Social Capital and Active Citizenship in Zimbabwean Youth: Changes from 2012 to 2017

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1. Executive Summary[1]

Social Capital has become a concept of growing interest in the past two decades. The presence of a high degree of social capital is argued to be one of the strong underpinnings of democracy, and the presence of varieties of civic and social associations is assumed to contribute to more active citizenship. In the West at least, there is increasing concern about the declining participation of citizens in elections, together with concern that citizens are also less interested in participating in social and civic networks and associations. This is interpreted as the effect of declining social capital.

Very little study of social capital has been carried in Zimbabwe, although it is implicit in the many and wide-ranging studies and discussions about the role of communities in Zimbabwean civic life. A previous examination of social capital as one aspect of active citizenship suggested that the component of social capital, trust, operated differently between rural and urban citizens (RAU. 2015). Trust was defined as either intimate, about relationships with other citizens, or institutional, about relationships between citizens and duty bearers.

Two more recent studies on the role of social capital in women suggested that the methodology could be usefully applied to the youth (RAU. 2018 (a); RAU. 2018 (b)). For these studies, a measure of social capital was constructed using six questions common to all three rounds of the Afrobarometer (2012, 2014, and 2017), and this was tested against seven measures of public interest and participation, as well as four demographic variables (age, residence, employment and education). These studies showed good relationships between social capital and measures of political interest and participation, but there were marked difference between rural and urban women. Social capital, as we defined this, is a property of rural rather than urban women. However, social capital is not a static property of individuals and communities and clearly varies both over time and due to socio-political events.

Thus, we used the same methodology to examine whether social capital operated in similar fashion with Zimbabwean youth.

Methods

The present study examined social capital in youth using the data from the last three rounds of the Afrobarometer surveys on Zimbabwe: Round 5 (2012), Round 6 (2014), and Round 7 (2017). A measure of social capital was constructed using six questions common to all three rounds, and tested this against six measures of public interest and participation, as well as four demographic variables (age, residence, employment and education). The measures of public interest and participation were also constructed from questions common to all three rounds: access to information, freedoms, political participation, agency, support for democracy, and political trust. A seventh measure, lived poverty, which was included in the women's studies, was excluded on the grounds that poverty was so ubiquitous in youth that it would be unlikely to have any discriminating power.

Findings

For the components of the Social Capital measures itself, most were at very low frequencies and showed few changes over the six years. The only significant change was in "trusting neighbours", which rose 12% from 2012 to 2014, staying the same from 2014 to 2017. There were minimal changes in the overall Social Capital index over the six years, which is not surprising in view of the minimal changes in the individual measures comprising Social Capital, and which is different to the women's study where there were significant changes over the same period.

When it comes to Access to Information, all sources of information, apart from the internet, show a decline in the use of these media. This may represent a shift towards social media, but

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the use of social media was only sampled in 2017 and hence no comparison can be made with the previous years. However, in 2017, 43% of the youth (18-35) reported using social media *every day* or a *few times a week*. However, it does not necessarily mean that the youth are using social media as part of an increased interest in participation.

When it comes to basic freedoms –*to say what you think* and *to join political organisations* – there is a marked shift towards the youth seeing their freedoms being eroded from 2014 to 2017. The most serious change is in the *freedom to say what you think*, 22%, and this perhaps must be seen in the rise in the use of social media as a safer medium of expression. It is also worth pointing out here the very low numbers of youth that are not careful what they say in public, all suggesting that youth voice is deeply absent from the public domain. *Voice* is, of course, a crucial component of citizen agency, and there can be little Social Capital when citizens are constrained from speaking in public.

It is thus unsurprising that *Political Participation* is low amongst the youth. Active political participation, as in *working for a candidate or party*, is virtually absent, and even *attending campaign meetings or rallies* significantly declined over the six years. This may be a consequence of the 2013 elections where the surprising result and the massive disenfranchisement of the youth for that election may combine to produce this lack of *political participation*. Nearly 2 million (29%) persons were not registered voters in 2013 and there was good evidence of bias in registration, with urban youth being more seriously affected than their rural counterparts.

Given this minimal (and declining) Political Participation, it is surprising that there is a trend amongst the youth towards increased agency, and especially *contacting local government councillors*. This is encouraging and perhaps underlines a response to "big politics". Are the youth giving up on political parties in favour of more local politics?

The evidence for increased *Agency* is bolstered by the findings on *Political Trust.* The youth report increasng levels of Political Trust for virtually every state agent included in the surveys. the trend is positive and significant for every agent – President, parliament, ZEC, the ruling party (ZANU-PF) and the courts. However, this is not the case for both the police and the army, where the youth show significantly declining trust in both. This needs to be considered in the light of the claims of support for the military in November 2017.

Perhaps it is the inevitable optimism of youth, butsome Zimbabwean youth show a trend towards believing that things are improving. From 2012 to 2017, a third of the youth show increasing support for democracy and that Zimbabwe is a democracy. However, two-thirds do not share this view, which indicates a growing pessimism about the country and its future.

Conclusions

A number of general conclusions can be drawn from this analysis.

- Firstly, as we have measured this, Social Capital is very low amongst the youth in Zimbabwe, and this has changed very little over the six years between 2012 and 2017;
- Youth access to the more formal sources of information – radio, television and newspaper – is declining, but they making more use of the internet (slightly) and social media (markedly). This is a general trend in the population however, and, on its own does not mean much;

- When the resort to IT-based sources of information is seen against the perception of freedom by the youth, then this may be more significant. Very few youth feel safe to express their views in public – only 8% in 2017 – and only a third (33%) feel that they have *freedom to say what they think*. It seems clear that *Voice* as a constituent of *Agency* is missing from the youth;

- This is amplified when *Political Participation* amongst the youth is examined, and Zimbabwean youth show a trend to decreasing participation, and a virtual absence of active political engagement in the formal sense. Zimbabwean youth can be characterised as "voters, but not yet citizens";

- This pessimistic view is ameliorated by the evidence that there is a trend towards increased agency in the sense of engaging duty bearers. The numbers are not large, but suggest that the involvement of youth in local government and community may be a more fruitful area to consider when fostering youth agency;

- *Political Trust* is increasing in respect of many state agencies, but not so for the police and the army. The diminution in respect for these agencies is important, and especially in the light of all the concerns about "youth bulges" and political stability. The reasons for this shift need to be understood, and questions also raised about how "popular" was the support for the army in November 2017;

- Finally, Zimbabwean youth, like the general population, are losing faith in democracy. Although small numbers are increasingly happy with the direction the country is taking, more than two-thirds are not.

2. Background[2]

One of the major areas of concern about youth worldwide has been the increasing preoccupation with the changes in demography, mostly in the under-developed world, the so-called "youth bulge". The relevance for any consideration of youth and citizenship is the evidence for the alienation of youth and their subsequent involvement in violence and crime. Urdal (2004) pointed out that, contrary to Huntington, there was no evidence for a critical threshold in youth demography above which youth violence was inevitable, but that youth bulges did increase the risk of domestic armed conflict, particularly when associated with economic stagnation. Subsequent work confirmed this finding (Urdal.2006; Cincotta.2008; Leahy. 2008). There is dispute, however, over causal relationships behind political violence and state instability. Some, as above, have argued that youth bulges are an important factor, whilst others have argued that "greed" not "grievance" is a better explanatory factor (Collier &Hoeffler. 1995). Still others refute the "greed" hypothesis, arguing that regime characteristics are the most important predictors of instability and political violence and argue little influence for either youth bulges, greed or grievance (Goldstone et al. 2005).

With this problematic for many under-developed countries and especially those where economic decline is taking place, the matter of turning the youth into good citizens is crucial (Hungwe.2013). Zimbabwe, like most of Africa, would seem to be one of these countries: youth (under 35 years) comprise 69.8% of the total population, and 74% of the unemployed according the most recent census (Zimstat.2012). The latter figure is probably higher in 2018 with the economy steadily collapsing since July 2013. There has already been evidence of youth involvement in political violence (Dzimiri. 2014), but this seems focused mainly on violence occasioned by elections and fostered by political parties. There is also evidence of formal induction into violence by the government in the training offered by the National Youth Training scheme (SPT. 2003) in the past, but also evidence that Zimbabwean youth seek to avoid involvement in political violence and employ a range of strategies to avoid this (Osteroom & Pswarayi. 2014).

Older work with youth indicated that Zimbabwean youth had very clear views about democracy and governance, and views consonant with a desire for active voice and participation in the socio-political life of the country (Reeler & Chitsike.2004). In this study it is asserted, at the risk of over-simplifying the current crisis, that two bi-polar constructs – *rural* versus *urban*, and *African* versus *Western* - characterise the political problem in Zimbabwe, and implicate the important position of the youth caught in the polarised space between the two major political parties in Zimbabwe. It is submitted that little has changed in respect of this problem since 2004.

The first construct is that of *rural* versus *urban*, and here the politics of land and indigenisation, harnessed to the rhetoric of the (unfinished) Liberation War are crucial. For ZANU-PF, the rural pole of this construct is critical, and the party defines its roots in the rural support given during the Liberation War and maintained this during three decades of independence (Bratton. 2015; Bratton & Masunungure.2012). The adherence to one pole of the construct – *rural* - is also exemplified by the strong electoral support given to ZANU PF by rural voters. The notion that ZANU PF has a social base sufficient to explain the remarkable majority in 2013 is the basis of some dispute (SPT.2013; RAU. 2014(a)), and much has been written on the manner in which this support has been obtained.

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[2] This report was written by Tony Reeler, Senior Researcher.

For the MDC formation[3], the urban pole has been crucial, deriving from its (formerly) strong trade union roots and an economically disaffected working class, but, in 2008, saw a growing proportion of rural constituencies beginning to support the party. To a large extent, the MDC has derived its support from a more educated group, such as the students for example, and a significant number of the MDC's formation leaders are drawn from the student leaders and activists of the 1990s (Hodgkinson. 2013). The student leaders, for example, are palpably urban, dismissive of the thrall of the Liberation War, and actively seeking to re-interpret what it means to be Zimbabwean.

The second construct is that of *African* versus *Western*, and again many of the above issues are relevant here. This again revolves around a re-invigoration of the Liberation War agenda, and a crucial part of the propaganda of the Mugabe regime has been the refusal of the West, and Britain in particular, to honour their commitments at Independence, especially in respect of land reform. The Zimbabwean opposition is cast as a stooge of Western neo-imperialism, deriving their local support from White Zimbabweans and other non-patriotic Blacks. This has been a very effective stratagem, seemingly bringing support from SADC and The AU, and also a range of left academics (Mamdani. 2008), but also drawing equal criticism from the same constituency (Jacobs & Mundy. 2009).

Both the above constructs apply to the youth, as pointed out earlier, and there seems to be a polarisation in the youth between the educated, urban, supporters of the MDC formation and the less educated, rural supporters of ZANU PF. This is a trifle over-simplified, but this simple model is helpful in trying to understand the attitudes of the youth in Zimbabwe.

This model is corroborated by the findings of the Afrobarometer surveys since 1999, all seven rounds. But youth, as pointed out above, are also mindful of the risks, even to their voices: since the beginning of the crisis in 2000, youth are careful about what they say in public. Furthermore, it is also that participation by youth has been seriously affected, and this trend towards caution is greater for women, and particularly young women. The youth, both male and female, are increasingly avoiding participation, mainly because the costs are so high. As recent Zimbabwean research shows, and especially around elections, the youth have very clear strategies for avoiding political violence, either as perpetrators or victims (Osteroom& Pswarayi.2014): they migrate away from the area in which they are known, join organisations (such as churches) in which non-political behaviour is protected, or, in the worst case, join the perpetrators and hope that they will be able to avoid the worst excesses. This is very much the strategy adopted in many other countries (Barter.2012).

So, whilst elections are times of risk and danger for youth, does this mean that they do not participate politically? According to the Afrobarometer poll in 2014, youth [under 35 years] were less likely to vote than the older groups: only 30% of the 18-25 age group felt completely free to choose who to vote for without feeling pressured as opposed to 44% of the over 56 year age group. This after the 2013 poll, where reliable estimates indicated that nearly two million Zimbabweans under 30 years were not registered voters, which was approximately 29% of the total adult population (6,647,779) of Zimbabwe (RAU.2013). This is supported by the Round 6 (2014) survey where only 24% of the youth aged between 18 and 25 years reported voting in 2013. In comparison, 64% of the 26 to 35 age group and 84% of the over 56 year age group voted.

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[3] The original Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) has since transformed and morphed into various MDCs due to internal infractions, hence MDC formation. MDCs became known as MDC formation during the negotiations with ZANU PF which resulted in Global Political Agreement of 2009. However, their political base remained essentially urban, bourgeoisie and educated elite.

According to the Afrobarometer data for 2014, the youth were less likely to state that they were close to a political party (51%) than the over 56 age group (71%), and that they were less likely to go to a political rally (19%) than the over 56 age group (59%).Much of this reluctance can be seen as the effect of the violent nature of Zimbabwean politics, and certainly, according to the Afrobarometer in 2017, the youth fear political violence. In answer to the question, during election campaigns in this country, how much do you personally fear becoming a victim of political intimidation or violence, 56% of those under 25 reported in the affirmative as opposed to only 40% of those over 56. This is not universally true for all youth, as small numbers relatively, speaking, have become actively involved in politics (Wilkins.2013), and few become involved in political violence (Dzimiri. 2014). One estimate, based on a national survey, suggests that the actual number of youth involved in political violence is only of the order of between 1-3% (ActionAid.2013). However, it is clear that the rhetoric about "youth violence" was extreme, even though the actual data suggested that many groups other than "youth militia" and "ZANU-PF Youth" were involved in political violence, Furthermore, the class of perpetrators termed "ZANU-PF" is not necessarily synonymous with young persons.

However, the youth generally are less engaged in other areas: they are less likely than those over 35 try to persuade someone to support the party that they themselves support, or approach a local councillor or an MP on some matter. The youth under 30 years are also less likely to participate in many other areas of socio-political life. Significant differences were less interest in public affairs, being a member of a community group, attending a community meeting, and being more likely to state that politics was too complicated for them. When the youth group was disaggregated, a number of differences emerged between young men and women. Young women were less interested in public affairs, less likely to discuss politics, try to persuade someone to support a political party, or to approach a local councillor.

What is also important to note in Zimbabwe, and related to the issues about youth bulges, is the very high rates of unemployment amongst the youth, estimated at 73% in one study (ActionAid.2013). There are some issues to be drawn here with the results of the 2012 Census, where it was claimed that, of the economically active population, 89% were employed, but it this is based on some very broad concepts of what is meant by "employment". As can be seen from the Census data, very high percentages of the youth, in all three age bands, report being either an unpaid family worker, or being unemployed or looking for work: in fact, half of the group in the first two age band reports being in one or other of these categories, but a shift takes place in the older age band (25-29).

It is also of great interest that young women are more frequently in a category of employment – paid employee, employer, or own account worker – than young men: young women outnumber young men in employment in the 15-19 age band (16.3% v. 9.6%), and in the 20-24 age band (34.2% v. 28.5%), but this changes for the 25-29 age band (47.1% v.54.7%).

The most plausible explanation here is that poverty results in young women being forced out of school earlier than young men and forced into work of one kind or another. There is some corroborating evidence for this view from a number of studies on child marriages (RAU.2014 (b)).

What seems to be emerging from this data are the dual effects of culture: youth is not much respected in traditional culture, and since the discrimination against the youth is doubly debilitating - neither the voice nor participation of youth is valued strongly - it becomes unsurprising that the youth evince little interest in political life, whether national or local.

Thus, it becomes important to understand youth from within their perspective, and here there is a paucity of research. Some African research suggests that this disengagement from active citizenship is not peculiar to Zimbabwe, but is a continent-wide phenomenon (Bratton &Logan.2006). However, it is also evident that the youth may be finding different routes to participation, and here social media, cultural activities and other forms of engagement would seem to require deeper understanding. For example, the ActionAid survey demonstrated very high potential use of social media, with 73% of the youth reporting using a cell phone daily, and 26% using the internet to access information (ActionAid. 2013). Other studies show that the youth are finding ways to challenge the constricting environment through the use of songs, poetry, and other forms of contemporary culture (Mate.2012).

However, what are missing are in-depth, qualitative studies of the youth perspective on active citizenship and social capital from an emic standpoint. There can be no better view than the insider's (emic) view of culture if we are to understand the potential problems that may result from Zimbabwe's youth bulge. For example, nowhere is there to be found a study of one of the most obvious issues around youth: given the massive unemployment, and no matter what the Census purports to be the case, is there any study outlining what all these hundreds and thousands of young people do every day of their lives, but 73% are talking on cell phones and using social media. What are they talking about? And what are they participating in? And how are they financing their lives?

Whilst there is no commonly agreed definition of Social Capital, there is a core meaning: "*features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit*" (Putnam. 1995) Elsewhere, we have discussed this concept in relation to youth and women in greater detail and the problems with the concept (Reeler. 2015). In order to get a better understanding of Zimbabwean youth, we approach the problem from the standpoint of Social Capital, employing a methodology previously used in studying Zimbabwean women

3. Methods

For this study, we used the data from three rounds of the Afrobarometer surveys Round 5 (2012), Round 6 (2014), and Round 7 (2017). Disaggregating women, we ended with a total sample of XXX youth for the three rounds. The detailed methods are described in another report. Here we are reporting only on the changes that took place over these three Rounds.
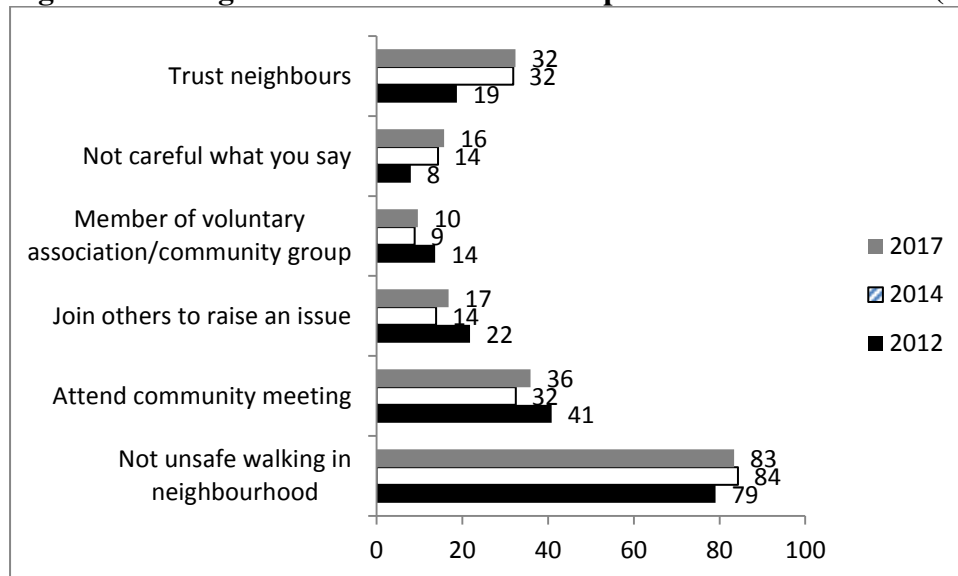
Briefly, and derived from the literature, we first constructed a measure of Social Capital from six questions that were asked in all three Rounds, and also six measures of forms of participation. Each of the latter was composed of several questions themselves.

Measure of Social Capital	Measures of Participation
1. How often felt unsafe walking in neighbourhood; 2. Attend a community meeting; 3. Join others to raise an issue; 4. Member of voluntary association or community group; 5. How often not careful what you say; 6. Like, dislike or not care as neighbours: people of different ethnicity.	1. Access to information (4); 2. Freedoms (2)*;* 3. Political Participation (3)*;* 4. Agency (3)*;* 5. Support for Democracy(2)*;* 6. Political Trust (8).

The number for each measure indicates the number of questions from the Afrobarometer that was used to construct the measure. A more complex analysis was carried out, based around a number of testable hypotheses, and described in another report (RAU & MPOI. 2017(a)). Here, we merely report on the quantitative findings over the five years.
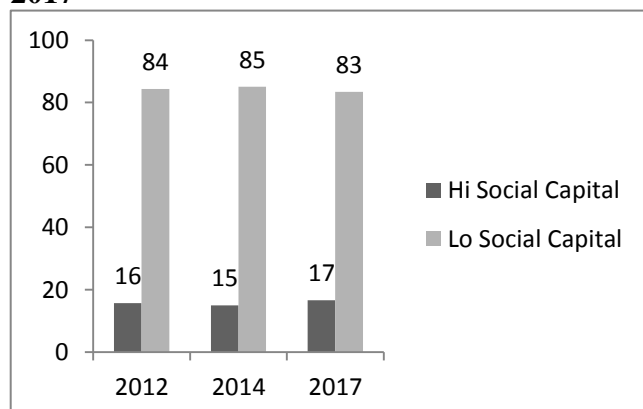
4. Results

Figure 1: Changes in measures of Social Capital over three Rounds (2012, 2014 & 2017)

It is evident that there are minimal changes in any of the measures comprising Social Capital over the six years, and furthermore very small numbers of youth evince signs of Social Capital apart from feeling *trusting neighbours* There is no obvious reason for this, and the two questions employed in 2014 and 2017 were identical: the 2012 question was slightly different, but there was no difference in the response rates from the youth. There are small trends for greater participation from 2014 to 2017 in *belonging to community groups or voluntary associations*, *joining others to raise an issue*, and *attending community meetings*, but these are offset by trends in the opposite direction.

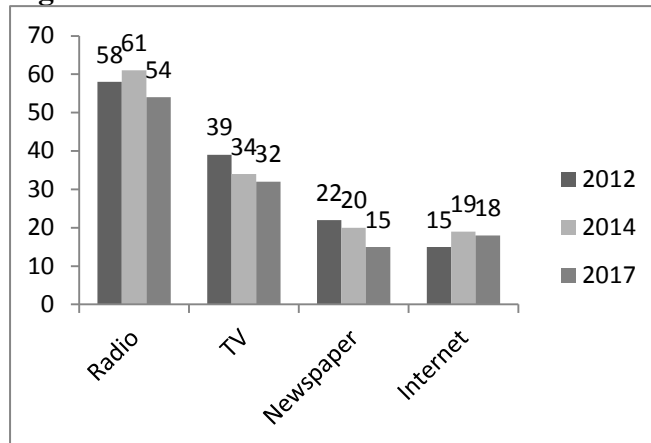**Figure 2: Changes in Social Capital, 2012 to 2017**

As can be seen in Figure 2, there are minimal changes over the six years, which is different to the women's study where there were significant changes over the same period. However, the trend is similar, with a drop from 2012 to 2014, and then an increase from 2014 to 2017. The changes are so slight that they can be ignored.

Thus, Social Capital, as we have measured this, has not changed in any major way over the six years, and the percentage of youth can that are defined as having high levels of Social Capital is very small. This bolsters the Afrobarometer findings reported earlier.

We then examined the changes in the various variables that we argue are measures of participation.
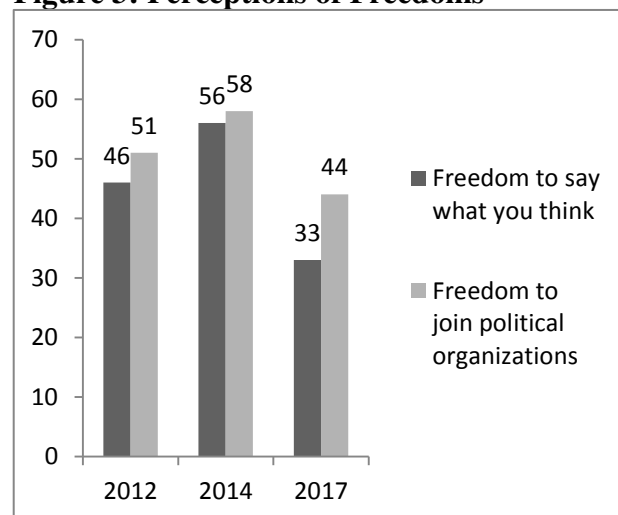
Figure 2: Access to Information

When it comes to Access to Information, it can be seen from Figure 2 that for all sources of information, part from the internet, there is a decline in the use of these media. This may represent a shift towards social media, but the use of social media was only sampled in 2017 and hence no comparison can be made with the previous years. However, in 2017, 43% of the youth (18-35) reported using social media *every day* or a *few times a week*.

This marked increase in the use of social media is of course not confined to the youth, but is a nation-wide process. However, it does not necessarily mean that the youth are using social media as part of an increased interest in participation as is seen below in Figure 4.

When it comes to basic freedoms –*to say what you think* and *to join political organisations* – there is a marked shift towards the youth seeing their freedoms being eroded from 2014 to 2017. There was significant positive shift from 2012 to 2013, presumably built on the gains of the GPA and the Inclusive Government, but this seems to have disappeared after the 2013 elections and the sustained decline in the economy. The most serious change is in the *freedom to say what you think*, 22 percentage points, and this perhaps must be seen in the rise in the use of social media as a safer medium of expression.
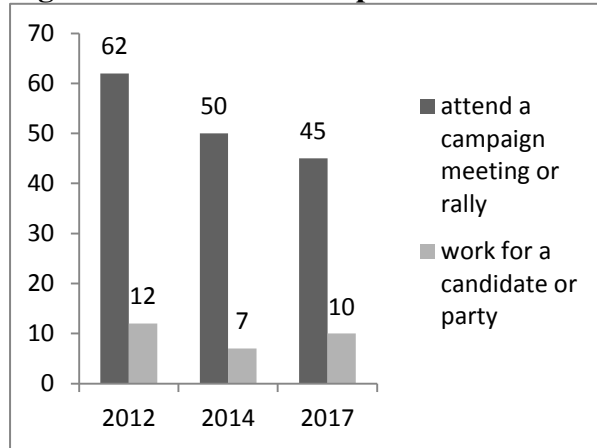
Figure 3: Perceptions of Freedoms

It is also worth pointing out here the very low numbers of youth that are not careful what they say in public (see Figure 1), all suggesting that youth voice is deeply absent from the public domain.

Voice is, of course, a crucial component of citizen agency, and there can be little Social Capital when citizens are constrained from speaking in public. This would logically be accompanied by little *Participation*, and, as seen in Figure 4 (over), this is in fact the case for Zimbabwean youth.
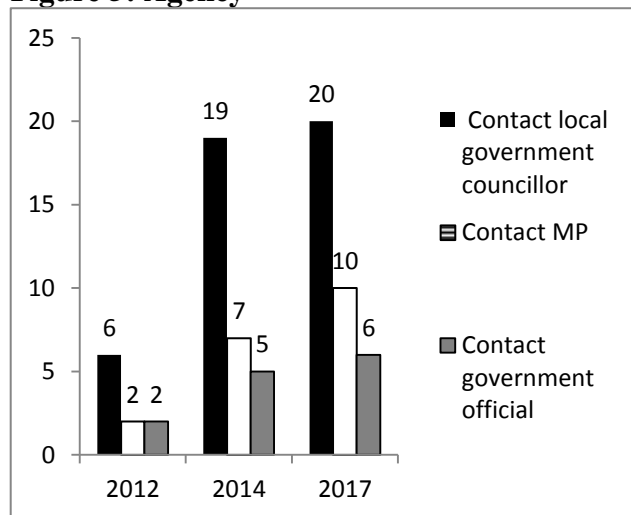
Figure 4: Political Participation

Given the previous findings on voice, it is thus unsurprising that *Political Participation* is low amongst the youth. Active political participation, as in *working for a candidate or party*, is virtually absent, and even *attending campaign meetings or rallies* significantly declined over the six years. This latter declined by 12% from 2012 to 2014, and then again by 5% from 2014 to 2017. Overall, this is a decline of 17%, and this may be the consequence of the 2013 elections.

The suggestion that the 2013 elections had a deleterious effect upon youth participation is derived partly from the surprising result as well as the evidence of the massive disenfranchisement of the youth for that election. As pointed out earlier, nearly 2 million (29%) persons were not registered voters and there was good evidence of bias in registration, with urban youth being more seriously affected than their rural counterparts (RAU. 2013).

Figure 5: Agency

Given this minimal (and declining) Political Participation, it is surprising that there is a trend amongst the youth towards increased agency, and especially *contacting local government councillors*. This is encouraging and perhaps underlines a response to "big politics". Are the youth giving up on political parties in favour of more local politics, and, if so, may this be a spur for implementing the devolution clauses in the 2013 Constitution? Certainly, the local action offers much greater possibilities for developing agency and fostering Social Capital.
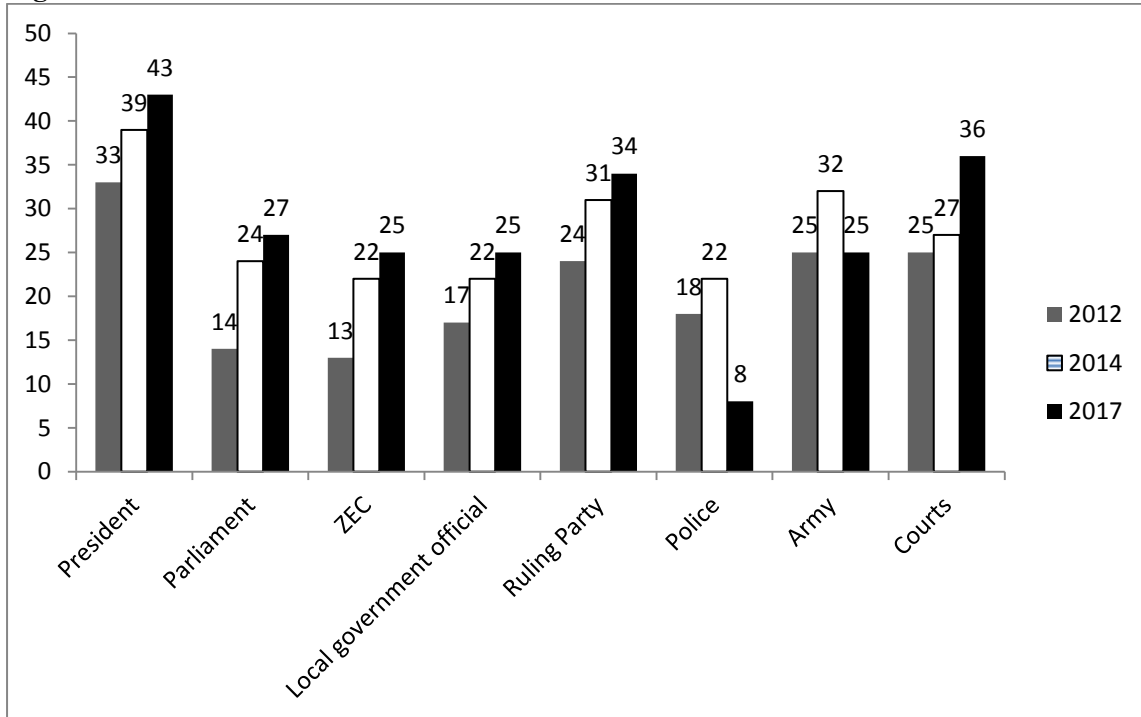

The evidence for increased *Agency* is bolstered by the findings on *Political Trust* (Figure 6 over). The youth report increasng levels of Political Trust for virtually every state agent included in the surveys. the trend is positive and significant for every agent – President, parliament, ZEC, the ruling party (ZANU-PF) and the courts. However, this is not the case
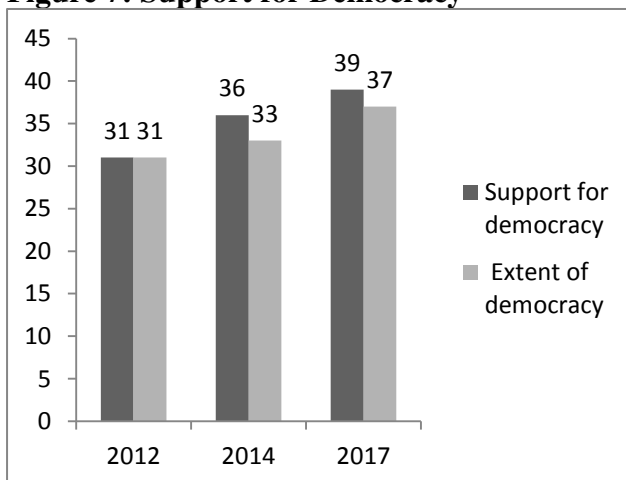
for both the police and the army. There is a increase in trust for both between 2012 and 2014, which then reverses from 2014 to 2017, markedly so for the police (14%)and significantly so for the army (7%). For the latter, this needs to be considered in the light of the claims of support for the military in November 2017.

Figure 6: Political Trust

Finally, there is the question about what the youth feel about Zimbabwe as a whole, and its status as a democracy.

Figure 7: Support for Democracy

Perhaps it is the inevitable optimism of youth, but, as seen in Figure 7, some Zimbabwean youth show a trend towards believing that things are improving. From 2012 to 2017, a third of the youth show increasing support for democracy and that Zimbabwe is a democracy. However, two-thirds do not share this view, which indicates a growing pessimism about the country and its future.

5. Conclusions

A number of general conclusions can be drawn from this analysis.

- Firstly, as we have measured this, Social Capital is very low amongst the youth in Zimbabwe, and this has changed very little over the six years between 2012 and 2017;
- Youth access to the more formal sources of information – radio, television and newspaper – is declining, but they making more use of the internet (slightly) and social media (markedly). This is a general trend in the population however, and, on its own does not mean much;
- When the resort to IT-based sources of information is seen against the perception of freedom by the youth, then this may be more significant. Very few youth feel safe to express their views in public – only 8% in 2017 – and only a third (33%) feel that they have *freedom to say what they think*. It seems clear that *Voice* as a constituent of *Agency* is missing from the youth;
- This is amplified when *Political Participation* amongst the youth is examined, and Zimbabwean youth show a trend to decreasing participation, and a virtual absence of active political engagement in the formal sense. Zimbabwean youth can be characterised as "voters, but not yet citizens";
- This pessimistic view is ameliorated by the evidence that there is a trend towards increased agency in the sense of engaging duty bearers. The numbers are not large, but suggest that the involvement of youth in local government and community may be a more fruitful area to consider when fostering youth agency;
- *Political Trust* is increasing in respect of many state agencies, but not so for the police and the army. The diminution in respect for these agencies is important, and especially in the light of all the concerns about "youth bulges" and political stability. The reasons for this shift need to be understood, and questions also raised about how "popular" was the support for the army in November 2017;
- Finally, Zimbabwean youth, like the general population, are losing faith in democracy. Although small numbers are increasingly happy with the direction the country is taking, more than two-thirds are not.

We began this report raising the spectre of "youth bulges". The evidence here does not suggest that Zimbabwean youth are likely to create the kinds of disturbances seen in other parts of the world, as in the North African "revolutions", but neither does it suggest that they are content. While the economy continues to decline, informal employment the only route to a livelihood, and an increasing disinterest in formal politics, these remain conditions for unrest, and even the youth of Zimbabwe may pass over the threshold of passivity. There have been signs that this is so in 2016 and 2017 with a more assertive civil society involving the youth, and the indications that large numbers of the youth have registered to vote in 2018 may suggest greater interest by the youth in "big politics".

There are two caveats here. Elections are not of themselves solutions to the massive problems faced by the youth: they are only an indication of the faith that youth might have in who might solve their problems. The big questions for the youth will only be answered in the policies that the winning party will implement. Furthermore, there is urgency for addressing the problems faced by youth, and this will be much slower than most believe: creating the number of jobs urgently needed by the youth will be a considerable challenge, and the issue around the possible impact of the Zimbabwean "youth bulge" will be whether the peacefulness so characteristic of Zimbabwean youth will sustain. Are Zimbabwean youth

merely "risk averse" (Masunungure et al. 2016), or are they "anomic", and will "anomie" lead to violence and instability (Mususa. 2017).

Finally, this study has treated youth as a homogenous group, which it clearly is not, and the rural factor has not been disentangled. As pointed out in the introduction, there are good grounds for dichotomising youth into rural versus urban, as well as African versus Western, and this is examined in a separate report.

6. References

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