

Chapter 12

Rural Urban Youth Delinquency in Zimbabwe, the Nexus: Youth Delinquency

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ABSTRACT

Zimbabwe's urban areas have been experiencing an alarming increase in violence and crime compared to the rural areas. This study explored the motivation for youth violence and crime in both rural and urban areas. Qualitatively, it compares youth-inflicted violence in the rural, Chikomba and Guruve against the urban areas, Seke urban, and Borrowdale, between 2000 and 2016. Eighty participants were drawn from a cross-section of the population. Theoretical underpinnings of the argument are derived from implicit theories held by the generality of Zimbabweans with regards to rural and urban youth. Data were collected from literature spanning from 1980-2016. Latent content analysis was employed to analyze data. The study established that while there is crime and violence in the two settings, the gravity and nature varies according to influences like poverty levels, level and rate of development, literacy levels, and motivating incentives from the third parties among others.

INTRODUCTION

Some Zimbabwean communities are worried about problems of both assaultive violence and other light and non-fatal delinquency and a general decline in morality, especially amongst the youth. What is clear is the existence of violence at the instigation of the youth in both rural and urban settings. The youth in the rural areas are to some extent bound and directed by social relations and cultural practices while in the urban, modernity and inter-cultural fusion have eroded social discipline. Similarly, abundance and accessibility to drugs in the urban areas have to some extent transformed the conduct of the youth in the urban areas unlike those in the rural areas. This comparative analysis of rural-urban youth-inflicted

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violence and indiscipline is presented in a conflict domain but heavily borrowing from psychology and sociology fields where conflict studies originated. Therefore, there is a great deal of variation of concepts and theories in an endeavor to clearly interrogate and discuss the subject matter. The study basically endeavors to examine the behaviours and violence by the youth in the two settings and to some extent, explore the major drivers of same.

BACKGROUND

It is against general implicit theories held by Zimbabweans that; youth in the rural areas are docile, naïve but respectful while those in the urban areas are clever, modern but immoral; that youth in the low density areas are peaceful, educated but hard drug addicts while those in high density areas are backward, thuggish and violent that this study was conducted. There has been a general realisation that while incidences of violence have been on an upward trend in most parts of Zimbabwe, there has not been enough empirical studies to elaborately explain both latent and visible causes and nurturing factors behind.

Since the period under study in 2000, apparently the era of the manifestation of a lively opposition political movement and the launch of the Land Reform Programme, Zimbabwe's economy has shrunk to record levels suffocating with it employment levels, social service delivery and investment opportunities. These results have affected almost every part of the country thereby forcing millions of Zimbabweans cross the borders for greener pastures. Resultantly, a sizeable number of the skilled, productive and educated Zimbabweans withdrew their services from sustaining and developing the local economy thereby creating more poverty and opening more opportunities for conflicts and violence.

It is usually ahead of major political events that Zimbabwean youth engage in bloody violence. In between, most of the recorded cases of violence emanate from minor criminal activities and abuse of drugs and alcohol. However, what has been of concern regarding youth violence is the variation between rural and urban youth-induced violence and the intra-urban youth-induced violence. From the previous studies, Reeler (2003), Dodo and Msorowegomo (2012) and RAU (2012), it is given that there were more cases of violence in urban areas than rural during the period under review while there were also more cases in the high density than in the low density during the same period. In year 2002, 2008 and 2013, studies by Reeler (2003), ZPP (2008), Dodo and Msorowegomo (2012) RAU (2012) and Zimstats (2015) show the following statistics for the interval analysis presented in tables below. Note that these statistics were taken from the recorded cases with various institutions in respective areas following the politicisation and weakening of the Police service. Therefore, there may be other unreported cases not considered in this study.

Table 1 shows that in year 2002, there were an average 1579 and 949 recorded cases of violence in Guruve and Chikomba districts giving a total of 2 528 while in the urban Seke and Borrowdale, there were 4 515 and 302 cases totaling 4817. This shows that Guruve had more activities than Chikomba while Seke also had more activities than Borrowdale. Overall, urban areas recorded more cases of violence than rural.

This figure shows that there were more recorded cases of violence in the urban and in particular in Seke than there were in the rural areas. The trend in statistics remains constant with Guruve recording the highest cases on the rural side while Seke has more on the urban side. These figures could be an

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