadership on youth participation in Zimbabwe. There is a perceptible gap in political leadership between the youth and the old guards. This disparity is not only on the level of parliamentary representation, but it is also visible on the ideational level. Currently, Zimbabwean politics is marred by ideological polarity emanating from historic memorialization of the liberation struggle by the gerontocrats which suffocates the demands of the present and the prospects of the future. The exclusion of the youth from the corridors of political leadership is promoting ideational stagnancy and political apathy among the youths. While there has been some inclusivity of the youth in political leadership, the youths continue to be marginalized by the gerontocrats in governmental positions. How can the aspirations of the young people be realized at the backdrop of generational challenges

working against them? This problem is urgent since Zimbabwe prepares for general tripartite elections in the year 2023. If this problem is addressed, Zimbabwe will probably be a beacon of democracy.

1.3 The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the impact of gerontocratic political leadership on youth marginalization in Zimbabwe with a view to finding solutions that impact positively on the progressive political participation and political transformational growth of the youth and the country.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

To address the purpose of this study, the researcher sought

- i. To find out the impact of gerontocracy on the young people in political leadership
- ii. To determine reasons for political marginalization of the youth
- iii. To explore how young people can participate progressively in political leadership.

1.5 Research questions

- i. What is the impact of gerontocracy in political leadership?
- ii. What are the reasons for political marginalization of the youths in Zimbabwe?
- iii. What are the possible ways that can help the young people to participate positively in politics?

1.6 Justification and Significance of the Study

The youth in Zimbabwe have experienced structural exclusion from the key political roles in general and from cabinet and decision-making positions. The reasons for this exclusion have not been fully explored from a scholarly point of view. This study sought to explore and identify the key causes why the youth are being marginalized from the key positions of socio-political and economic development.

The research will help in the theory and practice of political inclusion of all legible citizens in matters of leadership in Zimbabwe. It will solve the current problem of politics of patronage which is being perpetuated by the gerontocrats against the marginalized youth. Subsequently, the study will also help to explain the persistent premise that, leadership is the domain of the old and therefore exclusive of the young. To other researchers, it will help resolve the generational consensus conflict. To the policy makers, this study will inform them in the formulation of policies. Finally, this study will inform the youth leaders of the role they need to play to promote generational consensus. Concurrently, this research informs the youth about their need to prepare for their future through holistic participation in the decision-making processes.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This research focused on the effects of gerontocratic leadership on youth marginalization in Zimbabwe. The targeted population was mostly the youth, youth leaders, civic, political and religious, and policymakers since the research was seeking to interrogate the

effects of the current political leadership (gerontocratic) on youth marginalization. The research data was collected from the capital city of Harare in four different suburbs, Glen View, Glen Norah, Southlea Park and Mount Pleasant, where there is a fair representation of people from different regions of the country since it is the administrative city of Zimbabwe. The research was conducted in the month of March 2021. The study assumed that the political space in Zimbabwe has been mainly the domain of the old and the young are marginalized. This has a negative effect on the young who are supposed to be responsible for their emerging needs which their generations present.

1.8 Limitations of Study

There are several challenges which this study faced. First, the extraction of information freely from the respondents posed a challenge since Zimbabwean people are not very free to discuss pressing political issues. To this effect, the researcher ensured confidentiality to all the participants. The unwillingness to share political views freely was reflected by the findings where several questions which seemed political were not responded to. Second, availability of some policymakers was very difficult and the lack of enthusiasm from the pro-gerontocracy population. However, through using different existing fora, necessary data was collected and through the Catholic parliamentary liaison officer, the researcher accessed the policy makers and some key legislators. To a certain extent, language was a barrier even though English is the national language in Zimbabwe. Some of the language that is used in this study is technical. As for language barrier, simplified

translation was used whenever it was necessary. The most persisting problem was the pandemic. The research was done during the national lockdown, and it was not easy to access some key places or to contact those who were referred by the gatekeepers. Responsively, the researcher sought assistance from several assistant researchers to assist in accessing confined participants. The idea that the researcher was coming from outside the country was held with suspicion. So, local research assistants were involved to obtain credible information on behalf of the researcher.

1.9 Ethical Issues

This study was guided by ethical conduct in all its endeavours. In the use of secondary data, all used information was acknowledged. On the part of field research, the ethical boundaries were respected and be observed. All participants were given their dignified respect. All the responses were on full consent agreement and no coercion or use of force to acquire data. The research instruments were prepared in a non-biased manner with acceptable language which did not harm or undermine anybody. Cultural values of participants and their religious beliefs were also held with deserving respect. The principle of confidentiality, right to privacy and principle of voluntary participation were observed throughout the research. Under no circumstances did a researcher pretended to hide his identity to obtain information. Where interviews were carried out, tape recording was used after consent from the participant. Also, the anonymity of the participants was highly regarded. This project was done in consideration of all academic protocols. The

academic integrity was highly respected through acknowledging all sources which were used through this study.

1.10 Theoretical Framework

Human history has instances where societies attempted to reconcile the natural disparities that are brought up by the generational gap in demographic groupings. In human development, cultures and values are inherited by younger generations from the older generation. The up to down approach has been the conventional understanding of how social processes are transmitted from one generation to the other. In most cases, whatever is handed down from one generation to the next is seemingly considered to be a dogma that cannot easily be changed. The same would be expected of political processes that the elders form the leadership style, and the young would only be contained in those political systems as passive participants. On the contrary, this status quo is being challenged since it is porous in its functional disposition and has become a significant source of conflict. The youth are marginalized from the leadership positions at a time when they ought to make a valuable contribution. To address this, the researcher approaches this study from Karl Mannheim's theory of generations.

Mannheim's theory of generations points out the generational gap between the old and the young highlighting how the surrounding historical, socio-political, and cultural reality impacts the youth. Even though the young perceive reality in the eyes of their mentors, they quickly turn to process their surroundings by themselves. The current environment gives the youth the new perception to which they adapt and adopt new

realities. The new perception they adopt give rise to their engagement for social change. The youth in Zimbabwe, especially in the last forty years of political independence, have been trying to negotiate their need to be included in the corridors of decision making but, the political system in place kept them on the peripheries.

According to Mannheim, meaning is developed through personal experience with a given social context and each context is “necessarily different from other generations” (Mannheim, 1952). Each generation has a location in history and this same location is existential determination of knowledge. Consequently, individuals who belong to the same cohort are not of the same age, but they belong to the same location in the history of their socialization which helps them to form a common generational consciousness which result in quest or movement for social change or a change of particular social status quo. It is this same generational consciousness that is pushing the youth in Zimbabwe to demand for their political space which they feel it is being robbed by the older generations who are hanging on to power inconsiderably.

This makes each generation to have a collective mentality that pictures the dominant view of the world, reflecting on a similar attitude which leads to shared action. Mannheim identified late adolescence as the key period of formation of social and political outlooks, and collective consciousness. So, the younger generations are influenced more by the social and intellectual currents of their time and space. Generations are driving forces of social change and progression.

Relationally, the young people in Zimbabwe, according to Jaji, “are devising alternative methods to claim space in a political arena through strategies that range from co-opting gerontocratic masculinities to subverting them” (Jaji 2020, p.77). Young

people in Zimbabwe have since shown their resistance to the gerontocrats by staging student demonstrations and above all there has been a serious resistance through the social media platforms. The physical political space which is being restricted by the patronage of the gerontocrats is now being provided for through social media. On the other hand, the youth in Zimbabwe are manifesting their collective mentality through civic engagement and social media activism which is not controlled by traditional structures. “They are directing their attention to activities that have global resonance, such as environmental activism, advocacy for gender equality, human rights, good governance and peacebuilding” (Jaji, 2020, p. 88). The internet has therefore become a new political force for the young people in Zimbabwe through which they can express their political ideas freely.

1.11 Definition of Terms

This study defined the following key terms and concepts as follows:

Generational consensus: Denotes the inevitable opportunity that any society engages in sharing, mutual contribution and devolves the societal systems. It is the coming together of the people of succeeding generations to share and propagate experiences and knowledge reciprocally, with the aim of benefitting mutually and fostering a positive progressive relationship. This interaction can result in a positive or negative outcome.

Political leadership: In this work, political leadership indicates the citizens’ assumptions of leadership roles as expressed in its constitution and as dictated by democratic norms.

Political marginalization: Is the systematic discrimination of the citizens in the youth bracket of social demographics by the elders from the positions of leadership and decision-making.

Gerontocracy: In this work, gerontocracy connotes what the Kenyan academic, Onyonyo asserted: Gerontocracy is the rule by elders or a type of government that associates leadership with only elder. The elders' construed to be the custodians of customary law, its promulgators, and enforcers... In the post-independent Africa gerontocracy in the political sense has become notorious as some elders cling to power to dominate and favor their next of kin... Elders in political leadership in Africa have been associated with hunger for power other than wisdom (2017).

Political participation: In this study, political participation denotes a legal right of all legible citizens to partake in the activities of the state in view of owning their decisions for the progress and development of the nation. It is defined as “those legal activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or the actions they take” (Verba, & Nie, 1972).

Youth/ Young persons: Whereas this research shall follow the constitutional age-based definition of youth as persons between the ages of 18 – 35, for practical purposes, it is also important to have a more fluid perception of youth as “a formative transition period between childhood and adulthood marked by increasing independence and transition in work, education and social relationships” (Restless Development, 2015).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This study sought to establish why the youth are being excluded from political leadership by the gerontocrats in Zimbabwe. Hinging on the theory of generations, this literature review brought out how academic literature presents the issues of intergenerational interactions, political leadership, and the place of the youth in the socio-political engagements. It was approached from global, continental to local Zimbabwe contexts.

2.1 The Impact of Generational Consensus and Political Leadership

The current status quo of political participation in Zimbabwe is characterized by a systematic domination of the political space by people of almost the same generation. This supremacy by the gerontocrats pitying the young has raised many questions among the prospective younger generations in relation to how their aspirations are not met (Young, 1994). In relation to the theory of generations, there seems to be a political travesty which has created intergenerational disharmony. Dorman, (2006) that viewed the intergenerational political contestation from different perspectives which are helpful in trying to address the same problem as it presents itself in Zimbabwean politics.

In the known political structures from the traditional setups before representational democracy, leadership has been an enterprise for older generations.

There are no known structures where the young would lead when the elders were there. Leadership was deemed a reserved category which would basically be attributed to the experienced elders. However, when leadership positions were attained by fighting battles, the young were always the ones involved in fighting the wars as energetic warriors (Small, 2002). Young people especially men were acknowledged for their bravery and heroism, but rarely would that have them considered for political leadership roles.

In her work, *Youth Empowerment and Jovenns en accion*, French (2015) elaborated the importance of involving the young integrally in the decision-making matters. Jennings, and Niemi, (2014) highlight five key points that need to be observed in every society in as far as combined leadership is concerned namely a power sharing adult-youth relationship, an individual and community level orientation, a safe and supportive environment, peer collaboration, and reflection. The determination of a strong presence of all five of these themes can be used to identify a youth empowerment program.

These key themes describe a procedure which helps a society to reconsider, the traditional forms of societal leadership which in turn will promote unity of purpose between the young and the old. Adler, and Webster, (1995) argue that youth will not feel truly empowered if they are simply given a superficial sense of responsibility; a truly empowering experience is one which youth are integrally involved in decision-making, are given ownership over outcomes, and are offered the opportunity for guided self-reflection and positive feedback from the adults around them. Adults must be properly trained to regulate their involvement and ownership to provide appropriate space for ever more control to be taken by youth (French, 2015).

Closely related to French's assertion is a reflection on Frantz Fanon's words that *'each generation must, out of relative obscurity discover its mission, fulfil it or betray it,'* by Chimhavi. Young, (1979) argued that the plight of the contemporary youth in Zimbabwe in comparison to the older generations who in the past discovered the mission to liberate Zimbabwe from the colonial shackles. Whilst the older generation has reference of their response to the dictates of their time, the contemporary youth in Zimbabwe find themselves faced with socio-political and economic stagnation. They ascribe their plight to the encroachment of the older generation into the political space of the young. This leaves the young people in Zimbabwe not only in "the relative obscurity but in absolute obscurity which is characterized by exclusionary policies whose proponents are mainly the gerontocratic leadership in decision-making spheres of governance" (Chimhavi, 2012).

In response to this exclusionary mentality by the government, Chimhavi, (2012) argued that all the youth to consider entrenching democracy and good governance as forming the basis of their mission today which goes beyond free and fair elections but constructing a new political culture in Zimbabwe. According to Diamond, (1988) the culture that is centered on values of equality and tolerance of all generations and appreciating our differences as unity in diversity. Always vigilant in supporting the sovereignty of their state in the spirit of genuine patriotism as opposed to the current patriarchal hegemony as it is demonstrated by the ruling party ZANU-PF.

The youth of Africa and Zimbabwe clamour for the chance to display their capabilities of becoming leaders not of tomorrow but of today. They are striving to participate in the progressive building and securing peace in their respective states

(Diamond, 1988). The young are seeking space to take leading roles in the affairs of their nations, prioritizing the grand history, relevant education and economic empowerment. For an influential trajectory, the youth are called to organize themselves so that they can create spaces of influence which will help them to define their generational mission as it presents itself currently (Arora-Jonsson, 2017).

In his report, Berry (2012) raised the issue of intergenerational democratic deficit. This analysis of political participation among different generations with special reference to Britain has raised vital issues to do with generational deficit in political participation. Outstandingly, is the issue of the young disengaging from political activities even though they can participate in the electoral processes? Zhenglin, and Bernstein (2004) highlight power is concentrated in the hands of the old. Consequently, this disenfranchises the young since their age-based concerns are not taken aboard by the elders. Active young people are very much aware of how the system alienates them and they feel that they have no power to change this marginalizing structure.

Both the political system and the feeling of powerlessness to do anything against the arrangement have been sighted as the main causes of the youth to disengage from political participation. In view of democratic dictates, even though there is room for both young and old to vote, it is not always fair age wise to create equal numbers between the young and the old, in some instances the youth are outnumbered therefore outvoted and this could be vice –versa (Zhenglin, & Bernstein 2004). When confronted with such a scenario, the outvoted group will suffer misrepresentation. As a response, Berry stated that “ignoring the evermore apparent inequalities associated with demographic change is no longer a viable option” (Berry, 2012).

In this report, Berry has however highlighted the disparities associated with generational gap in political leadership. He indicated how the young are disenfranchised; the issue of progressive disconnectedness has been treated with great concern. If the old marginalize the young, there is a temptation of a gap in the value-relay (Polletta, 2012). The old continue to occupy the space of another generation. If that happens, progress slows down because the old are not familiar with the needs of this particular generation. In other words, social issues are responded to, generationally (Polletta, 2012). The analysis of generational gap presented by Berry sets a stage for this research in the sense that there is a confirmation of the problem.

Additionally, this study will not only take generational gap as a demographic factor but as a “social and relational location” (Gebremariam, 2009, p. 11) whereby youth marginalization is a result of rational domination of the young by the gerontocrats. The old deliberately close the democratic space as a way of keeping the status quo which is favouring them against the powerless young. This leads to a competitive situation of domination by the old and contestation by the young.

In response to the recurring debate in the British parliament on ‘the alienation of the young people from the British political life, White, Bruce & Ritchie (2000) conducted research which resulted in their compiled work entitled, *Young people’s politics: Political interest and engagement amongst 14–24-year-olds.*’ This was research done among the cross-section of young people who were purposively selected from different backgrounds in England, Wales and Scotland. These young people were invited to express in their own ways how they perceived politics. The findings indicated several perceptions varying

from their levels of interest in politics which was very much influenced by the background of the individual respondents.

Outstanding in their findings was limited conceptualization of politics, lack of knowledge and the complexity of politics which forced the young ones to view politics as inaccessible. Interesting to this study is the mistrust of politicians by the young people. Politicians are viewed as people who do not say the truth, people who do not keep their promises and who deliberately keep the young people away from political life (Polletta, 2012). In connection to the politicians' attitude towards the young, it was highlighted that, 'there was lack of opportunities for the young people to engage in the political process until the age of 18, and the perceived failure of politicians to be responsive to the needs of the young people, had also contributed to the low levels of political interest'' (White, *et.al.*, 2000).

Throughout the research, there was a continual reference to the ways in which the young ones felt excluded from the political life. It was noted that politicians were not interested in the views of young people, and they seemed reluctant to invest trust or responsibility in the young people. Be that as it may, the report did not proceed to highlight the lifelong impact of excluding the young people to participate in politics. Can it not be a danger to the democratic process?

In his 2018 compilation, *Beyond Rhetoric Youth Empowerment and Political Voice in Nigeria*, Albert argued on how the older generation mostly men, outmuscle the youth from the political space. He bemoaned on how the youth's voice is being drowned in the gerontocratic self-serving policies. Exclusion of the youth from the top echelons of

political discourse reduces a fully-fledged democracy to a quasi-democracy where some segments of the society are not equally taken into consideration.

Albert denounced the idea of leaving the youth behind in the planning processes which have to do with them. He deemed such moves as a travesty of justice and mockery of democracy. With Africa in general and Nigeria in particular, Albert indicated the demerits of marginalizing the youth on age factor. He referred to how women have been marginalized until recently when they waged a rights-focused war against patriarchal hegemonies. Youth are almost in the same position and above all, their number is bigger than that of the women, so they need to wage an age-focused war to attain an equal democratic space. Whilst it is common knowledge that the youth command bigger numbers in many societies, it has been noted that their power of numbers has always met an economic blockade.

Many youths in Africa are poor; therefore, they cannot stand any equal opportunity of enjoying political corridors with the old who use their money to secure their positions. Therefore, what appears to be apathy or disengagement by the youth is powerlessness induced by poverty. In other words, the generational gap is not only pronounced chronologically, but it is also economic. There is a gap between the old with economic muscle and the young with energy and ideas, but they lack the means and opportunity to execute them.

According to Muna, (2014) deconstructing intergenerational politics in his assertion that in Africa the leadership positions have been for the elders and this practice existed before the formation of the independent states. Muna, therefore, studied the relationship between the young and the old. He evaluated the merits and demerits of

having one generation dominating over the others in a representational democracy. Giving the example of Kenya, he ascertained that the old guards maintain a “firm grip on the country’s resources” denying the young to participate in the decision-making processes.

Muna (2014) therefore, proposed that there be an intergenerational dialogue which aims at reaching a consensus for all concerned generations. This narrative brings out a different reason why the gerontocrats want to hang on to power, it is not only on the experiential merit, but it is also a protectionism theory whereby they vehemently protect their illegal lifelines of amassing wealth. In retrospect, this interrogates the value of the relationship between experience and wisdom.

2.2 Political Leadership

The inclusivity and exclusivity of the youth in political leadership can be spelt through outlining the engagement of the youth in politics in history. It is essential to appreciate how political leadership has been treating young people throughout different epochs of history. Tracing the youth engagement will help to ascertain whether youth engagement or disengagement was induced by external realities, or it was an inner conviction within the young people.

2.2.1 Youth Political Involvement in the Pre-colonial Africa

The political pre-colonial set up is described by Awonoor (1990) as a system centred on seniority where authority is enshrined in family heads clans and chiefs. Youth are automatically taken to be subordinates of these elders in the social, political, and economic matters. However, even though the young people were not directly involved in the decision-making processes, they according to Chazan (1974) owned all the decisions which were reached on their behalf by their elders, and they willingly participate in the implementation of those decisions. Interest to note is the privilege the youth had to critique and criticize some political malpractices especially those which seemed to betray community trust and those of immoral nature.

The generational hierarchy was the order of the day, decision-making was imbued in elderhood so much that all the young people would not anticipate being part of the decision-making processes before they attain adulthood. The hierarchical order was designed and maintained by what Waller (2006) called discipline of initiation whose teachings and taboos would always remind the young the prize of defying their elders. In sum, the understanding was, the future is for the young and the past for the elders, therefore it is through the diligent mastery of the past that would prepare the young to inherit authority from the elders.

On the contrary, when the social stratification system of age-grades fails to provide the expected necessities for each generation, there was always a generational tension especially between the elders in authority and the youth who are of immediate generation from them (Polletta, 2012). Two main sources for generational confrontations were women and wealth. Whenever such clashes arise in some traditional African communities, Burgess & Burton, (2010) argue that when young men no longer

convinced, they could realize respectability through their patience, conformity, and best efforts, they look for alternative ways of advancing their status outside the community, they could escape a system that failed to offer promotion. The rebellious attitude was an expression of a delayed anticipated stage in the growth and development of generations in each traditional community.

2.2.2 Youth Participation during Colonial Period

The colonial period marked a very interesting epoch in the evolution of the interaction between generations especially between elders and the youth. As discussed above, seniority was the prerequisite of leadership and the enactment of rituals. Conversely, with colonialism, the traditional social structures were manipulated against the tradition and in favour of the new status quo (Corbett, 2015). According to Waller, colonial rule inherited the stratification structures that had to do with age grades, but they made some significant alterations on the structure of opportunity that made the young patient and their elders more tolerant and by proposing new model of responsible behaviour which in some way discounted the past (Waller, 2006). In other words, the continuation of traditional values was dissuaded in favour of the new order.

Youth were introduced into new areas of responsibility and new discipline was instilled in them through Western education and religion. The experience of conversion, education and moving into other places especially into towns, granted confidence to the young and they started challenging the traditional elders' authority. Burgess and Burton (2010) argued that colonialism introduced unprecedented tension between youth and elders. They pointed out that Christianity, urbanization, and capitalism trampled the structures of the generational relations.

According to Illife (2005) on how the traditional elders lost authority over their subordinates, the women, and the children especially, the youth. Elders regretted the degenerative impact of colonialism on the youth's behaviour. Colonial conditions undermined the categorical conditions of generation as young people re-evaluated their

roles, rights and duties in the society (Burgess, & Burton, 2010). At the end, the elders were seen as conservative relics of outmoded African past.

These institutions inculcated new ways of thinking and different worldviews into the youth. This new development however, challenged the hierarchical social structures which existed in the pre-colonial times. Kimble (1963) pointed out how the youth were submerged into capitalistic mentality where education exposed them to the spirit of personal reward, private property, and rights. The colonial masters targeted the young because they wanted to tap their energy and the youth were also malleable thereby not difficult to teach and instruct. By co-opting the young into the new economy and by turning them into productive and responsible citizens alone offered colonialism a future (Waller, 2006).

2.2.3 Youth Political Participation in the post-Colonial Period

Political independence was attained at different times by different states in Africa. At the inception of independence, most of the states inherited the constitutions of the colonizers with some inevitable amendments. The youth who most of them had fought the struggles for independence were co-opted into ruling party systems and into government on merit ticket since some had activists against the colonial powers (Corbett, 2015). Renowned west African young nationalists such as Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, Sekou Toure from Guinea, Mali's Modibo Keita and Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah are known for their organised resistances against the colonial powers (Awoonor, 1990). Some of these

youthful young men were successful in politics so much that they became the first elected leaders of the independence and post-independence governments.

With the dawn of independence most youth gave their allegiance to the leaders of the parties that had led the independence struggle. Benhabib, (1996) observed that since independence gave birth to African new states, there was no reference apart from the traditional styles of leadership. Consequently, the old patriarchal and gerontocratic forms of leadership were evoked. The youth found themselves on the mercy of the elders in charting the political trajectory. The position of the youth at independence was best summed as the politics of generation after independence were at the same time inclusive and exclusive; the state recruited, celebrated, and foregrounded the vitality of the youth on the public stage. And yet the state also excluded images of the youth that appeared to conflict with the nationalist imperative of building the nation and its selective invocation of African traditions (Burgess, & Burton, 2010).

Cooper, (2008) reiterated the same sentiments when he pointed out the role of the youth in the post liberation struggle as less occupying a specific role than their availability as supporters of political parties, as toughs who serve political henchmen. Nkrumah of Ghana was well known for that kind of youth co-option during Ghana's political movement to which he was the leader. In the current political circles, youth are still co-opted as foot soldiers who "occupy the low echelons of political parties and who are used by political patrons in various ways to mobilize party members and votes" (UNECA, 2017).

Whilst there is a traceable record of youth political activism in many African countries, it is noted that the young people are still marginalized from formal governance

and key political systems. Their involvement is limited, and, in most cases, it is very minimal. In addition to the systematic exclusion, youth are disenchanted because of their lack of capital. Most of the youth in Africa are unemployed and that disenfranchises their hope to be involved in politics on the level of decision making. They end up being decision takers only. The African Union (AU), 2017 report indicates how the African states never had a clear and specialized function which was dedicated to the youth of the whole continent. Even though there was a Pan African Youth Movement (PYM) which was founded prior to the formation of Organization of African Union (OAU) in 1962, it was not incorporated into the organs of OAU. As explored, youth activities in the post independent Africa have been peripheral and very little was done to incorporate youth fully to the organs of the government.

2.2.4. Youth and the Contemporary Political Leadership

The United Nations – Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), (2017) issued a regional report on *Africa and prospects for inclusive development*. This is a report on progressive growth of numbers of young people who are bracketed as youth both chronologically and sociologically. Africa is projected to house 40% of the world's young people and this number is expected to grow rapidly in the next three generations. It is predicted that by 2050 the number of young people in Africa will be phenomenal. Be that as it may, whilst there is such a progressive projection of growth in numbers, it is very unfortunate that such a reality is not reflected in the praxis of the policies of African states.

In most cases, the youth of the African continent are still marginalized and alienated from the decision making and policy making platforms (Benhabib, 1996). This is not to say that the youth are not thought about but there is a political unwillingness which blocks the young from implementing the formulated policies. In this UNECA regional report, the challenges of the youth have been assessed in detail highlighting the barriers and hurdles which they encounter in their attempt to occupy the political space (Knoke, 1994). The report also offers some possible solutions on how the youth can navigate their way out of the peripheries to which the system has committed them.

In view of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the UNECA interrogates the best ways in which African youth can be seriously considered in matters of development and leadership. Three important ways to achieve this were transcribed in the report. The first is to implement policies that account for diversity and demographic changes in the youth population. Secondly, is to promote investment that absorbs the capacities of youth in a variety of sectors including education, health, employment, governance, and civic engagement. Thirdly, is to strengthen the evidence base for more effective youth policy development (UNECA, 2017).

The report acknowledges the efforts those different organizations especially African Union is making in formulating youth policies such as the Youth Decade (2009-2018). However, what is lacking is the implementation of these policies and the willingness of the gerontocrats to open up the democratic space for the younger generation. Consequently, most of the policies are strategically sabotaged and systematically made to turn against the youth. The UNECA position on the youth confirms many other preceding positions on the same concern but this study will advance

the argument to interrogate some practical ways of engagement which will make the policies a visible reality. This study will also demonstrate the disadvantages of considering the youth as a chronological factor rather than a sociological disposition

A viewpoint raised by Niang, (2018) in her article entitled: *Raising the voice of the young people in governance* outlines how the youth are “isolated and underrepresented across the continent. This is often the case in most parts of the world, but the ratio of under-representation of youth in Africa is alarmingly. This disparity in representation ignores the merit that in many cases the youth are more knowledgeable and more alert to the dictates of their fast-moving environment (Djampour, 2018). The gap between the policymakers who are in leadership and the young, for whom they make policies, manifests itself in such policies failing to meet their goals upon implementation. Such has caused a sour relationship between the youth and the leadership with the young accusing the policymakers for not minding the generational gap but at the same time coercing the young to render blind submission to them. Senior leadership often views the aspirations of the youth as cultural invasion and imperialist influence, nothing to be taken seriously (Naing, 2018).

Faye (2017), in his article, *African youth integration in Africa*, presents the situation in some West African countries concerning the integration of the youth into political lifelines. He questions the paradox where the youth are historically known for their vociferous and audible bearing when advocating for change but when that change comes, the young who were on the forefront seem to disappear into oblivion without furthering their position into legal structures of governance (Djampour, 2018). This is the reality which the author seeks to address. Of the many concerns that surround the young

people's failure to secure substantial positions in political leadership, Faye highlighted legal dispositions of many African states as a contributing factor. The legal cut off age for presidential, candidature, or ministerial post is very different from the voting age. For instance, in most African countries, citizens vote when they turn 18 years and above but they can only contest to be legislators when they are either 25 years or above and when they are forty years and above for presidency. Mahony, (2018) argued that such age disparities result in the underrepresentation of the youth hence leading to apathy. When there is such a disenfranchisement, it becomes counterproductive practice for any given society.

In the world youth report entitled *Youth participation in decision making*, Kofi Annan the then Secretary General of the United Nations was cited saying. No one is born a good citizen; no nation is born a democracy. Rather, both are processes that continue to evolve over a lifetime. Young people must be included from birth. A society that cuts itself off from its youth severs its lifeline; it is condemned to bleed to death. (Kofi Annan 2003). The report highlights the importance of the youth participation on decision-making with special reference to the preparation of a brighter future. Youth participation has positive benefits to the society, since it “promotes respect for them as social actors, as agents of their lives, and as citizens of their societies” (World Youth Report, 2003, p. 276). By incorporating the youth into decision-making processes, the society cultivates better decisions and outcomes which in turn promote the well-being and development of young people.

When young people are included in the political spaces and other areas of leadership, it strengthens their commitment to understanding human rights and

democracy especially upon realizing that participation is their fundamental right. There is an assurance which comes together with the inclusivity of the young, they feel secure and protected which ignites a sense of belonging within the society thereby dispelling the sense of disinterestedness within them.

2.2.5 Youth and Political Leadership Styles in Zimbabwe

In the *Conceptions of leadership as 'persons' and as 'positions'* devalue the role of youth in Zimbabwe, Tyser presents the situation of youth participation in Zimbabwe from a leadership styles perspective. She presents two outstanding types of leadership which seem to be dominant in Zimbabwe. Leadership as *persons* and leadership as *positions* are two different forms of leadership. If leadership role is taken from the person's point of view, it means that only those persons with outstanding history would remain leaders or could be elected to leadership. Leadership as "person" is the traditional perspective of leadership that focuses on individual entities, consistent with an epistemology of an objective truth and a Cartesian dogma of a clear separation between mind and nature (Uhl-Bien, 2006). For instance, Robert Mugabe was always backed by his war of liberation credentials. That always made him a hero and then a hero- leadership theory was created. In other words, if one is not a liberation hero, he/she cannot be a leader. This devalues the role of the youth since they and many others did not experience the protracted armed struggle for liberation in Zimbabwe.

If leadership is viewed as a position, then only those in formal positions will be recognized as leaders (Tyser, 2016), and that pushes out the knowledgeable but

inexperienced youth. The system makes the inexperienced mere followers who are afraid to take power and lead. Tyser, (2016) traced the role of the youth in Zimbabwe and she identified some years when there was not even a youth ministry in Zimbabwe. For 12 years, 1988 -2000, there was no specific youth ministry to look after the needs of the young in Mugabe's government. When the ministry was recreated in 2000, it was meant to coerce the youth into perpetuating the waning ZANU PF regime through land grabbing.

In another observation, the author pointed out the hypocrisy of Mugabe's regime concerning education. Even though Zimbabwe was renowned for its quality education, it never meant a lot to the leaders who continued to use war credentials for positions of leadership over academic qualifications. Such a mentality devalued the role of the youth. Possibility of a crisis is predicted in Zimbabwe after the death of the liberation struggle heroes. The state might be plunged into a civil war so that heroes may emerge to take up leadership.

2.3 Gerontocratic Leadership

According to Acheubum (1995) the rule by the elders or the aged is not something novel. It dates back to the Platonic times where Plato discouraged younger people into public service before the age of fifty. In the Mediaeval England, sixty years was the cut off age for anyone who would serve in the public service. The Soviet Union was characterized by old leaders "who were bureaucrats... conservative enough to maintain control over the levels of power as one cohort gives way to the next" (Acheubam, 1995). In the Americas,

the natives' councils were dominated by old men who presided over the politics of the land.

Before the 20th century these older American men were predominantly the leaders of all activities, and they would only leave those responsibilities only when infirmity or superannuation forced them to transfer power. From the 20th century moving forward, the USA introduced a seniority system especially in the Upper House where age is a prerequisite. No one can serve in the Upper House if he/she is below fifty. In Britain, history has it that for almost the whole of 19th Century and the first half of 20th Century, public life was a domain for the elders where age counted, and seniority mattered.

2.3.1 Traditional Gerontocracy in Africa

Aguilar, (1998) argued that African countries noted that community leaders were rulers by the virtue “of the superior knowledge they are supposed to possess in space and time, additionally the control of the society was enhanced by the economic resources they amassed a long time” (Aguilar, 1998). The old also had the knowledge of cultural and religious traditions that placed them in the position of power as opposed to the younger generation. Generation and patriarchy were always considered as ordering principles in the African context through which the Africans would perceive their world view. Generation is viewed as a category key to understanding the construction of social knowledge and power relations in Africa (Aguilar, 1998).

Among the Maasai, Samburu, Borana and Turkana of Kenya, to be an elder is determined by one's gaining of fertility which sees him going up the ladder of seniority.

Generations are important to African societies because they speak of how boys and girls become men and women, would define their masculinity and femininity. The idea of adulthood among the Africans is ranked the highest in the generational hierarchy, the youth are at the base, and it implies that there is unequal access to valued social roles and rewards. Elders had monopoly of wisdom; their views were rarely challenged. Any opinions from the youth were basically met with contempt and regarded as impulsive behaviour or sign of disrespect.

2.3.2. Strategic Gerontocracy

Strategic gerontocracy is defined as a selection of aging leaders based on premeditated considerations (Magni- Berton & Panel, 2017). This is different from traditional gerontocracy in the sense that traditional gerontocracy is based on a “genuine preference for old leaders” due to their specific skills which come with age. Strategic democracy thrives in systems which are either quasi- democratic states, autocratic states or authoritarian states and in systems that are under dictatorial leadership. Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular is not spared from the strategic gerontocracy. It is because of its prevalence in political systems that have prompted this study to interrogate its effects.

Mbadlanyana (2012) in his article, *Politics, Age and Ideas: Revisiting and unfolding the gerontocratic myth in African political leadership* avowed the importance of considering age in political leadership noted that the idea that political power should or is linked to age is one of the defining features of the African political discourse. It is through age lenses that the relations and constructions of power are refracted,

recombined, and reproduced as people make claims on each other based on age claims that are often reciprocal but asymmetrical in nature (Mbadlanyana, 2012).

Complimentarily, according to Mbadlanyana, both the young and the old are actors who are vying for the same political space. There is a need that all actors coming from different identified segments of the society are given functional opportunities in the political space. Every age has different needs so an all-encompassing inclusivity which is guided by the constitution helps to create a balanced viable society. Mbadlanyana considers gerontocracy as a myth which hinges on the premise that political leadership is the reserve of those who have lived longer.

However, history has both confirmed and denied this premise on the pretext that there are many gerontocrats that are in political positions of influence but have never demonstrated the mental agility of their wisdom to respond to the pressing political issues. At the same time there are also young men and women who were granted the chance to lead, some did well, and others performed below the expected standard. This, therefore, means that, age is not enough to let one occupy the office of leadership. There are more aspects that need consideration. Consequently, “it is time for young people to combat and demonstrate strong aversion to alterity and their ‘othering’ when it comes to political leadership” (Mbadlanyana, 2012, p.14).

According to Kiwuwa, (2015) on *Africa is young: Why are its leaders too old?* Through a rigorous analysis, it emerged to him clearly that there might be multiple reasons why the old leaders want to cling to power as opposed to allow the young ones to participate in the leadership of government structures. Notably, in 2016 the average of ten oldest leaders was 78.5 years compared to 52 years for the leaders of the ten most

developed countries. Comparatively, it is salient even though Africa has a younger population. with the median age of 19.5 years but she still lacks young leaders of the ages between 35 and 55years of age. There is a visible gap in leadership which manifests itself through the functional disconnection between the old leaders and those whom they lead who are predominantly young.

Countries like Angola, Zimbabwe and Uganda can be examples of this generational disparity. In 2015 for instance, 85 percent of Angolans were not born when president Dos Santos came to power in 1979. In the same year, 2015, the then incumbent president of Zimbabwe Robert Mugabe had 83% of his population not born by the time he rose to power in 1980. The same holds for the current president of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, whereby 76% of Ugandans were born after his ascendancy to power in 1986. Sadly, most of the citizens who were born after these old leaders' assumption of power have enjoyed the corridors of leadership through the established structural ranks of their given governments.

The burgeoning youth of Africa get dispirited when they experience the heavy-handed attitude of the old on them. They feel excluded and at same time experience the impact of senility of the leaders who become "incapable to provide an unclouded vision that matches the pace, expectations and tongue of time" (Kiwuwa, 2015, p. 3). Paradoxically, the youth are generally more in numbers, but they are always outvoted by the older generations. This is caused by the political mechanizations which are established by the seasoned politicians whose tactics, experience and "shrewd political brinkmanship through patrimonial networks" (Kiwuwa, 2015, p. 5) pushes away the spineless youth which cannot be trusted with bigger responsibilities.

On the other hand, the disparity between the old and the young favours the old because of their historical mantras which they invoke to scare the young. The youth who have no history to show but they are sources of untapped knowledge and energy which is useful to the state if spaces for political participation are opened evenly for all generations to participate. The conservative mentality of the aging leaders hinders “the innovativeness of the youth, their vibrancy, adaptability and their desire to learn and to change” (Kiwuwa, 2015, p. 5). In view of these ideational differences, Africa will for the foreseeable future stay caught in the unpredictable generational crosswinds between her past and the future. In summary, Kiwuwa, (2015) has demonstrated the emerging disharmony between the older generation and the youth. This gap is basically engraved in the minds of the old leaders who deliberately safeguard it against the youth who try to narrow and close the gap by alternative means of leadership.

Adebayo (2018) argued in, *Gerontocracy in African politics: Youth and the quest for political participation*, how older generation have stood in the way of the young ones to progress. His argument was inspired by the French elections which elected a very young youthful leader Macron. Enticed by that, Adebayo raised a question about African leadership. He had a cross section of the continental leadership and he realized that most of them were on the gerontocratic age. He mentioned Nano Kuffor Adu of Ghana who was 73 years of age when he came to office, Emmerson Mnangagwa of Zimbabwe who replaced a 95-year-old longest serving leader in Africa, Robert Mugabe; he also mentioned a 78-year-old Buhari of Nigeria and many other gerontocrats who are ruling different African states. The question that is being asked by the author is when Africa will have young leaders?

Admittedly, the youth can be accused of their apathetic attitude towards politics, but this does not warrant the dichotomous reality which is presented by African politics across the board. What come out are the structures that repulse new young entrants into the political leadership. These structures are supported by the older generation who perpetuate their glorious past which is empty of a prosperous future. Adebayo also ascribed the generational gap to culture. The African culture is subscribed to the same understanding as of Plato's Greek city states structures which stipulated that the elders lead and the youth submit. Subsequently, it means that the African elders have taken advantage of traditional culture to press their patronage agenda even within the democratic structures. The youth who are brought up in such cultural dictates are bound to bury their heads in the sand thereby marginalized.

2.4 Political Marginalization of Youth

Razer et al. (2013) defined marginalization as having a sense that one does not belong and, in so doing, to feel that one is neither a valued member of a community and able to make a valuable contribution within that community nor able to access the range of services and/or opportunities open to others. Marginalization denotes a situation and a state which prevents full participation of individuals or groups in political, social, and economic life. Conditionally, it can prevent citizens from active participation. It delimits the freedoms that are accorded to the individuals or groups of given society or state. Causes of marginalization are multiple; it could be gender, religion, ethnicity, and demographic differentiations such a youth.

The *United Nations Columbia Youth report* indicated how the youth all around the world are mobilizing each other to demand that attention be given to issues that directly affecting them as youth. Among many concerns, youth are vulnerable to political and socio-economic considerations. Young people, all over the world are generally marginalized due to their age and such exclusion “not only infringes upon their human rights as young people, but also has negative effects on the cohesion and stability of the societies in which they live” (United Nations, 2014, p. 5).

In Africa, the youth constitute more the 50% of the continent’s population. However, their demographic significance has never been a considered factor in as far as decision-making processes are concerned. Their marginalization in the socio-politics and economics has been a perennial threat to Africa’s good governance and political leadership. Young people are marginalized because of the reasons which Okojie, presented in her United Nations report concerning the youth. She contends that the youth are marginalized in African politics due to barriers relating to demography, such as age restrictions, gender barriers, cultural factors which exclude youth from decision-making. Secondly, due to economic status barriers where youth lack economic means or income to participate, as aforementioned, youth organizations are mostly underfunded in most African states. The other barrier is time and location which does not fit the programs of the youth. The youth are marginalized when there is lack of organizational preparedness that is the unwillingness of the adults to share power with the young whom they believe that the youth lack commitment, capacity and temperament to participate in adult decision-making processes (Okojie, 1998).

The working paper, authored by Oosterom and Gukurume (2019) entitled *Managing the born-free generation: Zimbabwe's strategies for dealing with the youth*, illustrates the tension between the youth and the older generations. The special interest of both parties is the democratic political space. Advancing their argument, Oosterom and Gukurume (2019) outline that the main areas of concern between the youth and the elders. They traced the problem from the liberation struggles that many countries like Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Ethiopia and Uganda underwent. The liberation movements turned into political parties which finally became ruling regimes.

Consequently, these movements cum parties considered themselves as the sole liberators who brought independence through the barrel of the gun and implicitly, it is only through the same that they can be unseated from the political thrones. They have therefore created a liberation narrative and political memorialization which legitimizes their perpetual stay in power (Oosterom & Gukurume, 2019).

With special reference to Zimbabwe, the working paper discusses the relationship between the Government of Zimbabwe and the youth. The government, for a long time has developed different theories in relation to how they can deal with the youth. Among many theories, the ruling party, Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front, (ZANU-PF) has crafted strategies which either includes or excludes the youth from the party's organs through which they can access the political space. The Zimbabwean government has deliberately targeted the young people using both carrot and stick, with the carrot largely aimed at binding the youth into patronage relationships (Oosterom & Gukurume, 2019).

ZANU-PF which has been in power since independence in 1980 has been having the youth at its disposal henceforth they created stooges from the youth and used them to perpetuate the liberation ideology through having unhealthy allegiance to the ruling older generation (Oosterom & Gukurume, 2019). These obsequious youth contributed nothing pertaining to their needs but became apparatus for the sustenance of the regime to stay in power. So, the youth were never considered as independent actors in the political state, but they were treated as pawns in the game of kings. To keep them in submission, coercion and patronage were used by the government through the party. To summarize how the youth activities were being conducted, the table 2.1 illustrates the strategies which the government has been using to engage the youth but in a non-meritorious manner. The table 2.1 shows how the youths were systematically placed within the political and economic system of the regime.

Table 2.1: ZANU-PF's discourses and strategies for youth deployed

Time period	Discourses	Political strategies	Economic strategies
1980-1989	Not yet targeting youth at large scale, but generic discourse on support for liberation. Opposing voices in student activism in late 1980s dismissed as sell-outs.	Youth brigades/militia, extend from using war collaborators.	Not yet youth-specific
1990-1999	Not yet targeting youth at large scale, but generic discourse on support for liberation and increased labelling of those opposing the regime as dissidents	Crack-down on student unions and protests, while reinforcing links between the party and certain student unions.	Not yet youth-specific
2000-2008	Instilling 'patriotism' in the 'born-free generation' and labelling those who support the opposition as 'sell-outs' and susceptible to foreign influence. Appealing to youth through popular culture.	National Youth Service established; graduates used as militia; and violence mobilization of party youth. Ministry of Youth and Development and Employment Creation established, and first Youth Policy adopted, in response to youth disenfranchisement and suppressed youth support to MDC	First National Youth Fund created in 2006

2009-2013: Government of National Unity	Growing awareness of the size of the youth population, emphasis on youth productivity for economic development. Promises to youth in 2013 party manifesto aligned with this view.	Patronage networks to youth: incorporating youth as ghost workers on government payroll. ZANU-PF seeks to entrench informal politics and networks for mobilizing violence and channelling resources, using NYS graduates on the ground.	Youth Empowerment Fund (linked to broader Indigenization and Economic Empowerment Act and policy) 2013: start of ZimAsset linked youth funds
After 2013 : ZANU-PF back in power	Appealing to the youth vote. Youth Interface Rallies 2016-2017	Youth Policy revised in 2013, more emphasis on youth role in economic development. ZANU-PF youth league manifests factionalism, G40 vs. Mugabe, leads to reshuffle in positions to keep control of youth	Continuation of Youth Development Fund and other funds linked to ZimAsset
After November 2017: Post- Mugabe era	Mnangagwa government suggest being accommodating of young people and emphasis their instrumental value and responsibility in economic development	Following Operation Restore Legacy, most G40 members were purged from ZANU-PF and youth league.	Empower Bank: 12millionUSD\$ capitalization for this bank. Income Generating projects: 10 million USD\$ Youth

In his article: *What's stopping Zimbabwe's young people from participating in elections*, Musarurwa (2018), opined that Africa's youth bulge aging between 18-25 years constitutes 39.5% of the continental population. Logically, this entails that the youth are most voters. It has been noted that when it comes to elections, youth are apathetic not because of any other substantial reason than the unfavourable democratic processes which do not acknowledge the youths as possible candidates.

An example is given of the 2011 Nigerian polls where only, 52.6% of the Nigerian youth voted while only 33% of the South African youth voted in their country's 2014 polls. Worldwide, the level of youth participation in electoral processes and political leadership is very low as it is reported in United Kingdom, Ireland and most of the Southern Europe, Italy, Greece, and Portugal. Coming back to Zimbabwe, the case is

almost the same but with the reasons categorically expressed as having restrictive political parties, lack of interest, not having adequate information and lack of funds.

To transform this unfortunate reality which the youth found themselves in, there is need to create political, structural and physical spaces that allow the youth to have a meaningful participation. This can be done by allocating quotas to the youth or having policies which prioritize youth empowerment. In the research which the author conducted among the youth in Zimbabwe, one third showed disinterest in political participation while one quarter expressed that they have never participated at all in any political engagement and only one fifth said they participated fully in political engagement.

Political structures, be it political parties, cabinet and parliament were cited as the main reason that prevented meaningful youth participation. These structures are influenced by ‘adultism’ which sees only older adults securing key positions from which they begin to dictate the youth.

The adults also feel threatened by the energy which the youth exhibit so they regard them as dangerous elements which should be kept out of the decision-making corridors (Musarurwa, 2018). Apart from adultism, poverty makes young people particularly vulnerable and prone to being excluded on financial grounds. Musarurwa, (2018) noted that that 70% of the youth in Zimbabwe are unemployed and this renders them susceptible to exploitation and control. They are so poor that they end up surrendering their rights therefore abandoning a culture of positive engagement.

To improve this exclusivity, 71% proposed the introduction of policies which brings freedom to participate in politics without restrictions, 54% indicated the provisional need for leadership training, 42% advocated for youth awareness campaigns,

while 40% proposed the idea of pro-youth policies and 38% proposed effective engagement in productive activities (Musarurwa, 2018). Generally, the youth indicated their willingness to engage into political activities but only when they are viewed as a vital force which is competent enough to bring development. The idea of the youth being equipped and be prepared was also outstanding among the respondents.

2.5 Conclusive remarks

Mannheim's theory of generations implicitly seeks to navigate how best every generation can be valuable and relevant for its own time in socio-political matters and in economic endeavours. Progressively, having discussed the different perspectives on the co-operational and co-existential relationship between the gerontocrats and the youth, this literature review has highlighted the aspect of participation in decision making processes as a legal or constitutional requirement only without considering the generational aspect which if not respected, dents the progressive system of generations.

Representational participation is not enough if it lacks the spirit which comes with every generation. The serious gap is caused by an overlap of the gerontocrats who have since encroached into almost two generations of the Zimbabwean population since the attainment of independence in 1980. Since it is forty years this year, 2020, this is a reminder to the state that it has lost two political generations through gerontocratic domination. Conversely, the youth have been lamenting with no action; this study proposes an alternative for the youth to move from being victims of history to be masters of their time.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEACHER METHODOLOGY

The chapter describes methodology that was used for this study. This includes research design, target population, sample size and sampling technique, data collection procedure, research site and time frame, reliability, and validity of research instrument and finally the chapter presents data analysis techniques.

3.1 Research Design

A research design denotes the procedures for collecting, analysing, interpreting, and reporting data in research studies (Creswell & Plano, 2007). The study was guided and governed descriptive design survey. Cooper & Schindler, (2011) asserted that descriptive research design is useful since it describes characteristics of phenomenon under the study. This design was useful in establishing reasons that exclude youth from leadership positions in Zimbabwe and find solutions that impact positively in the developmental and transformational growth of the youth and the country. The study used semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire; descriptive research design used for this study was based on the opinions or perceptions of the respondents.

3.2 Target Population

The target population is the total number of units from which data can be collected. It is a complete set of aggregates (persons) of common characteristics which are of interest to the researcher (Kothari, 2013). According to Pole and Lampand (2010) target population is categorized as all the participants of a given group or region from which generalization of findings will be based. The study targeted the population which consisted of youth groups registered by the Ministry of Youth the year 2019, the Zimbabwe Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture and religious leaders of churches and mosque within Harare in Zimbabwe. The religious leaders included one representative form each church and mosque. There is a total of 50 registered churches and mosque with Harare in Zimbabwe (Office of the Attorney General and Department of Justice, Zimbabwe 2019).

According to Ministry of Youth 2019 report, there are four registered youth groups organization namely Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU), Zimbabwe Youth Council (ZYC), National Movement of Catholic Students (NMCS) and IGNITE Youth within Harare in Zimbabwe. The unit of observation (the research or target population) for each youth groups included representative members of four youth groups, staff at Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture and religious leaders of churches within Harare in Zimbabwe as shown in table 3.1 that present study target population. The unit of observation were purposely selected since they were much informed about the under the study.

Table 3.1: Target Population

	Target Population	Percent (%)
Ministry of youth Sports and culture (representatives)	94	35.5
Zimbabwe youth Council	40	15.1
Zimbabwe National students Union	45	17.0
Ignite Youth	30	11.3
Religious Leaders(churches)	50	18.9
Youth Coordinators	6	2.3
Total	265	100.0

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

3.3.1 Sampling Frame

A sampling frame refers to complete list of everyone or everything you want to study (Kombo & Tromp 2009). The sampling frame describes the list of all population units from which the sample is selected (Cooper & Schindler, 2008). For this study the sampling frame included all the 265 representative members from the four youth groups, staff at Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture and religious leaders of churches within Harare in Zimbabwe.

3.3.2 Sampling Technique

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), sample refers to a small group acquired from reachable population. Sampling is important in research because it enables the researcher to minimize the cost since only a portion of the population is involved. A sample is a small group obtained from accessible population (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). This study used Yamane (1967) formula that was also used by Israel (1992) as indicated below.

$$n = N / (1 + N(e)^2) \text{ to calculate the sample size}$$

Where:

n = sample size,

N = Population size

e = margin of error set at 5%

For this study: N=265

e =5%.

Therefore, replacing the values in the formula gives a sample size of

$$n = 265 / (1 + 265(0.05)^2)$$

$$n = 159.4$$

$$n = 170 \text{ respondents}$$

The sample was stratified as shown in table 3.1 and respondents were picked randomly from each stratum.

Table 3.2 Sample Size

	Target Population	Percent (%)	Sample Size
Ministry of youth Sports and culture (representative)	94	35.5	57
Zimbabwe youth Council	40	15.1	24

Zimbabwe National students Union	45	17.0	27
Ignite Youth	30	11.3	18
Religious Leaders	50	18.9	30
Youth Coordinators	6	2.3	4
Total	265	100.0	160

3.4 Data Collection Process

According to (Garg, & Kothari, 2014), data collection process refers to procedures used to gather raw and unprocessed information that can be processed into important information following scientific data analysis process. The study used primary data that was collected using self-administered questionnaires and interview guide.

After fulfilling the preliminary requirements of thesis proposal and after receiving the permission to go to the field, the researcher informed the research assistants, and all relevant authorities. The research instruments were prepared, and data was collected by drop and pick method with the help of research assistant. The respondents were given enough time to fill the questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to research assistants that assisted in convincing respondents to fill the questionnaire. This increased the return rate.

The researcher prepared schedules for interviews beforehand. The data providers were met at designated places in person for interviews. The copies of the questionnaire were distributed, and collection points and collection times for distributed questionnaire were established. The copies of the questionnaire were collected at a convenient time.

For interviews, notetaking was the priority over tape recording but when it was necessary, recording was an alternative. Since some of the respondents were committed

during the day, evening hours or other convenient time was agreed upon. Some logistical challenges were inevitable such as availability of the data providers, their willingness to discuss issues with political elements and the health challenges being posed by the pandemic. To surmount these challenges, consensus was reached on establishing convenient time for the respondents and the research assistants helped to create favourable times for the participants.

On fear to discuss issues that are politically related, assurance was granted and surety on the anonymity of the information provided. The health precaution measures were observed as they were stipulated by the ministry of health. Other alternative means that were part of this process included telephone interviews in case some data providers were not available and Google form for questionnaires for situation that prohibits physical filling in of forms.

3.5 Research Site and Time Frame.

The research was carried out in four different locations of Harare namely Southlea Park which is one of the biggest peri-urban suburbs, Glenview and Glen Norah for the high-density suburb, Southerton and Waterfalls as middle density suburbs and Mount Pleasant and Borrowdale as low-density suburbs. The youth groups and policymakers were met in their respective offices for interviews and questionnaire responses. The timeframe for the data collection was the month of March 2021.

3.6 Reliability and Validity of the Instrument

Reliability refers to whether measurement procedures assign the same value to a characteristic or variable, each time that the characteristic or variable is measured essentially under the same circumstances (Omoka, 2019). Validity denotes the degree to which a study accurately reflects or assesses the specific concepts that the researcher is attempting to measure. In response to these requirements, the researcher validated the research instrument through making sure that the questions addressed the subject matter of the research question. The validity of the questionnaire was achieved by the help of the supervisor. The construct validity was achieved by assessing each specific objective of the study as a section.

The research instrument was tested through a Google form which was administered to fifteen young people in Zimbabwe and their responses informed the researcher on whether the questions are validly measuring what they are supposed to measure. At least 92% of the respondents demonstrated that the questions were clear and unambiguous.

Apart from the responses that the researcher received from the pilot test, the instrument was looked at by the thesis supervisor whose advice and input was taken into consideration. Therefore, the research instrument can be said to be reliable and valid to measure the variables that are presented by this study.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis according to Smith (2015) refers to systematic manipulation, processing and arrangement of form the field data with an aim to produce meaningful information. It entails editing, coding, classification and tabulation of data before analysis. The study used both qualitative and quantitative methods for data analysis. The raw data which was received from the primary sources through field research was transformed into interpreted information which, subsequently, was translated into descriptive factual information which is essential in obtaining the recommendations and conclusions. The quantitative information which was obtained through the research tools was analyzed by SPSS version 22. The analysis included both frequency and percentages. All this, helped this study to respond to the thesis problem as reflected by the conclusion and the recommendations. The qualitative data was used analyzed through thematic analysis and interpretive approaches. The findings are presented in narrative and verbatim citations.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter presents results of data analysis, findings, and interpretation. The results are arranged under the following subsections: these includes response rate, demographics of the participants and descriptive analysis. Descriptive statistics have been used to analyze the quantitative data. The outcomes are largely frequencies or percentages presented in charts and tables. The qualitative data was used and analyzed through thematic analysis and interpretive approaches. The findings are presented in narrative and verbatim citations.

4.1 Response Rate

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), to determine the response rate is essential because a low response rate is an indicator of questionable validity of research results. Creswell (2014) argued that higher response rate in research guarantee more accurate survey results. For this study, a total of 160 participants (160 copies of the questionnaire and 18 interviewees) were planned. The 18 individuals who participated in the interviews were the key informants among 160 participants and they were purposely selected. A total of 84 of the sample population responded. This indicates a response rate of 52.5% which was adequate to proceed with the findings. Babbie (2012) argued that 50% is adequate, 60% is good and 75% is very good. The higher return rate was achieved for this

research through prior arrangements, reminders and follow-ups which was done by the researcher and the research assistants. The return rate results are as shown in table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Response rate

	Number of Respondent to the Questionnaire	Percent
Returned Copies of the Questionnaire	84	52.5
Unreturned Copies of the Questionnaire	76	47.5
Total Copies of the Questionnaire	160	100

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Participants

The demographic information of the participants in this study included gender, age and educational level. The demographic profile has an influence on gerontocratic political leadership and youth marginalization in political leadership in Zimbabwe. The data collected in this regard was analyzed and results are summarized in the figures presented in the following sections.

4.2.1 Gender of Respondents

The study result in figure 4.1 reflects the sex of the participants.

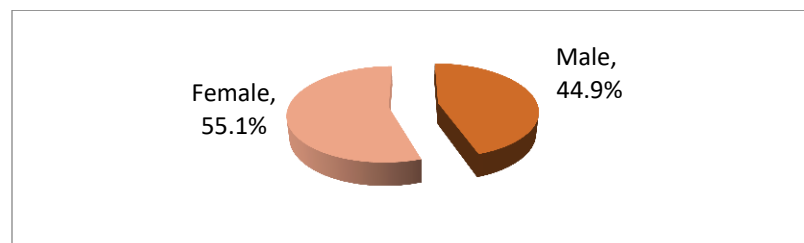


Figure 4.1: Gender of Respondents

The majority 55.1% of them were female and 44.9% male. This implies that the majority of the respondents were female. Gender of the participants was of interest to this study because it was used to inform further analysis on the topic, encouraging for equal rights of women and girls in political leadership. Statistically, the last population census conducted in Zimbabwe in 2012 indicated that women were 52% and men were 48%. This numerical difference entails that, women are 4% more than men in total population of Zimbabwe. Consequently, this numerical disparity was reflected in the respondents' differences. Due to gender awareness campaigns, the researcher acknowledged the increase in number of women who are participating in the decision-making processes. Women's equal participation with men in power and decision-making processes is part of their fundamental right to participate in political life and at the core of gender equality and women's empowerment. Women have the right to participate in political processes that affect them, their families, and their societies (Kassa, 2015). Countries with improved women's participation and leadership in civil society and political parties tend to be more inclusive, responsive, and democratic.

4.2.2 Age of Respondents

The study results in figure 4.2 show that majority 53.6% of the respondents were of age between 18 and 25 years. Those respondents who indicated age between 26 and 30 years were 31.9%, while 10.1% of respondents indicated to be age between 36 to 45 years.

About 2.9% of individual that participated in this study were 46 years and above, the number is small because of COVID-19 pandemic. the risk of contamination was higher among older ages and the recovery rate of the old ages was lower than that of the younger people. in. The older population was the most threatened and more susceptible to COVID-19 pandemic, thus the majority were unwilling to participate in the data collection process. This study results imply that majority of the respondents were youth. The results of this study will be of importance to the youth as this study sought to inform the causes that lead to youth exclusion from political leadership positions in Zimbabwe with a view to find solutions that impact positively in the political participation and transformational growth of the young people and the society of Zimbabwe as a whole.

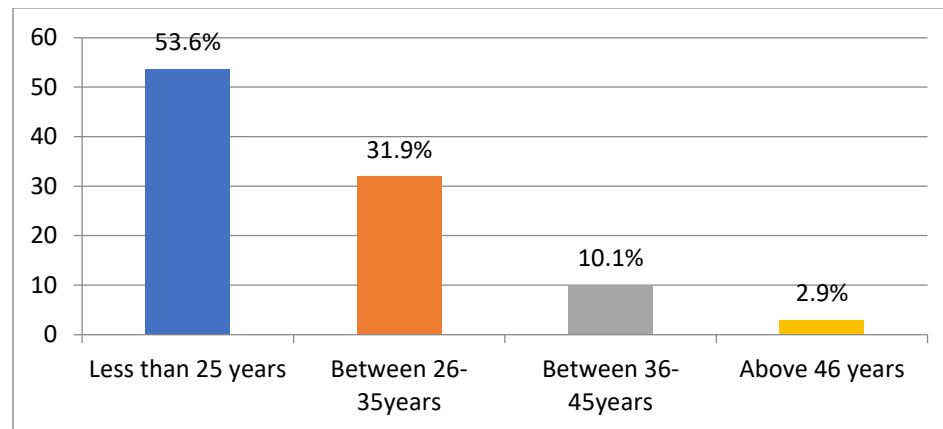


Figure 4.2: Age of Respondents

4.2.3 Educational level of Respondents

Figure 4.3 displays majority 55.1% of respondents had graduate level of education, 18.8% had Certificate education level and 14.5% had Masters level. The data also shows that 11.6% of respondents had reached diploma educational level. This study finding

implies that the respondents had high intellectual capacity to respond and interpret the questions accordingly.

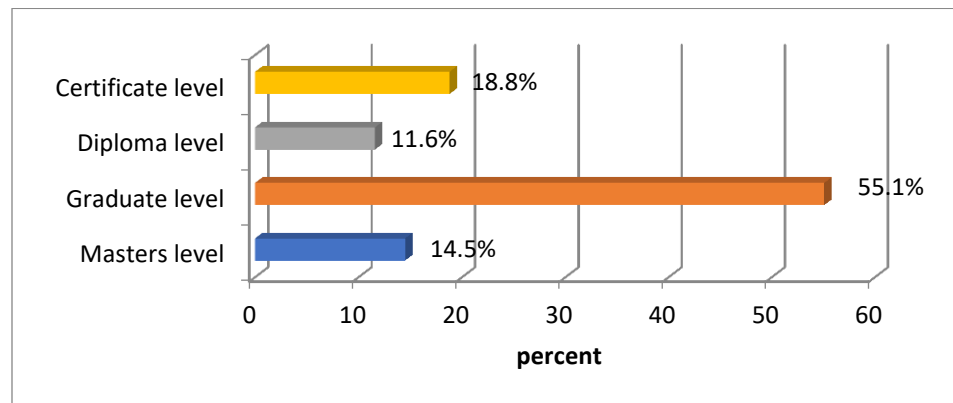


Figure 4.3: Educational level of Respondents

4.3 Generational Consensus and Political Leadership

Generational consensus refers to the coming together of the people of succeeding generations to share and propagate experiences and knowledge reciprocally, with the aim of benefitting mutually and fostering a positive. The first objective of the study was to find out the impact of generational consensus between the young and old in political leadership. The study sought to determine whether generational consensus was important in political leadership in Zimbabwe. The study results of the data from the questionnaire are as shown in table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Significance of generational consensus in political leadership

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	50	59.5

No	14	16.7
I do not know	5	6.0
No response	15	17.9
Total	84	100

The findings reveal that majority 59.5% of respondents to the questionnaire agreed that generational consensus was important in political leadership in Zimbabwe. About 17.9% of the research participants did not respond to the question, 16.7% disagreed while only 6% of the study respondents were neutral. This study finding implies that generational consensus is important in political leadership as indicated by the majority 59.5% respondents who participated in this study.

Most of the respondents who agreed that generational consensus is important in political leadership stated that generational consensus is important because it allows cross pollination of ideas between the different generations that creates a viable leadership between the two generations. Another significance of generational consensus is that it helps to form a formidable synergy between the two generations by harnessing energy from the youths and wisdom from the old and that promotes inclusivity in political leadership.

These present results were in accord with the suggestion by the youths and political leaders who were interviewed; one of the youths said, “Preparation of younger generations for future political leadership roles is important because it brings proper mentorship that is required, substantial knowledge, skill, and experience gap as younger generations inherit their roles and responsibilities from older counterparts.”

In another interview, a religious leader who is a youth co-ordinator added, “generational consensus between the youth and the elders helps to prevent political contestation between the generations.” He went on to say, “Instituting intergenerational relationships in political leadership allows both groups to learn about each other’s differences and similarities while constructing a relational capacity and a sense of fulfilment.”

Another youth from ZINASU leadership commented, “generational consensus is important because it allows the younger generation to apply modern offers of technology into their leadership system thereby improving or makes the leadership style compatible to the wave of globalization.”

These study findings reiterate Hiskes and Hiskes’ (2009) idea that social bonding supports the youth and aging adults through a variety of enjoyable activities, encourages and engages both groups. Generational consensus in political leadership enhances patriotism among generations. Youths will not feel truly empowered if they are simply given a superficial sense of responsibility; a truly empowering experience is where youths are integrally involved in decision-making, are given ownership over outcomes, and are offered the opportunity for guided self-reflection and positive feedback from the adults around them (Adler and Webster 1995).

The study also sought to determine whether there is a conflict between generations in terms of political leadership. The results of the study according to the data from questionnaire were as indicated in table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Conflict between Generations

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	57	67.9%

No	6	7.1%
I do not know	6	7.1%
No response	15	17.9%
Total	84	100

The findings of the data from the questionnaire reveal that the majority, adding up to 67.9%, of the study respondents agreed that there is a conflict between generations in terms of political leadership in Zimbabwe, 15% of the respondents did not respond. 7.1% disagreed and 7.1% of the respondents were unable to indicate whether there is a conflict between generations in terms of political leadership. Subsequently, it implies that there is a conflict between generations in terms of political leadership in Zimbabwe. An explanation for these results of conflict between generations in political leadership as suggested by most of the respondents included possible shifts in values and conflicts of interest between the younger and the older generations.

The reasons that result to conflict between generations in political leadership as mentioned by majority of respondents include age difference which entails different values and different perspectives. It is the new wine into old skins problem, a generational protectionism and difference in purpose. The old want to settle while the young want to adventure.

Data from interviews also reveal similar findings, that there is intergenerational conflict in Zimbabwe. A youth participant explained: “Lack of understanding/tolerance and unwillingness to collaborate are the main reasons that result in conflict between generations in political leadership in Zimbabwe.” A religious youth advisor added: “Because the older leaders feel threatened in their ideologies by the young ones thereby keeping all the young at bay as their defensive mechanism. The older leaders are not open

to new ideas.” Responding to the same, a provincial youth leader stated that: “The older leaders think that the young will not safeguard the legacy and heritage of the country.”

These findings support the evidence from study by Burgess and Burton (2010) that revealed how colonialism introduced unprecedented tension between youth and elders. They pointed out that Christianity, urbanization, and capitalism trampled the structures of the generational relations.

The study further sought to determine whether generation gap is a major social problem in political leadership in Zimbabwe. The outcome results from the questionnaire data are as shown in table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Generation gap

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	41	48.8
No	21	25.0
I do not know	6	7.1
No response	16	19.0
Total	84	100

The results in table 4.4 show that majority (48.8%) of the respondents to the questionnaire agreed that generation gap is a major social problem in political leadership in Zimbabwe whereas a total of 25% felt otherwise. 19% did not respond to the question, whilst 7.1% were neutral.

The majority respondents alleged that generation gap is a major social problem in political leadership in Zimbabwe because the young are considered incapable by the old political leaders. The gerontocrats feel that the young are inconsiderate. Consequently, the hierarchy of the society is deemed age biased. Additionally, the old are richer than the young thereby creating an economic gap which inevitably force the young to rely on the

old for their welfare thereby making them (the young) their subordinates. Another reason that makes generation gap a major social problem can be explained by the Igbo of Nigeria's proverb, "A young man standing cannot see what an old man will see sitting down." Meaning elders are guided by the wisdom from experience and therefore, the old will always have advantage over the young.

These findings concurred with the argument of the interviewed respondents who suggested that, generally, generation gap is a major social problem in political leadership in Zimbabwe. From the interview data, the following opinions reflect the general views of the interviewees:

A political youth mentor stressed that: "It becomes a social problem if the parties or members of these groups do not realize that they need each other." Similarly, one youth noted, "Values and attitudes of the younger generation do not fit well with the beliefs of the older generation" in Zimbabwe. Another dissenting voice from a youth added, "Young people's ideas are not taken seriously because we are taken as people who did not fight in the liberation war thereby lacking institutional memory. In terms of socialization, we are taken as people who know nothing."

The above findings restate the argument of Forti and Maina, (2012) who argue that intergenerational disparity between the youth and the elders has led to political contestation between the generations. The older generation which currently comprises of those in leadership in Zimbabwe have deliberately employed politics of patronage as a way of keeping out the younger generation whom they fear because of their compatible capabilities. Generational social problem in political leadership mentioned by most of the respondents include conflicts on vital decision making, manipulation of the weaker

generation and unequal distribution of the benefits. Generational gaps can impact relationships between political members of different generations.

The respondents were also asked to indicate the individual group that suffers the most from a conflict between generations. Table 4.5 presents the results from the questionnaire data.

Table 4.5: Generation that suffer most from a conflict

	Frequency	Percent
The young	38	45.2%
The Old	2	2.4%
Both Generation	26	31.0%
Don't know	1	1.2%
No response	17	20.2%
Total	84	100%

Table 4.5 above, shows that the majority numbering up to 45.2% of the youth believe that the young suffer most from a conflict between generations in political leadership in Zimbabwe, 31.0% of the respondents hold that both generations are affected. Those who did not respond were 20.2%. Some of the challenges echoed by most respondents from the questionnaire are sabotaging means to access leadership roles and lack of financial support for political campaigns and political establishments.

As interview data shows, above findings are in congruence with views of the interviewed youth leaders of Zimbabwe. Some of the challenges were echoed by one of the political leaders when he opined, “Abuses which are verbal, mental and physical are perpetrated by state security agents, for example, abductions or frequent intimidations by government security.”

These findings concur with Musarurwa, (2018) who argued that adults feel threatened by the energy which the youth exhibit; so, they regard them as dangerous elements which should be kept out of the decision-making corridors. Apart from adultism, poverty makes young people particularly vulnerable and prone to being excluded on financial grounds. Musarurwa (2018) noted that 70% of the youth in Zimbabwe are unemployed and this renders them susceptible to exploitation and control. They are so poor that they end up surrendering their rights, therefore abandoning a culture of positive engagement.

The study also sought the youth to indicate their preferred kind of political leadership. The study results from the questionnaire data are as shown in table 4.6. The observation from table 4.6 revealed that majority 76.8% of the participants preferred mixed type where both young and old are included in political leadership, 15.9% of the study respondents preferred Juvenocracy kind of political leadership and only 7.2% of the study participants preferred gerontocratic type of political leadership.

This implies that the most preferred type of political leadership in Zimbabwe by youths is the mixed type consisting of both the youth and the older generation. Any citizen of age 18 years and above should be allowed to contest to be legislators and for presidency. According to Mbadlanyana, (2012), both the young and the old are actors who are vying for the same political space. There is a need that all actors coming from different identified segments of the society are given functional opportunities in the political space. Every age has different needs so an all-encompassing inclusivity which is guided by the constitution helps to create a balanced viable society. Mbadlanyana, (2012)

considers gerontocracy as a myth which hinges on the premise that political leadership is the reserve of those who have lived longer.

Table 4.6: Preferred political leadership

	Frequency	Percent
Gerontocracy (rule by the old)	5	6.0
Juvenocracy (rule by the young)	11	13.1
Mixed (both young and old)	53	63.1
No response	15	17.9
Total	84	100

The first research question was sought to determine the impact of age interaction between the young and the old in political leadership. The study findings revealed that age interaction between the young and the old has a significant impact on political leadership in Zimbabwe. Generational consensus in political leadership enhances patriotism among generations. On the contrary age interaction between the young and the old can be conflictual in terms of political leadership where the young generation fails to get credence in political leadership in Zimbabwe. These study findings are like Dorman (2006) who revealed that intergenerational political contestation from different perspectives is helpful in trying to address the same problem as it presents itself in Zimbabwean politics.

The steps mentioned by the majority are helpful in enhancing generational consensus for democracy in Zimbabwe. This consensus includes meritocratic leadership, the youth quota system, ensuring gender and age balance in political leadership, embracing inclusivity in decision- making processes, empowering of both ages in

understanding democracy, distinguishing traditional leadership and modern leadership and promoting youth-elder cooperation against eldership leadership.

4.5 Reasons for Political Marginalization of the Youths

The second research question sought to determine causes of political marginalization of the youths in Zimbabwe. The respondents were first asked to indicate whether youth were marginalized in political leadership in Zimbabwe. The results from the questionnaire are as shown in table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Political marginalization of youth in political leadership

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	37	44.1
No	16	19.0
I do not know	16	19.0
No response	15	17.9
Total	84	100

The questionnaire data analysis results in table 4.8 shows that 44.1% of respondents agreed that youth in Zimbabwe were politically marginalized in political leadership whilst 19.0% disagreed. Those that were unaware whether there was youth marginalization in political leadership were also 19.0%. About 17.9% of the respondents did not respond to this question. The finding that the youth are marginalized in political leadership is supported by some youth group leaders and religious leaders who were interviewed. One of the religious leaders stated, “The young people were not directly involved in the political decision-making processes”. In another interview a youth leader stressed that “The main duty of youths in political parties was merely to perpetuate the voice of the party leadership.”

Young people, all over the world, are generally marginalized due to their age and such exclusion not only infringes upon their human rights as young people, but also has negative effects on the cohesion and stability of the societies in which they live (United

Nations, 2014). Marginalization in the socio-politics and economics spheres has been a perennial threat to Africa's good governance and political leadership. Young people are marginalized because of the reasons which Okojie, (2010) presented in her United Nations report concerning the youth. She holds that the youth are marginalized in African politics due to barriers relating to demography, such as age restrictions, gender barriers, cultural factors which exclude youth from public decision-making process.

Secondly, the study sought respondents' opinion on whether both youth and old people are given equal opportunity in political leadership processes. The study findings from the questionnaire are as indicated in table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Equal political leadership opportunities

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	11	13.1
No	50	59.5
I do not know	7	8.3
No response	16	19.0
Total	84	100

The questionnaire data analysis results in table 4.8 shows that the majority 59.5% of respondents hold that both the youth and old people are not given equal opportunities in political leadership processes. Only 13.1% agreed that both youth and old people are given equal opportunity in political leadership processes.

The reasons as why the participants denied that both old and young people are not given equal participation in political leadership include lack of common background, for instance, the old in Zimbabwe have a heroic history for liberating Zimbabwe and the young do not have (uneven political reference), economic disparities- the old have wealth and the young do not have, the cultural dictates as indicated by the proverb; "when a kid

goat bends down, it sucks from its mother's breast," in Swahili this means that the youth are admonished to defer to elders, and reap the reward of nurturing. Another reason for generational disparity between the old and the young in political leadership processes is that the experienced versus the inexperienced, experimenting ideas versus consolidating ideas.

The finding that the youth in Zimbabwe are marginalized is supported by some youth group leaders, political leaders and religious leaders who were interviewed. One of the leaders stated: "The political structures and systems in place do not cherish maximum participation of the youth. The youths are patronized by big wings as their front runners and never as independent participants."

In another interview a youth group leader noted:

Yes, for example the youth leader of the ruling party is 55 years old. There is a mentality that war credentials make somebody fit for the office yet many youths who are capable are side-lined. Additionally, the structures in government have given so much priority to those with liberation war credentials. Hence you find posts that are meant for the youths are given to 50 years old people.

In another interview, a political activist added, "Indeed, they are marginalized; a few who would have managed to secure key positions, do not live peacefully, for we have cases of a spate of abductions are on record."

These findings broadly support the work of Kachembere, (2017) which states that the political participation of the youth in Zimbabwe constitutes a narrative that is between being manipulated and being kept at bay. In the first decade after independence, the youth

were co-opted into brigades and militias whose duty was to perpetuate the ideology of the ruling party ZANU PF. Any opposing voice was met with heavy-handedness.

Thirdly, the respondents were asked to indicate whether age factor has an impact when choosing political leaders. The results of the questionnaire data analysis are as shown in the table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Age factor in political leadership

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	35	41.7
No	23	27.4
I do not know	11	13.1
No response	15	17.9
Total	84	100

The study results in table 4.9 show that the majority 41.7% of respondents agreed that age factor had an impact on the selection of political leaders while 27.4% of the respondents disagreed. 17.9% did not respond. Only 13.1% of respondents were not aware whether age factor had an impact when choosing political leaders. Equally, 13.1% were neutral.

The impact that age factor has in choosing political leaders as mentioned by the majority respondents was both positive and negative. The positive impact included the aged, experienced political leaders have advantages over the inexperienced leaders, the young have energy to attain their goal and the old lack the energy to pursue their vision, and the young are malleable whilst the old are rigid. The mentioned negative impact that age factor has on choosing political leaders include age bias, where the young can segregate the old and vice versa, the old are slow to risk thereby slow to venture into new realities, the young are inexperienced and energetic, the old are susceptible to corruption

because of overstaying in power and they perpetuate politics of memorialization over progressive politics.

According to Waller (2006), what he called discipline of initiation whose teachings and taboos would always remind the young the prize of defying their elders, the future is for the young and the past for the elders, therefore it is through the diligent mastery of the past that would prepare the young to inherit authority from the elders.

These findings recapitulate the data from the interviews. A ZINASU youth leader argued, “The youth are functionally involved but not for their benefit but for the benefit of the ruling elite. Their role both in government and the ruling party has been of a doll in the game of chess.” One of the youths stated, “The main duty of youths in political parties was merely to perpetuate the voice of the party leadership and to perform dirty tasks for the elders in return for very meagre tokens.”

It therefore implies that age factor in Zimbabwe has an impact when choosing political leaders. The youth of the African continent are still marginalized and alienated from the decision making and policy making platforms. Mahony (2018), argues that age disparities result in the underrepresentation of the youth, hence leading to apathy. When there is such a disenfranchisement, it becomes a counterproductive practice for any given society. Faye (2017) cites the legal dispositions of many African states as a contributing factor. The legal cut off age for presidential candidature or ministerial post is very different from the voting age. For instance, in most African countries, citizens vote when they turn 18 years and above, but they can only contest to be legislators when they are either 25 years or above and when they are forty years and above for presidency. The

youths aged 30 years and above should be given a chance to vie for legislature positions and even for presidency.

Fourthly, the study participants were asked whether they agree with the notion that the older one is, the wiser one becomes. The questionnaire data analysis results are as shown in table 4.10.

Table 4.10: Notion that the older one is the wiser one becomes

	Frequency	Percent
Agree	22	26.2%
I agree strongly	10	11.9%
I disagree	14	16.7%
I disagree strongly	18	21.4%
I don't know	5	6.0%
No response	15	17.9%
Total	84	100

The results in table 4.10 shows that a combined 38.1% of the respondents to the questionnaire agreed with statement that the older one is, the wiser one becomes, while another equal number (38.1%) respondents disagree with the statement. Those who are not sure constituted 6%. According to Acheubum (1995), the rule by the elders or the aged is not something novel; it is traced back to the Platonic times where Plato discouraged younger people into public service before the age of fifty. In the Mediaeval England, sixty years was the cut off age for anyone who would serve in the public service. Soviet Union was characterized by old leaders that were bureaucrats and conservative enough to maintain control over the levels of power as one cohort gives way to the next elderly generation.

These suggestions were in congruence with political leader who suggested that the older one is, the wiser one becomes. The interviewed politician stated that:

The youth are more in numbers, but they are always outvoted by the older generations, because of the political mechanizations which are established by the seasoned politicians whose tactics, experience and shrewd political brinkmanship through patrimonial networks push away the youth considering them that they cannot be trusted with bigger responsibilities.

Sternberg (2005), on hypothesis of Older-and-Wiser, argued that wisdom is not essentially or basically a product of old age, though attaining an advanced age surges the odds of acquiring the kinds of life experiences and emotional maturity that improve wisdom. Vivian Clayton in 1950s was fascinated by special qualities possessed by her two elders, her father Simon Clayton and motherly grandmother. Even though the two elders had limited education, they had uncanny ability to remain calm amid crises, made good decisions and conveyed an almost palpable sense of emotional contentment, often in the face of considerable adversity or uncertainty. This implies that wisdom is founded upon knowledge, but part of it is shaped by the experience of uncertainty.

Fifthly, the respondents to the questionnaire were asked whether having older political leaders in government offer more advantages than the younger ones in terms of performance. The questionnaire data results are as shown in table 4.11.

Table 4.11: Whether older political leaders in government offer more advantages than the younger ones in terms of performance

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	25	29.8
No	44	52.4
No response	15	17.9
Total	84	100

Observation from table 4.11 show that majority 52.4% of the study participants disagreed with statement that older political leaders in government offer more advantages than the younger ones in terms of performance. Those that agree with the statement were 29.8% while 17.9% did not respond to the question.

Most respondents disagreed on whether older political leaders have advantages over younger ones in terms of performance or vice versa because they believed that Zimbabwe has never known young leaders in government, both ages have something to offer because energy and experience are a good recipe for progress, and the old naturally tend to pause and settle whilst the young believe that the sky is the limit. Some of the study participants also stated that performance is predominantly, meritocratic and professionalism so whoever is qualified performs the unqualified and that the few young ministers especially during unity government performed very well better than the gerontocrats thus the youth should also be given chance in political leadership.

The views from the youths and their leaders who were interviewed show the following. “Leadership is not a natural legacy only but a skill that is acquired with time, some young people are also capable of leading if given opportunity,” opined one youth leader. This relates to Sternberg (2005) who argues that attaining an advanced age increases odds of acquiring the kinds of life experiences and emotional maturity that improve wisdom. There is a need that all actors coming from different identified segments of the society are given functional opportunities in the political space. Every age has unique needs so an all-encompassing inclusivity which is guided by the constitution helps to create a balanced viable society. Mbadlanyana (2012) considers

gerontocracy as a myth which hinges on the premise that political leadership is the reserve of those who have lived longer.

To summarise, the second research question of the study sought to determine reasons for political marginalization of the youths in Zimbabwe. The study findings revealed that the youths in Zimbabwe are always outvoted by the older generations because of the political mechanizations which are established by the seasoned politicians whose tactics, experience and shrewd political brinkmanship through patrimonial networks push away the youth who are prejudiced as those who cannot be trusted with bigger responsibilities. United Nations (2014) report asserted that young people all over the world are generally politically marginalized due to their age and such exclusion has negative effects on cohesion and stability of the societies in which youths live. Marginalization in the socio-politics and economics has been a perennial threat to Africa's good governance and political leadership.

4.6 Young People and Political Leadership

The third objective of the study was to explore how young people can participate progressively in political leadership. The first question inquired the respondents to the questionnaire whether they thought that the youth were well represented in the political leadership of party politics. The study findings from the questionnaire data are as indicated in table 4.12.

Table 4.12: Youth representation in political leadership of party politics

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	7	8.3

No	52	61.9
I do not know	10	11.9
No response	15	17.9
Total	84	100

The study results in table 4.12 illustrate that, according to the data from the questionnaire, majority (61.9%) of the respondents felt that youths were not well represented in the political leadership of party politics. 17.9% respondents did respond to the question. About 11.9% of the respondents were neutral. 8.3% believed youths were well represented in the political leadership of party politics.

The majority participants who disagreed that the youths are not well represented in political leadership and party politics were of view that even though the population of the youth constitutes the majority, their representation in political leadership is low and the youth are only populated at the base but very thin in the higher positions. This finding is supported by reviewing the age factor of cabinet ministers in the last ten years in Zimbabwe. The average age was 52 years. In the current ministry there is only one minister out of twenty-three who is less than forty years. In the political parties, the gerontocrats still dominate apart from few exceptional cases where young people are in echelons of power. Another problem affecting the youth representation in political leadership and party politics is cultural and economic dominance by the elderly political leaders. The youth lack financial muscles to campaign for themselves. Other reasons suggested by majority respondents as to why youths are not well represented in political leadership and party politics include the political systems in Zimbabwe which lack quota system. the youth fear victimization so they shun higher posts and youth are not empowered so they feel not qualified.

These findings agreed with the responses obtained from interviews from youths and their leaders that the youth of the African continent are still marginalized and alienated from the decision making and policy making platforms. Some of the views from youth coordinators are as stated: “Youths are not being given enough platforms or rather opportunity to give ideas that might take the country to a higher level like other countries.” Another youth noted, “Our political system is outdated. There is too much nepotism; if you are not connected you can’t make it. Diverse opinions are left out that way.” In the same vein, one religious leader opined, “If you look in the parliament there are a few people below forty years and that easily reflects that there is no proper or complete representation of the youth in politics.” In confirmation, one youth reiterated, “That there is an abuse of youth’s rights; youths are viewed as unfit to lead and the issues which affect the youths are judged as non-important.”

From these findings, the study concludes that there is a political unwillingness from the older members which blocks the young from implementing the formulated policies of youth integration in Zimbabwe. In this country, leadership role is taken from the person’s point of view. It means that only those persons with outstanding historical credentials would remain leaders or could be elected to leadership (Uhl-Bien, 2006). For instance, Robert Mugabe was always backed by his war of liberation credentials. That always made him a hero and then a hero- leadership theory was created. In other words, if one is not a liberation hero, he/she cannot be a leader. This has devalued the role of the youth since they and many others did not experience the protracted armed struggle for the liberation in Zimbabwe.

Some of the challenges that hinder youth from participating in political leadership as mentioned by the majority respondents include nepotism/generational association-age mates, bureaucracy, the youth feel used as agents and instruments only by politicians, the youth are used as purveyors of political conflict and violence, the political process is perceived as flawed corrupt, repressive, and exclusionary, and poverty as majority of the youth lack enough funding to participate in politics

Secondly, the respondents were asked to give their opinions on whether the youth are fairly represented in executive positions/ministerial positions. The results of the questionnaire data analysis are as shown in table 4.13.

Table 4.13: Youth representation in executive positions

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	14	16.7
No	55	65.5
No response	15	17.9
Total	84	100

The results in table 4.13 show that majority (65.5%) of the respondents were dissatisfied with youth representations in executive positions/ministerial positions. About 17.9% respondents did not respond while respondents that were satisfied with youth representations in executive/ministerial positions were 16.7%. Those respondents who agreed that youth are fairly represented in the executive positions in Zimbabwe mentioned that the youth hold positions in the Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Culture and in the youth wings, and promotion of youth through National Youth Service.

The political system in Zimbabwe makes the youth mere followers who are afraid to take power and lead. Tyser (2016) traced the role of the youth in Zimbabwe and

identified some years that there was not even a youth ministry in Zimbabwe. For 12 years, 1988 -2000, there was no specific youth ministry to look after the needs of the young in Mugabe’s government. When the ministry was recreated in 2000, it was meant to coerce the youth into perpetuating the waning ZANU PF regime through land grabbing.

Thirdly, the study sought to determine whether the youth are given a chance to participate during the formulations of youth policies. The study results from the questionnaire data are shown in table 4.14.

Table 4.14: Youth participating in formulations of youth policies

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	25	29.8
No	44	52.4
No response	15	17.9
Total	84	100

A good percentage (52.4%) of the individuals who participated in this study indicated that the youth are not given opportunity to participate during the formulations of youth policies while 29.8% of respondents mostly aged above 45 years agreed that youth are given opportunity to participate during formulations of youth policies. 17.9% did not respond. This study results confirms that the youth of Zimbabwe are still marginalized and alienated from the decision making and policy making platforms (Benhabib 1996). Youth will not feel truly empowered if they are simply given a superficial sense of responsibility. A truly empowering experience is one which youth are integrally involved in decision-making, given ownership over outcomes and offered the opportunity for guided self-reflection and positive feedback from the adults around them (Adler &

Webster 1995). Adults must be properly trained to regulate their involvement and ownership in order to provide appropriate space for ever more control to be taken by youth (French, 2015).

Fourthly, the study further sought to rate the level of youth participation in decision making processes. The results from the analysis of the questionnaire data are as shown in the table 4.15.

Table 4.15: Youth participation in decision making process

	Frequency	Percent
Very high	11	13.1
High	10	11.9
Low	25	29.8
Very Low	22	26.2
No response	16	19.0
Total	84	100

A total of 56% of the individuals participated in the study agreed that in Zimbabwe, the level of youth participation in decision making processes was low while a total of 25% of respondents rated youth participation in decision making processes as high. About 19.0% did not respond to the question.

These findings agreed with some respondents who were interviewed on their suggestions about positive effects of youth participation in decision making process. One of the youth leaders stated that: “Engaging youths in decision making processes that touch around governance, elections, accountability and sexual and reproductive health, and rights helps to solve the youth problems.”

Another youth in an interview acknowledged, “I have seen Zimbabwe government increasingly supporting youth ministries, youth policies and youth programs

and there is a greater recognition that young people are the future of their country's development. But there is still a long way to go to realize this potential. For economic benefits in this country, there is need to involve youths in decision making process because they are an asset.”

These findings are consistent with Musarurwa's (2018) study findings that noted that in Zimbabwe youth participation in elections are apathetic because of unfavourable democratic processes which do not acknowledge youths as possible candidates. Worldwide, the level of youth participation in electoral processes and political leadership is very low as it is reported in United Kingdom, Ireland and most of the Southern Europe, Italy, Greece, and Portugal (Lewis-Beck, & Nadeau 2012). In Zimbabwe, the case is almost the same but with the reasons categorically expressed as having restrictive political parties, lack of interest, not having adequate information and lack of funds. Political structures such as political parties, cabinet and parliament were cited as the main reason that prevented meaningful youth participation; the structures are influenced by adultism which sees only older adults securing key positions from which they begin to dictate the youth (Musarurwa, 2018).

The respondents' additional comments on ways that can be used to empower youth to participate in political leadership included promoting civic education, introduce new forms of politicking particularly social media route, expand inclusiveness of political structures, promote meritocracy over experience, engage youth on every level of political contestation, reduce political contestation age and promote proportional representation in political leadership.

Lastly, on young people's participation in political leadership, the respondents were asked to rate the extent to which the existing policies on youth are being implemented. The results of the data analysis from the questionnaire are indicated in table 4.16.

Table 4.16: Implementation of the existing youth policies

	Frequency	Percent
less implemented	27	32.1
Fully implemented	15	17.9
Moderately implemented	10	11.9
Not Implemented	5	6.0
I don't Know	6	7.1
No response	21	25.0
Total	84	100

The results in table 4.16 shows that the majority 32.1% of the respondents believed that the existing policies on youth were less implemented. Those who did not respond to the questionnaire were 25.0%. 17.9% indicated that the existing youth policies were fully implemented and 11.9% moderately implemented. Those who indicated "don't know" and "not implemented" and were 7.1% and 6% respectively.

As interview data shows, the above findings are in congruence with views of the interviewed respondents. A youth believed "Zimbabwe's government has increasingly continued to support youth ministries, youth policies and youth programs and there is a greater recognition that young people are the future of their countries' development. But there is still a long way to go to realize this potential."

The study respondents were asked whether they preferred the current political leadership in Zimbabwe. Table 4.17 presents data results from the questionnaire.

Table 4.17: Preference with current Zimbabwe political leadership

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	15	17.9
No	51	60.7
No response	18	21.4
Total	84	100

The questionnaire data analysis results shown in table 4.17 indicate that majority (60.7%) of the respondents do not prefer current political leadership in Zimbabwe. 21.4% did not respond and 17.9% preferred the current political leadership in Zimbabwe. Majority respondents did not prefer the current political leadership in Zimbabwe, however, those who said yes did not justify apart from one responded who expressed satisfied with President Emmerson Mnangagwa's government. The older and experienced politicians lack interests for future the generation. It is also important to note that the question was too direct. Implicitly they expressed fear and being not free to speak about the current leadership.

This finding is consistent with the view held by significant number of respondents interviewed; they did not prefer the current political leadership in Zimbabwe because of kleptocratic, dictatorial rule of the political leaders and the ruling ZANU–PF party. One youth reacted, “Not at all, because there is a lot of corruption and people are not even free and there is need for leaders with people at heart.”

From interviews, a leader from a political party asserted, “Politically, Zimbabwe has been under the leadership of the ruling ZANU-PF for the last forty years. The overstay of ruling party has been alleged to have caused democratic malpractices which have left Zimbabwean political leadership in a quandary.” Another civic leader stated that:

The most outstanding challenges that bedevilled Zimbabwe few years after independence include corruption, poverty, poor service delivery, unemployment, poor economic performance, policy inconsistency, lack of independence of the judiciary, lack of rule of law, human rights abuse, dictatorship, reduced voter confidence and electoral credibility.

Most of the respondents who were interviewed did not prefer the current political leadership in Zimbabwe and the following views are some of the reasons that they gave. One commented, “Political leaders should uphold both traditional and today’s generation leadership styles.” Another one stated, “The older ones should guide the youth when leading to the top positions.” Still, another interviewee reasoned that there is “inadequate developmental projects.”

These findings were like Marazanye’s (2016) study results which revealed that Zimbabwe inherited a healthy economy which helped her to develop the essential sectors to a commendable status of having good education system, operational health system and functional infrastructure. In relation to the youth and economic empowerment, the study noted that Zimbabwe did not have specific economic strategies for the youth in the first two decades. In addition, the bank that was established to empower economic development and income generating projects was initiated with the youth being included. However, it is important to note that even though the youth were mentioned in various programmes of the state, their involvement was of manipulation, decoration or tokenism and all developmental projects were partisan and exclusivist in nature (Sana, 2011).

The study also sought for the opinion of the research participants to determine whether leadership style in Zimbabwe had an impact on political participation. Questionnaire data analysis results are as shown in table 4.18.

Table 4.18: Leadership style influences political participation

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	41	48.8%
No	14	16.7%
I do not know	10	11.9%
No response	19	22.6%
Total	84	100

The questionnaire data analysis results in table 4.18 show that majority (48.8%) of the respondents indicated that leadership style in Zimbabwe had an impact on political participation while 22.6% did not indicate their response and 16.7% disagreed. Those respondents that were neutral were 11.9%. This study finding implies that the current political organisation around gerontocracy in Zimbabwe affects the participation of the youth. This goes back to pre-colonial cultures where gerontocracy was legitimised. The contemporary political system is still rendering gerontocracy anomalous and problematic.

The majority respondents who agreed that leadership style has impact on political participation stated that leadership style in Zimbabwe affects the pattern of political grouping, pressure groups, social economic, business organization and the voting pattern. Attitude of political actors in the recent occurring situation and the dynamic social political participation had obviously justified the perpetual act of greed and selfishness among principal political leaders.

Most of the interviewed youths and coordinators agreed that leadership style in Zimbabwe had an impact on political participation. The interviewed youth noted: “Some

citizens fear to be vanquished by ones in power. Political leadership dictates/determines the views and perceptions of the mass hence their level of participation/political leadership controls the political participation in all angles. The current political leadership is very subjective to decision making.”

This finding concurs with Dorman’s (2006), study results according to which, in the known political structures from the traditional setups before representational democracy, leadership has been an enterprise for older generations. There are no known structures where the young would lead when the elders were there. Leadership was deemed a reserved category for the elder generation.

The last research question sought to determine the alternative style of leadership to gerontocratic political leadership. The study findings exhibited that most of the respondents felt that youths were not well represented in the political leadership of party politics. Most of the respondents were dissatisfied with the youth representations in executive positions/ministerial positions. Tyser (2016) traced the role of the youth in Zimbabwe and identified some years that there was not even a youth ministry in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwe’s political system makes the inexperienced mere followers who are afraid to take power and lead. The findings also revealed that the youth in Zimbabwe are not given the opportunity to participate during the formulations of youth policies. This confirms that the young people in Zimbabwe are still marginalized and alienated from the decision making and policy making platforms.

The suggested contribution on the formulation of youth policies by majority respondents to policy makers included the youth should be empowered through civic

education and economic channels, reduce presidential age, they make political playfield even, adopt meritocracy and ensure gender equality in political leadership.

In conclusion, the study findings have revealed some essential indications that are very important to note. Distinctively, the findings have confirmed the hypothesis that the gerontocrats are marginalising the young people in Zimbabwe. On the other hand, the findings have shown an extraordinary trend of several respondents who would not respond to certain questions. This has been attributed to the indoctrination that was done to the youth in Zimbabwe through National Youth Service program and through Herbert Chitepo school of ideology. For a period of more than ten years back, the youth in Zimbabwe have been undergoing political indoctrination hence influenced their responses to anything that has to do with political interrogations.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary of the findings from the descriptive analysis. It also provides the conclusions as well as study recommendations and recommendations further study.

5.1 Summary of the Study

The purpose of the study was to analyze political effects of gerontocratic political leadership on youth marginalization in Zimbabwe with a view to finding solutions that impact positively in attaining generational consensus among the existing generations. This section presents summary of findings as per three key research objectives.

The first objective of the study sought to determine the impact of generation consensus between the young and the old in political leadership. The study findings have revealed that age interaction between the young and the old has a significant impact on political leadership in Zimbabwe. Generational consensus enhances unity and patriotism among generations in political leadership. These study findings are like Hiskes and Hiskes' (2009), study findings that revealed the social political bonding between young politicians and the older counterparts supports both the youths and aging adults through a variety of enjoyable activities that encourage and engage both groups. Generational consensus in politics helps to energize the older adults and give a sense of purpose, especially when they are sharing their political experience and skills. Age interaction

between the young and the old in terms of political leadership can lead to conflict between the two generations; the generation that suffers most from such a conflict is the young generation since the older generation has advantage in terms of power and means. The findings agree with Forti and Maina (2012), who argue that intergenerational disparity between the youth and the elders has led to political contestation between the generations. The older generation which currently comprises of those in leadership in Zimbabwe have deliberately employed politics of patronage as a way of keeping out the younger generation whom they fear because of their compatible capabilities. Generational social problem in political leadership mentioned by most of the respondents include conflicts on vital decision making, manipulation of the weaker generation and unequal distribution of the benefits.

The second objective of the study sought to determine causes for political marginalization of the youths in Zimbabwe. The study findings revealed that the youths in Zimbabwe are politically marginalized. The youth are politically marginalized due to their age. These findings concurred with Mahony (2018), who argues that age disparities result in the underrepresentation of the youth, hence leading to apathy. The youth marginalization in the socio-politics and economics spheres has been a perennial threat to Africa's good governance and political leadership. The findings also revealed that youth in Zimbabwe are not given the opportunity to participate during the formulations of youth policies. This confirms that youth in Zimbabwe are still marginalized and alienated from the decision making and policy making platforms. This is because the youths are always outvoted by the older generations because of the political mechanizations which are established by the seasoned politicians whose tactics, experience and shrewd political

brinkmanship through patrimonial networks push away the youth from assuming bigger responsibilities.

The third research objective of the study sought to determine the possible ways that can help the young people to participate positively in politics. The study findings showed that most of the respondents felt that youths were not well represented in the political leadership of party politics. Political structures such as political parties, cabinet and parliament were cited as the main reason that prevented meaningful youth participation; the structures are influenced by adultism which sees only older adults securing key positions from which they begin to dictate the youth. In Zimbabwe, the case is almost the same but with the reasons categorically expressed as having restrictive political parties, lack of interest, not having adequate information and lack of funds. The findings also revealed that youth in Zimbabwe are not given the opportunity to participate during the formulations of youth policies. The possible ways that can help the young people in Zimbabwe to actively participate in politics is providing them with opportunity to participate during the formulations of youth policies and ensure favourable democratic processes which do acknowledge youths as possible candidates. The government of Zimbabwe should also continue providing support to youth ministries, youth policies and youth programs.

The empirical findings of the study affirm the hypothesis that there is youth marginalization by the gerontocrats in the political leadership. Outstanding causes which are found both in primary data and secondary data are: the age factor in relation to political positions. Second, young people are viewed as inexperienced thereby deemed not fit for political leadership. On the other hand, the politics of patronage where the

older politicians seek to maintain and retain their positions through keeping the young one at bay. The issue of financial disparity has been voiced by both the reviewed scholars and the respondents. The gerontocrats have resources but no energy whilst the youth have ideas and energy thereby not given space to materialize their ideas. Interestingly, even though the political pendulum seems to favour the older over the young, the findings of this study have evidenced that the young are seeking generational consensus not total domination. The young are promoting political space where all ages are given equal opportunities. This understanding affirms what the respondents indicated when they were asked what kind of leadership they would prefer. The reviewed scholarship about Zimbabwe has also indicated the similar trend. There is a consensus between the qualitative findings from the reviewed literature and the quantitative data as indicated by the findings.

The study findings have revealed two outstanding trends that the researcher did not think of until the analysis of the data. First, the depth of ideological indoctrination by the ruling party to the young people. In the face value, one would think that the younger generations have moved away from the political memorialization of the older generations, but the findings indicate that the reasons for having recurrent number of respondents who refused to respond to some questions on the questionnaire can be attributed to those youths who underwent either the training in National youth services or the youth leaders who attended Hebert Chitepo School of ideology. It is alleged that the graduates of these two institutions are very strict in volunteering the information. They prefer to remain neutral in matters that probe political issues about Zimbabwe. On the other hand, the study findings have also shown the level of youth's disengagement from

political participation on the ground. Several respondents expressed ignorance about their political commitment. This might be a strategy of the gerontocrats to keep the youth at bay. Several respondents, even though they have high academic qualifications did not demonstrate that their qualifications inform them about their political rights. Most of the responses lacked political clout one would expect from the citizens.

5.3 Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to analyze political effects of gerontocratic political leadership on youth participation in Zimbabwe, finding the solutions that have positive impact on generational consensus between the young people and the elders. To address this, the study took the lens of the theory of generations. The study followed explanatory research design with mixed (qualitative and quantitative) research methods. The intergenerational disparity in political leadership is present globally, and more pronounced in Zimbabwe.

The study concluded that the young people in Zimbabwe are among the most marginalised young people in terms of occupying substantial political offices and having access to economic opportunities. The current political organisation in Zimbabwe is gerontocratic and this can be traced back to precolonial cultures. The modern political organisation renders gerontocracy anomalous and problematic; youth have been left with few avenues for performing a normative form of masculinity built around leadership, self-sufficiency, and self-determination (Hodzi 2014). Some of the young people are politically marginalized from leadership positions due to their age restrictions, gender

barriers and cultural factors which exclude youth from public decision-making process, and such exclusion has negative effects on the cohesion and stability of the communities where they live. Hence, the study findings underscore and conclude that intergenerational interaction is essential in political leadership. Generational consensus in political leadership enhances patriotism among generations. The generational consensus in politics helps to energize the older adults and give a sense of purpose, especially when they are sharing their political experience and skills (Adler and Webster 1995).

The study also concludes that the results of conflict between generations in political leadership includes possible shifts in values and conflicts of interest between the younger and the older generations. The causes of conflict between generations in political leadership as mentioned by majority of respondents include age difference which entails different values and different perspectives.

The study also concludes that political performance is predominantly, meritocratic and professionalism so, whoever is qualified must be given chance to perform without considering age as a prerequisite. Young ministers during unity government performed very well and were better than the gerontocrats thus the youth should also be given chance in political leadership.

Additionally, the study concludes that political parties in Zimbabwe prevent the youth from participation in political leadership. Youth exclusion from participating in political leadership is driven by adultism; the adults take all positions of influence including those ministries which deal with the young people. It indicates the importance of resolving this problem of exclusion of the young people.

The study highlights that one of the main causes why the youths in Zimbabwe are excluded from participating in political leadership is due to poverty; many young people in Zimbabwe are unemployed. This renders youth vulnerable to exploitation; poor youth are always ready to sell their rights, for food hand-outs and even promises of jobs that will never materialize.

The youth in Zimbabwe have limited opportunities of participating in formulation of youth policies; they are also excluded in the implementation process of youth policies. The study concludes that with limited opportunities given to the youth to participate in the formulation of youth policy, a gradual change towards youth engagement in the formulation of public policies in Zimbabwe is necessary.

From these study results, it can be concluded that political leadership in Zimbabwe has not been inclusive of all eligible generations. The ruling ZANU-PF overstay in power for the last forty years has caused democratic malpractices which have left Zimbabwean political leadership in a dilemma. These challenges as mentioned by one of the political youth leaders interviewed include corruption, poverty, poor service delivery, unemployment, poor economic performance, policy inconsistency formulation, lack of independent judiciary, lack of rule of law, human rights abuse, dictatorship, reduced voter confidence and lack of electoral credibility.

This study proposes further analysis on the effects of gerontocratic political leadership on youth participation in Zimbabwe. There is a perceptible gap in political leadership between the youth and the old guards. This disparity is not only on the level of parliamentary representation, but it is also visible on the ideational level. Currently, Zimbabwean politics is marred by ideological polarity which is emanating from historic

memorialization of the liberation struggle by the gerontocrats which suffocates the demands of the present and the prospects of the future. The exclusion of the youth from the corridors of political leadership is promoting ideational stagnancy and political apathy among the youths. While there has been some nominal inclusivity of the youth in political leadership, the youths continue to be marginalized by the gerontocrats in governmental positions.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study proposes the following recommendations concerning the effects of gerontocratic political leadership on youth marginalization in Zimbabwe. These recommendations are proposed according to different social actors. The main actors are the youths, youth leaders, policy makers and the gerontocrats.

The study recommends that youth should be included in meaningful political leadership in Zimbabwe. Intergenerational disparity between the youth and the elders lead to political contestation between the two generations. Instituting intergenerational relationships in political leadership allows both groups to learn about each other's differences and values. The youth in Zimbabwe should be viewed as a vital source of information which justifies the need for adults to give them space and opportunities to engage meaningfully in political leadership. Social bonding can support youth and aging adults through a variety of enjoyable activities that encourage and engage both groups. Instituting of a National Youth Parliament provides an opportunity for the youth to

contribute to the framing of national policy and addressing social issues through direct dialogue with parliamentarians.

To the policymakers, the study recommends provisions of the following solutions to the government of Zimbabwe: freedom of youth to participate in politics and development without restrictions, provision of leadership training and training in elections and governance processes, and availing resources and support for youth-led initiatives that are reaching out to young people. The promotion of the quota system and the amendment of the constitution to give equal opportunities to the young people. Re-evaluation of age limits of different portfolio holders to create opportunities for young people of both genders.

The other stakeholders are the youth leaders. The study further recommends that the government of Zimbabwe, through mentorship, should provide support to youth's participation in inclusive political processes and democratic practices. This can be achieved through providing skills for youth and building their capacities to participate actively in democratic practices. Such activities should include leadership trainings, training in elections and governance processes, promotion of young women's participation and presence in political offices and decision-making at all levels.

To the gerontocrats: Influenced by Marie, von Ebner-Eschenbach, German language writer who said, "In youth we learn: in age we understand." The gerontocrats ought to understand that the youth population in Zimbabwe is growing and before long enough they will assume political leadership positions. This is a challenge to government of Zimbabwe. Therefore, this study recommends that the current political leaders in Zimbabwe should initiate a political process of mentoring the youth within their ranks.

This will ensure that the next generations of leaders are adequately prepared for political space. Youth should be empowered through civic education and economic channels, they make political playfield even, adopt meritocracy and ensure gender equality in political leadership.

Moreover, the study recommends that governments of Zimbabwe should provide support to young people's inclusion in decision making arena. The youth of Zimbabwe should be given chances to engage in governance and participate in politics and decision-making processes. There is need for Zimbabwean government to increase support to youth ministries, youth policies and youth programs. Empowering and allowing youth opportunity to take part in decision making process benefits their development greatly in skills needed to be effective leaders.

Finally, the researcher suggests the following areas to be carried out:

- i. This study focused on the youth in Harare, Zimbabwe. A similar study could be conducted in other parts of the country other than Harare in Zimbabwe. the other research studies will serve as critique to the current study. The studies will be also to address the research knowledge gaps of the current study.
- ii. Other studies can also investigate the impact of gerontocratic political leadership on youth marginalization in other countries in Africa other than Zimbabwe. This will be useful to establish whether the youth in other countries in Africa are among the most marginalised populations in terms of occupying political office and having access to economic opportunities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Questionnaire

Dear Respondent, this questionnaire is designed to gather information on impact of gerontocracy political leadership on youth marginalization in Zimbabwe. The information given will be treated as confidential, and it is only meant for academic research. Kindly tick your responses against each question in the spaces provided.

Section I: General Information

1. Kindly indicate your gender
 - a) Male ☐
 - b) Female ☐
2. Kindly indicate your age bracket
 - a) Less than 25 years ☐
 - b) Between 26-35years ☐
 - c) Between 36-45years ☐
 - d) Above 46 years ☐
3. Kindly indicate your level of education
 - a) PhD ☐
 - b) Masters ☐
 - c) Graduate ☐
 - d) Diploma ☐
 - e) Certificate ☐

Section II: Generational consensus

1. Is generational consensus important in political leadership?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

c. I do not know ☐

If Yes, please give some of the importance of generational consensus

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2. In your opinion, do you think there is a conflict between generations in terms of political leadership?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

c. I do not know ☐

If yes, mention reasons that results to conflict between generations in political leadership

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3. Is generation gap a major social problem?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

c. Don't know ☐

If you say YES, explain

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4. Who do you believe suffers the most from a conflict between generations?
- a. The young []
 - b. The old []
 - c. Both generations []
 - d. Don't know. []
5. Which kind of political leadership do you prefer from the following?
- a. Gerontocracy (rule by the old) []
 - b. Juvenocracy (rule by young) []
 - c. Mixed (both young and old) []
 - d. Other (state)
6. Kindly, state some of the steps that can help to facilitate the intergenerational dialogue for democracy
-
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-
-
-

Section III: Youth Political Marginalization

7. Do you think there is youth political marginalization in political leadership in Zimbabwe?
- a. Yes []
 - b. No []
 - c. I do not know []
8. In your opinion, do you think both youth and old people are given equal opportunities in political leadership processes?
- a. Yes []
 - b. No []
 - c. I don't know []

If your answer is ‘No’, kindly explain the reasons for the generational disparity between the old and the young in political leadership processes

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9. In your opinion do you think that age factor has an impact when choosing political leaders?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I do not know

If ‘Yes’, explain what the type of impact

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10. Do you agree with the notion that the older one is, the wiser one becomes?

- a. I agree []
- b. I disagree []
- c. I do not know []

11. Of the political leaders in government you know, would you say the older ones have advantages over the young ones in terms of performance?

- a) Yes []
- b) No []

Explain your answer

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Section IV: Young people (youth) and political leadership

12. Do you think youth are well represented in the political leadership of party politics?

- a. Yes []
- b. No []
- c. I don’t know []

Kindly explain your view on question (12)

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13. Kindly, discuss some of the challenges that hinder youth from participating in political leadership?

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14. Do you think the youth are fairly represented in executive position (youth holding minister positions)?

a) Yes ☐

b) No ☐

If yes, please mention some of the ministries whose minister is a youth

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15. Are youth given a chance to participate during the formulations of youth policies?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

16. How would you rate youth participation in decision making processes?

a. Very high ☐

b. High ☐

c. Low ☐

d. Very low ☐

17. What ways/means do you think can be used to empower the youth to participate in political leadership processes?

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18. Kindly, rate the extent to which the existing policies on youth are being implemented

a. Partially implemented ☐

b. Fully implemented ☐

- c. Not implemented []
- d. I don't know []

19. If you are given a chance to contribute to the formulation of youth policies, what would you like to tell the policy-makers about your generation?

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.....

Section IV Style of Political leadership

20. Do you prefer the current political leadership in the country?

- a. Yes []
- b. No []

If Yes, please explain the kind of political leadership styles you prefer for you country

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21. In your opinion, does leadership style have impact on political participation?

- a. Yes []
- b. No []
- c. I do not know []

Please, explain your choice above

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Appendix II: Interview Guide

1. How do you explain the low representation of young people in political structures and governments in Zimbabwe?

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2. Are the youth marginalized in decision-making processes of political parties and governmental leadership?

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3. What is an enabling environment for young people's participation in political leadership?

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4. What can political parties, parliaments, governments, and civil society do to increase young women and men's (youth) representation in politics?

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5. What are some of the most innovative alternative methods (demonstrations, hashtags or stay-aways) to formal political participation that young people choose to bring about change and be heard?

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6. How can the policymakers support more young people who would be interested in channelling their activism through formal political institutions?

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7. What strategies and approaches have been successful in enabling young men and women in political parties and government in Zimbabwe?

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8. Are the youth marginalized in the political leadership and government posts? Explain

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9. Are the young MPs supported in their parliamentary career by their old parliamentarians?

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Why do you think the old leaders do not want to work or to be replaced by the young leaders?

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10. What are the main challenges that are faced by the youth as they try to participate in political leadership or in governmental leadership?

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11. How can we best measure youth political participation and policy influence?

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