



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

RESEARCH TOPIC: ISSUES IN YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: THE CASE OF BOTSWANA

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DEDICATION

This research essay is dedicated to my late father Gopolang Seitshiro who always inspired me to aim high. Your constant encouragement is what kept me going.

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ABSTRACT

There has been an increasing interest of late in scholarship on young people's active participation in civic duties such as volunteerism, taking part in the democracy process or being members of civil organisations. Youth civic engagement is an emerging area of practice and knowledge with an interest to place young people at the forefront of national development. This study then focuses on civic engagement especially youth civic engagement in Botswana. It provides an overview of the situation in youth civic engagement in Botswana. Findings suggest that young Batswana do take part in civic duties although they often come across challenges on their efforts to become active citizens. Study concludes with recommendations for improving youth civic engagement.

Keywords: civic engagement, youth civic engagement, citizenship, civil society, youth empowerment

CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION TO YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Civic relates to the domain of collective action which is outside the private affairs of citizen and their families. Engagement on the other hand stresses action or the readiness to act (Lauglo & Oia, 2006). According to Flanagan (1998) civic engagement has its roots in community organising, it occurs through both political and non-political processes. It is concerned with collective action that express interest in order to influence or carry out some sort of change. Civic engagement is people working together to make a difference in the civil life of their communities and developing the combination of skills, knowledge, values, and motivation in order to make that difference (Fullinwider, 1999). Examples of civic engagement activities include electoral engagement, participation in civic associations, activism for policy or social change or the ways in which community members share efforts to take action to achieve change (Theiss-Morse & Hibbing, 2004).

According to Balsano (2005) people derive great benefits from their membership in a stable, prosperous and free society that is why every citizen has a responsibility to contribute his or her fair share to sustaining the public institutions and processes on which all depend. Civic engagement has then become more necessary for the development of countries. There has been a global concern with the collapse of community citizenship, where citizens no longer have trust in their society and have taken the decision not to participate in the public sphere (Fullinwider, 1999). People have withdrawn from the public life into the private life which has led to the crumbling of community identity, and loss or erosion of social capital (Sherrod, 2010). The loss of social capital in this sense is when people are no longer getting the expected collective benefits derived from the cooperation between individuals and group. Citizens are finding it hard to see the benefits of having to cooperate among themselves as community members, they would rather concentrate on their own private world (Balsano, 2005). Signs of this loss of interest in civic engagement can be seen in the unstable voting patterns, increase in anti social behaviour and a withdrawal into the private world among others (Putnam, 2000).

Even though there may be well established structures in most African countries to enhance and generate interest in civic engagement between citizens and governments in the formulation and implementation of policies, it is usually a few who can make use of these

structures (Perold, 2006). The youth have been found to be the ones lacking the ability or resources to organise themselves and as such are usually left out. Young people have been the subjects of an enormous amount of research over the years since they constitute a significant category of the world population. Some of this research is on the challenges facing governments and policy makers in providing opportunities for every young person so that they can have decent lives and contribute to the economic development of their countries. While regional protocols and agreements encourage civic engagement activities among young people these activities are increasingly constrained by government legislation thereby giving citizens challenges in their efforts to engage in the civic sphere (Resnick & Casale, 2011).

1.1 BACKGROUND

The role of young people as a political and social force has just been realised recently. At first, young people were regarded as not mature to understand what was happening in their social and political world (Gyimah-Brempong & Kimenyi, 2013). In Botswana the government formulated the 1996 Youth Policy as an initiative to involve the youth in the development of their communities. The government had realised that its service provision has resulted in citizens being dependent on the government for most things. The state led development by the government of Botswana has arguably created a dependency syndrome and a lack of initiative by citizens. This is evident by the over reliance of youth on government to provide economic resources and social services such as the poverty eradication programmes which are being given out to unemployed youth (Donald, 1992).

According to Best (2007) it is only recently that it has been realised that youth can play a major role in the development of their communities. For example, in America the period of the 1960s was highlighted by demonstrations by the youth to show their opposition to the Vietnam war. Their struggle against racial inequality in the United States of America were high points which showed youth civic assertiveness and that they were concerned about what was happening in their society and took a stand to bring about positive change. This instils some motivation for citizens enter into public affairs for reasons such as to extend their own right and to protect their own interests (Ginwright et al, 2006).

According to Ntsabane & Ntau (2000) civic engagement in Botswana has mostly been correlated to voting patterns. Machacha (2014) states that the 2002 Democratic Research

Project, correlates voter apathy and low political participation in Botswana to factors such as weak civil society, weak opposition, unorganised electoral system, splits of opposition parties, and low youth participation to name a few. This has caused steady declining voting trends with the highest participation of 58 percent in 1965 and lowest of 30.9 percent in 1974 showing an average of 45 percent which constitutes less than half the potential voters. Many youth in Botswana are still trying to find their footing when it comes to youth civic engagement due to a number of challenges such as lack of civic education and government regulations to name a few (Mpabanga, 2000).

Volunteering and service provision in Botswana has also been seen as a form of active citizen participation, with the government of Botswana calling for involvement of communities in service provision. However according to Rankopo et al (2007) service provision by government has resulted in citizens including the youth not willing to volunteer. In 1996 the government of Botswana passed the first National Youth Policy with the objective of ensuring that the youth were given every opportunity to reach their full potential both as individuals and as active citizens of Botswana (Ministry of Youth Sports and Culture, 2010). In 2010 the policy was revised to include emerging new issues in youth development such as information, science and technology, environmental conservation and protection, moral and spiritual development and the promotion of leadership in youth.

1.1.1 Youth

The definition of youth varies with circumstances especially with the changes in demographic, financial, economic and socio-cultural setting. Silbereisen & Lerner (2007) go on to say that various factors influence the age definition of the youth in Africa. These include the age at which education is completed, as many young people complete their education much later in their lives. According to McBride et al (2004) other factors that are pertinent in Africa are the age of family formation, rising unemployment and the economic costs of achieving adult status. It varies from country to country even though some countries might adopt a universal definition that is used by international organisations such as the United Nations. The United Nations Secretariat for statistical purposes uses the term youth and young people interchangeably to refer to individuals aged 15-24 with the understanding that member states and other entities may use different definitions (United Nations, 2008).

It is worth noting that apart from the UN Secretariat definition, the term youth varies in different societies around the world, several UN entities, instruments and regional organisations have somewhat different definitions of youth which the UN Secretariat recognises. The UN Habitat (Youth Fund) define youth as individuals ages 15-32 and UNICEF recognises an individual as being a child until they turn 18 (United Nations, 2008). The African Youth Charter on the other hand defines youth as individuals aged 15-35 (African Union, 2006). As outlined in the Botswana Revised 2010 Youth Policy youth also refers to those individuals aged 15-35. The youth policy recognises this age group as one where critical decisions of life are taken. This is the definition adopted for this study.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Botswana is no exception when it comes to issues of youth involvement in civic duties. The youth of Botswana is affected by this social phenomenon even though little information has been generated on the topic in the country. A youth was cited in the Mmegi online edition as saying, “I have never voted, I loathe politicians, here we have politics of the stomach, everyone is concerned about enriching themselves through political positions. So why should I care?” Reneilwe Kemoeng cited in (Mmegi online, 29th Novemeber,2012). In the same article the National Speaker of Parliament Dr Margaret Nasha was also cited declaring voter apathy among the youth and citing it as a threat to democracy.

According to the Independent Electoral Committee report of the 1999 general elections 28% of the youth who were eligible to vote voted, and 7% of those who registered to vote did not vote. However 48% of youth who were eligible to vote did not even bother to register to vote. In the March 1998 opinion poll, the age group of 18-20 years fared badly. Only 42% compared to 80% participants aged 31 years and above showed their intention to vote in the 1999 general elections (Ntsabane & Ntau, 2000). The youth in Botswana have mentioned that they feel that they are not taken seriously that is why they do not bother to be involved in the public sphere. More and more youth are decrying the current state of politics in Botswana that is why the youth in Botswana have developed a political unconsciousness according to Ntsabane & Ntau (2000). The weak civil society has then led to low voter participation among youth (Mpabanga, 2000). Civic engagement in Botswana however is not limited only to voting, the youth also engage in activities such volunteering in civil organisations, taking part in professional sports or activism for policy change to name a few. Botswana has a large

number of youth, 50.7% of the population being female youth and 49.3% being male youth (Central Statistics Office 2014). Therefore their absence in civil affairs is not good for the country's development.

It has been found out that the youth who are not engaged in civil affairs tend to fall through the cracks of society and engage in risky and destructive behaviour such as alcohol and drug abuse because they do not have anything meaningful to engage them (Yates & Youniss, 1999). It is important that issues on youth civic engagement be studied including the factors surrounding the loss of interest by youth in being active in civic engagement activities. The aim of this study is therefore to explore issues around youth civic engagement in Botswana particularly with regard to the levels of their participation in civic activities such as volunteering, voting, standing for political office among others and the challenges they come across in being active members of the civil society.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

General Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study is to discuss issues in youth civic engagement in Botswana.

Specific Research Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are:

- To explore the nature of youth civic engagement in Botswana
- To explore the activities of youth civic engagement in Botswana
- To examine the challenges that the youth face in their efforts to participate in the civic sphere
- To identify the roles of social work in promoting youth civic engagement

The study focused on the following research questions

- What is youth civic engagement?
- What activities are involved in civic engagement?
- What roles can social work play in promoting youth civic engagement?

- What are the challenges that the youth face in their efforts to participate in the civic ?

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Research

This study is significant in that it targets the youth which is a distinct population group in Botswana. They form a significant percentage of the population 50.7% of the population being female youth and 49.3% being male youth according to the 2011 Population and Housing Census. The size of this population category therefore calls for special attention in relation to the issues surrounding youth civic engagement so as to understand them and in turn empower the youth to participate meaningfully in their society. Studying youth civic engagement will provide an important baseline that can lead to improvements to the academic body regarding youth civic engagement. Little information has been generated on the topic. The study intends to examine issues that affect the youth in their efforts to engage in the civic sphere. In pursuing this topic it is expected that the study will generate more interest to further explore the issues of youth civic engagement, not only in Botswana but also Africa. It is very important to have a body of knowledge on the topic that is African based because what works for other societies may not necessarily apply to the African context.

Practice

Social work is concerned with the promotion of social functioning. The study on youth civic engagement can therefore help practitioners to get a better understanding of the challenges facing Botswana youth in the civic sphere. This will give social workers an insight on issues of youth civic engagement in Botswana to find solutions to the problem. Such an insight will put them in a position to come up with initiatives that will effectively address these challenges and in the process promote civic engagement among the youth of Botswana. Social workers can use their core responsibilities such as advocacy to promote youth participation in the affairs of society.

Policy

In terms of youth policy issues, the findings of this study can help government to develop youth programmes in line with the National Youth Policy. Such programmes will generate interest among the youth to participate in the civic society and also address the challenges

they face as active members of the society. Botswana has a number of policies that has been geared towards generating interest among the youth to participate in the civic sphere but a great deal of youth are still lagging behind in participating partly because some of these policies were formulated without their involvement. These policies are often regarded as not being youth friendly.

1.5 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

Below are terms which are used in this study:

Civic engagement as defined by Sherrod et al (2010) is the citizens behaviour and attitudes that express their will to get involved in their society or community in a manner consistent with democratic principles. For citizens to be engaged in their society they have to have positive attitudes towards their expected roles in the society, which will make it highly possible for them to be engaged in their own community. Civic engagement includes being involved in a range of voluntary sector activities and local associations and engagement in public affairs.

Citizenship is the process in which people develop trust in others and society's institutions and produce competencies to participate in social institutions, networks and associations that to some degree serve a public cause (Putnam, 2000).

“**Civic literacy** is the knowledge, ability and capacity of citizens to make sense of their political world” (Milner, 2002; pg 2). For citizens to be involved in their public sphere they have to have the knowledge of what is expected of them in terms of the roles that they have to play such as going out to vote during general elections.

Civic service can be defined as an organised period of substantial engagement and contribution to the local, national or world community recognised and valued by the society with minimal monetary compensation to the participant (McBride et al, 2004).

Social capital is the expected collective or economic benefits derived from cooperation between individuals and groups. This involves the community coming together for a common goal which is for the benefit of their society (Putnam, 2000).

Voter apathy as defined by Machacha (2014) is a condition by which eligible citizens portray lack of interest or care for voting in an election and can generally be affirmed by low voting turnout as well as declining voting trends.

Youth as described in the Botswana Revised National Youth Policy (2010) refers to individuals aged 15-35 years.

Empowerment is a social-action process that promotes participation of people, organizations, and communities towards the goals of increased individual and community control, political efficacy, improved quality of community life, and social justice (Wallerstein, 1992).

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW: PERSPECTIVES ON YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

2.0 INTRODUCTION

By virtue of their membership in a family unit, a neighbourhood, a school district, a cultural group and a multitude of other community building blocks, young people both shape and are shaped by the society around them (Youniss et al, 2002). Youth are frequently connected to normative society through numerous institutions, including the school, related clubs, civic associations, churches, organisations such as scouts, sports leagues. There is a re-emerging interest in understanding how youth contribute to their communities. There is a shift from the dominant paradigm of psychological approaches to development which allow only for a view of young people as empty and inert vessels (Best, 2007).

This chapter is a review of literature on youth civic engagement on a global, regional and local context. The chapter will introduce the following major themes; definition of youth civic engagement, activities that entail youth civic engagement, challenges that youth face in participating in the civic sphere and the roles of social work in promoting youth civic engagement. Theories that have been used in guiding the study are also discussed in this chapter.

2.1 WHAT IS CIVIC ENGAGEMENT?

The term engagement would stress action or at least readiness to act. A more inclusive definition also includes a declared interest in social issues and political issues to show that there is readiness to act in public domain and a keen interest to begin with. It implies a concern with issues in the public domain, beyond one's private life (Ajiboye, 2009). According to Flanagan (1998) civic engagement can be political or non-political with non-political engagement including actions that connect individuals and relating to care or development. Behaviour in the non-political sphere include acting as a member of or donating or contributing to, or volunteering for a group, association or non-profit organisation. Political engagement on the other hand includes those behaviours that influence the legislative, electoral or judicial process such as voting and advocacy at the local, state and national levels (Flanagan,1998).

Youniss et al (2002) on the other hand, state that a broader definition of civic engagement can include action pertaining to civil society and the aspect of daily life in which individuals

freely associate in groups to fulfil their interests and protect their beliefs. In non democratic nations that do not provide formal channels of political participation, civic engagement needs to be defined in terms of informal behaviours that include acts of advocacy, collaboration and community building (Fullinwider, 1999). Within civic engagement it is important also to look at the ways in which citizens develop the skills and knowledge to participate in civic activities such as in the family, educational institutions and political participation.

Silbereisen and Lerner (2007) argue that it was believed that political socialisation begins in the family as parents provide an environment in which political discussion on the media helps to make political domain salient thus orienting youth politically. Recently however, the school has been realised as another major arena of political socialisation because it is seen as society's agent in cultivating citizenship. Lauglo & Oia (2006) argue that there is no definite difference between the political and civil space. Rather there is a continuum between formal political acts such as voting, political actions such as protesting for a moral cause and performing a service such as working in a rural literacy campaign.

According to Organisational Research Services (2012) civic engagement has its roots in community organising since Alexander DeToqueville advocated that neighbourhoods come together to improve their quality of life. Alexander DeToqueville argued that community organising could be identified in 3 major approaches; social work, political activism and community development. Common to these approaches is a focus on handling the issue at hand in partnerships with the people affected. However each approach is fuelled by a unique set of beliefs and assumptions as well as different types of roles for organiser and community members.

NASW (2008) identifies the social work approach as being focused in ensuring that there are adequate resources and services that meet community needs. The political activist approach is based on the view that the community is a political power base and is focused on shifting power dynamics within a community. It may involve mass demonstrations or protest activity to address widespread issues such as workers' rights or force a response from those in power. That is why this approach can lead to conflict between community members and those who have something to lose from shifting power dynamics. The community development approach on the other hand sees the neighbourhood as a space with commercial value. The function of organising is simply to maintain and improve the physical and commercial value

of the community. This at times means advocating for changes in the way services are used or adding services that better meet the needs of community members.

2.2 ACTIVITIES IN YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- *Membership in voluntary organisations*

Activities in civic engagement include membership in voluntary organisations which are characterised by defined membership. Examples of these organisations are political parties, organisations representing the range of occupations and industries and the various forms of sports and cultural activities. According to Lauglo & Qia (2006) some organisations have youth wings, others are mainly concerned with the needs and interests of youth and young adults (sports clubs, youth leagues and youth clubs). In theories of liberal democracy this web of civil society organisations serve important functions by; (a) providing a training ground in civic skills (organizing, representing, public speaking) and (b) serving as intermediary between citizens and government by aggregating and expressing interests in addition to benefiting members directly and providing them with a forum to socialise (Theiss-Morse & Hibbing, 2005).

Participation in community based clubs and organisations and extra-curricular activities during the adolescent years is related to civic and political participation in adulthood although these relationships may be most pronounced in midlife when people have set down roots in a community and have vested interest in community affairs (UNESCO 2011; McBride 2004). In their national three-generational panel study, Jennings & Stoker (2001) found that participation in voluntary organisations peaked during the high school years, dropped off in early adulthood and increased again at midlife.

Volunteering is said to instil civic values, enhance political behaviour and improve democracy and society. According to Theiss-Morse & Hibbing (2005) interaction with others for a broader cause than ones selfish interests pushes people to shift their attitudes. The youth get to appreciate differences and they acquire basic democratic values. Frequent interaction of young people among a diverse set of people tends to produce a norm of generalised reciprocity. They come to believe that if they do a good deed for someone or their community that favour will be returned. Voluntary associations strengthen social bonds and develop a

sense of community they breed cooperation and ease coordination to help solve collective action problems in communities (Yates & Youniss, 1999).

Botswana is characterised by a large number of civil society organisations which deal with a number of issues such as provision of health services, environmental management, youth and sports to name a few. Most of these organisations have the youth as its members and an example of such organisations is Ngamiland Council Of Non-governmental Organisations (NCONGO) based in Ngamiland. It is a non profit organisation in support of young people towards developing young people's social and professional integration. NCONGO's goal is to see an engaged and effective youth civil society in Ngamiland. Its member organisation which are mostly led by young people aged 24-32 makes it possible to advocate for youth mainstreaming in development (Ngamiland Council Of Non-governmental Organisations, 2015). Youth of Botswana have also been found to volunteer in voluntary organisations to provide services such as public education. The threat of HIV/AIDS on Botswana's development saw a number voluntary organisations being formed with the purpose of giving community members education on HIV/AIDS and this was done through volunteer members. Young people have been found to be the ones mostly employed in these organisations because they are young and energetic and can work the long and odd hours which the work entails.

- *School extracurricular activities*

Although individuals are guaranteed rights by virtue of their status as citizens, it is through the exercise of those rights that they assume membership and through their civic engagement that citizens sustain their rights as citizens (Laugo & Qia, 2006). According to Flanagan (1998) membership in community based youth organisations and extra-curricular activities at school may be a developmental foundation for later civic engagement because it is in such experiences that youth develop an affection for the polity. This is because in-school Community Based Youth Organisations (CBYOs) youth learn what it means to belong to their community, they appreciate the feeling of belonging which may generate their interest in civic duties.

Like other institutions of socialization CBYOs help to stabilise societies by integrating youth into social groups they also contribute to social change by providing spaces where younger generations can contest the status quo (Wholey & Simson, 2010). For example character

traits of loyalty, duty and honour are reinforced in the Boy Scout pledge because these organisations provide a structure for free time, a pro-social reference group and adult mentors who are volunteering their own time for a community organisation. Clubs such as Boy Scout and Girl Scout can be found in most public schools in Botswana including clubs such as PACT, Scripture Union or 4B. These are school extracurricular activities that have been set out for students to engage in. These is where young people learn to exercise their voices through voting for their leaders, testing out ideas, disagree with each other and make meaningful contribution to their communities (Milner, 2002). These extracurricular activities also play a role in the development of social trust, a social good that forms part of democracy.

- *Taking part in the democracy process*

Putnam (2000) states that there has been a recent global trend in young people exhibiting disengagement from the civic sphere. There is a general loss of interest in public affairs by the youth which has resulted in a loss of opportunities to discuss matters of common interest and community affairs. Putnam (2000) goes on to say that when a certain group of the community decides to withdraw from the public sphere discussions on public affairs tend to be one sided because there is an input that is missing from the group which has withdrawn from the public sphere. Smith & Tolbert (2004) state that the withdrawal of a certain group of citizens from public affairs disturb the balance of public deliberations. The loss of interest in civic engagement among the youth is a concern among scholars and political commentators to a point where contemporary politics are now distinguished by declining voter turnout and diminishing levels of civic and political engagement by the youth. According to Yates & Youniss (1999) a legitimate democracy depends on the consent of the governed and its health depends on civic engagement. For democracy to prevail, citizens have to engage in the public sphere to air out their views on what they believe is right and wrong on the part of their government by means of voting.

- *Youth leadership*

Youth leadership involves youth leaders in improving their community while developing themselves and their capacity to become agents of change. Activities range from roundtable discussions and participation on public boards and commissions to community organizing and public-awareness campaigns (Helve & Holm, 2005). According to Lord & Hutchison (1993) when youth are given the opportunity to lead they build their understanding of the

social and political issues that interconnect us all and disadvantage some. This knowledge is then used to affect systems change and transform communities.

2.3 CHALLENGES YOUTH FACE TO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN THE CIVIC SPHERE

- *Fading civic obligation*

Balsano (2005) states that for various reasons the solidaristic organisations that dominated the United States landscape from the 1930s through to the early 1960s have weakened. The solidarity that had informed the workings of organisations has collapsed, people are no longer coming together as a collective for the common good of their societies. Individual choice has emerged as the central value, citizenship has become optional as the sense of civic obligation has faded. Fullinwider (1999) goes on to say that evidence suggests that youth are somewhat less committed to the American creed than their parents. The 1990s surveys on youth civic engagement suggest that young people are less likely than adults to say that the United States of America is the greatest country. Over the past generation Americans' interest in public affairs has steadily declined and this decline has been more pronounced among young people (Sherrod et al, 2010). Key measures that can be said to identify the declining public interest include the withdrawal from reading about public affairs, watching national television news, discussing politics, voting in national elections, volunteering in civic societies and having an interest in public issues.

- *Limited opportunities to participate in the civic sphere*

In their efforts to be engaged in the public sphere the youth are often faced with a number of challenges which makes it difficult for them to show interest or be engaged in civic activities. According to Ajiboye (2009) today's youth people aged 10-24 years represent the largest generation in history, 1.8 billion represent a diverse group with different needs and aspirations that vary across and within regions. Many young people are experiencing challenges with finding decent and sustainable employment, receiving information and access to issues related to health, education, poverty and inequality. To make matters worse, the current situation in the global economy and its impact on social and political institutions has

further decreased the opportunities for youth participation in the civic sphere (Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2005).

Perold (2006) states that young people's right to participate in formal decision making processes and in social, economic, environmental and political institutions remains limited. Their potential as a valuable resource to sustainable development is often not recognized. In a survey conducted by the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development in July/August 2012 majority of the 13,000 respondents representing 186 countries from all regions in the world noted that the main challenges for young people's citizenship include limited opportunities for effective participation in decision making processes; the lack of participatory structures for young people at community and national levels; lack of trust between youth and government institutions and political parties and the lack of capacity development for youth and youth organisations (Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2005).

In sub-Saharan Africa a staggering 80% of the respondents pointed out that limited opportunities for participation in decision making processes resulted in limited structures for young people's participation in their communities. Youth in Zambia for example have cited facing constraints such as lack of information, restricted contribution to decision making, inadequate access to education and lack of youth rights (McBride et al, 2004).

- *Social inequality*

Recent scholarship has sought to explain the challenges that the youth face and this was focused on two factors; resources and interest (Wholey & Simson, 2010). When it comes to resources for example, individuals who live in poor neighbourhoods are more likely to be disengaged from the public sphere due to their mistrust in the people in power because they are not addressing the situation of bringing them out of poverty. In terms of interest the youth are said to get involved in the public sphere if there is something of interest to them to be engaged in, they would want to be involved in issues that they feel are addressing their needs such as bringing them out of poverty (Ginwright, 2006). Milner (2002) states that social status is closely linked to political participation therefore voting can be used to serve the purpose of comparing broad and long term trends in political participation among youth in poor neighbourhoods and those in the well of neighbourhoods. This means that issues such as

poverty among the youth can be used to measure whether there is a decline or increase in youth civic engagement looking at the number of young people who have voted overtime.

Many other factors may partly explain why young people find it difficult to engage in the public sphere, for example living in communities where insecurity and violence is present and poverty is a daily reality may explain why some young people no longer want to get involved in society. Lack of safety leads to feelings of mistrust to those who are supposed to protect young people.

- *Lack of civic education*

The lack of education among the youth on what is expected of them in the public sphere has led to them not playing any role in the public sphere. According to Balsano (2005) due to this lack of civic education, young people do not think that politicians' decisions affect them directly, they do not believe that casting a vote can have a genuine influence on the decision-making process. They are sceptical about a system that concentrates power in the hands of the few. UNESCO (2011) states that affection for the polity and engagement in community affairs are logical extensions of the sense of connection youth develop from involvement in the community. Often when the youth feel that they are not satisfied with the way things are run in their country they feel disaffected and lack an emotional bond to community affairs. . A British researcher Murray Print had also identified deficiencies in civic literacy as a factor that leads to ignorance of young people of all ages of their political institutions (Best, 2007).

- *Unstable political economies*

One of the greatest challenges facing government and policymakers in Africa today is how to provide opportunities for the continent's more than 200 million youth so that they can have decent lives and contribute to the economic development of the countries. Africa is the youngest continent in the world about 70% of its population is 30years of age or younger (Gyimah-Brempong & Kimenyi, 2013). Undoubtedly the challenges for youth that are central to Africa's economic development are numerous and varied and include employment, health and civic engagement. For Africa to grow and maximise its full potential, it must mobilise its young people to engage in public affairs. The youth have to be seen as the future of tomorrow, therefore, their input in the running of their countries is vital for a healthy democracy. However, youth civic engagement has been realised to be relatively low (Morrow

et al (2005). Many countries in Africa are facing civil unrest which makes it difficult for the youth to be involved in making their preferences known in the public sphere due to reasons such as fear of victimisation by those in power (Perold, 2006).

Africa of today is not the same as Africa from 40 years ago. Nowadays there is a high percentage of youth who do not have a productive workforce to enter into. Despite this the youth are not engaged to lead the mobilisation of the right programs as a response to this need (Milner, 2000). Mercy Corps recently undertook a study in Africa to find out what works to promote youth civic engagement in the Middle East and North Africa and to also look at the benefits that can be expected for the youth who participate in their societies. The results showed that few of these changes are automatic, rather youth civic engagement initiatives must make deliberate efforts to influence the participation of youth in the civic sphere (Helve & Holm, 2005). According to the report, recommendations were made that to address challenges in youth civic engagement, programs must reach youth from rural areas whose voices are the most underrepresented in public debates and decisions. To strengthen young people's social and civic values, these programs need to support sustained involvement of youth in civic groups and actions.

Resnick & Casale (2011) argue that youth political participation in Africa, particularly in urban areas, is broadly similar to that in other regions. In comparison with older people, Africa's youth vote less and are more likely to demonstrate either no partisanship or an attachment to political parties. Despite Africa's huge youth population, the majority of the region's presidents are over 60 therefore some African scholars believe this prevents the concerns of youth being brought into the political arena which result in lower youth participation in civic activities due to their differences with the older leaders who do not seem to share in their interests (Resnick & Casale 2011).

- *Lack of financial resources for youth to participate in the political sphere*

According to (Rankopo et al, 2007) youth in countries such as Botswana could be a source of labour inputs as well as human capital in production, which could improve total factor production in the region of the world where capital formation is limited. Youth can be powerful catalysts in their own and for community's development. The consequences of not

fully developing and taking advantage of youth's potential could be unpleasant including significant economic losses, social upheaval and instability. Youth are more likely to become frustrated because of legitimate grievances including little participation in decision making and low social mobility (Helve & Wallace, 2001).

In an online Daily News article (August 29th, 2013) by Puso Kedidimetse it was reported that some young people are not optimistic that their participation in civic activities such as politics can improve their welfare. Most youth in Botswana are resigned to the fact that the elderly will continue to rule because they are better resourced. They have cited unemployment as a major challenge for them to be actively involved in the democratic process of their country such as standing for political office or even to lobby for their inclusion into elective positions. For one to campaign for political service they need financial resources to compete with elder politicians. The youth of Botswana argue that elder politicians compared to them are better equipped financially to take on these roles. They contribute to community change by acting as resources and citizens in their communities. As with youth service in Botswana in general one major challenge to promoting youth civic engagement is the lack of clear policy direction and guidelines. Scholars argue that greater impact and benefit to both youth and the wider society requires strong co-ordination between the national youth policy and youth services (Gyimah-Brempong & Kimenyi, 2013).

- *Limited opportunities for youth to participate in the public sphere*

In a study done by Rankopo et al (2007) it was stated that volunteering has a social meaning and can fulfill political, economic and religious obligations among youth. Rankopo et al (2007) state that volunteering in Botswana is made up of formal and informal organisations, individuals and small groups involved in a variety of activities. Youth volunteering in Botswana can provide opportunities for young people to participate in the civic sphere by directing their energies toward helping others and tackling development challenges while at the same time developing their own skills, experience and confidence and enhancing their ability to take advantages of opportunities in the future. Rankopo et al (2007) argue that youth volunteering can promote civic engagement among youth because it involves the active engagement of young people with others and it also enables the youth to build connections

with others and empowers them to contribute to the social development of their communities and countries.

In their study it was found out however that young people in Botswana are generally less interested in volunteering because of certain challenges or restrictions they face in their efforts to volunteer. For example organisations are sometimes not interested to provide opportunities for young people with fewer skills, less education and knowledge to volunteer reason being that donors require skills in report writing and accountability for their financial support. These requirements then deny many young people the opportunity to serve their societies through their active participation. According to Rankopo et al (2007) young people also volunteer with the hope of using the experience to find permanent employment or turning the voluntary position into a paid one and with the limited opportunities for volunteering this contributes to increased levels of unemployment among youth in Botswana.

2.4 ROLE OF SOCIAL WORK IN PROMOTING YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The NASW Code of Ethics states that; “Social Workers should engage in social and political action that seeks to ensure that all people have equal access to the resources, employment, services and opportunities they require to meet their basic human needs and to develop fully. Social workers should be aware of the impact of the political arena on practice and should advocate for changes in policy and legislation to improve social conditions in order to meet basic human needs and promote social justice” (1999, Sec 6.04). Unfortunately Botswana does not yet have a national framework for guiding social work practice. Therefore reference will be made to some codes of other countries to articulate the role of social work in youth civic engagement.

- *Advocacy*

According to Midgely et al (1992) most social workers practice in settings where they deal primarily with individuals and families and others help clients in groups and yet others work with people in community settings. Social work calls for a developmental perspective which will promote social development and it brings to the community important skills such as advocacy which can play an important role in promoting youth civic engagement. Social

work has a long standing tradition of advocacy on behalf of their clients, it is widely recognized as an essential profession to civil society.

Rome & Hoechstetter (2010) state that social workers assume a vast variety of positions in voluntary association, interest groups and social service agency all of which serve as important vehicles for civic engagement. As lobbyists they have been recognized as integral parts of the federal policy-making process. Few scholars or practitioners are thinking about civic engagement across the life course, but social workers are experts on the young and the old. In the social work profession community participation, active citizenship, social capital, and voluntary action are different terms that are often used to refer to similar aspects of citizen life, that is, citizens involvement in public activities that affect the individual as well as the common good (Midgely et al 1992). The nonprofit sector has evolved into the primary mobiliser of the citizenry with social work at the centre (The Encyclopedia of Social Work, 2008).

- *Youth work*

Youth civic participation in nature has changed over the years, it has changed to being issue-specific and service oriented. Youth are reluctant to join formal organisations and prefer to take advantage of open opportunities to become involved in addressing issues that concern them (Department of Economics and Social Affairs, 2005). With regard to these changes social workers should then familiarize themselves with these changes and the types of activities in which young people are engaged in order to gain more insight into their concerns and priorities. Social work should be concerned with focusing on the kind of support and opportunities young people need to become healthy and functioning adults.

Examining factors that impede the positive development of young people is important more specifically with the fact that there is a growing consensus that effective youth programs contribute to young people's healthy development (Rome & Hoechstetter , 2010). It is the responsibility of social workers to address this by advocating for an approach that channels the power of youth to take action in their communities, while simultaneously challenging communities to embrace their role in the development of youth. Social workers working with youth should be in a position to come up with programs that are flexible enough to adapt to

the existing diversity among young people and the communities in which they operate (Wade, 1997).

- *Activism*

Activism is one of the fundamental roles of social work and according to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2005) throughout history youth have been the segment of the population most likely to accept the status quo and to act to change society for the better. The developmental nature of youth make them particularly susceptible to adopting an activist orientation toward citizenship. The Encyclopedia of Social Work (2008) states that social workers have a historical link between the state and the youth population, which is a very important aspect in maximising the potential for youth civic engagement and promoting good governance. As state agents social workers can help promote youth civic engagement by fostering and supporting youth community based development programs and broadening youth civic participation opportunities. Community based development programs in this essence will involve partnering with youth organisations to design and implement programs aimed at meeting the need of the young population. Such programs have an inherent and profound benefit for youth civic engagement because they cultivate local youth leadership and broaden civic participation in political processes (The Encyclopedia of Social Work, 2008).

2.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theory can be used to explain or predict and can underpin intervention as well as be used within research frameworks. It represents a systematic way of understanding events, behaviours and/or situations (Schunk, 2011). All research contain theory in some form and social work research is no exception. For this study Empowerment theory and Learning theory have been used to explain issues in civic engagement.

2.5.1 Empowerment Theory

Empowerment is both a value orientation for working in the community and a theoretical model for understanding the process and consequences of efforts to exert control and influence decisions that affect one's life. Lord & Hutchison (1993) state

that empowerment may be seen as a process where individuals learn to see a closer correspondence between their goals and a sense of how to achieve them, and a relationship between their efforts and life outcomes. According to Wallerstein (1992) empowerment is a social-action process that promotes participation of people, organizations, and communities towards the goals of increased individual and community control, political efficacy, improved quality of community life, and social justice.

For the purpose of this study, empowerment is defined as a process whereby individuals achieve increasing control of various aspects of their lives and participate in the community in activities such as voting, volunteering with dignity.

Empowerment theory suggests that actions, activities or structures may be empowering and that the outcome of such processes result in a level of being empowered. Empowering processes are the ones in which attempts to gain control, obtain needed resources and critically understand one's social environment are fundamental (Rappaport & Seidman, 1999). A process is said to be empowering if it helps people develop skills so they can become independent problem solvers and decision makers. According to Rappaport & Seidman (1999) empowered outcomes refer to operationalization of empowerment which can be the effects of interventions designed to empower citizens. Mechanisms of empowerment can be proactive behaviour, helping systems in the community and access to resources.

Empowerment can be personal, social, political, educational or economic. At individual level it is often referred to as psychological empowerment and includes understanding one's socio-political environment. This is the capability to analyse and understand one's social and political situation. One way that individuals can develop these analytic skills is through the participation in activities and organisations in the community (Kasnel, 2000). Rappaport & Seidman (1999) suggest that increased opportunities for people to become involved in community organisations and activities will help decrease feelings of powerlessness, alienation and withdrawal from community living. These organisations and activities are the ones that provide opportunities for learning new skills, developing a sense of community etc, thus an empowered person might be expected to exhibit a sense of personal control.

Social empowerment is understood as the process of developing a sense of autonomy and self confidence and acting individually and collectively to change social relationships. Youth's involvement in local associations and the inter community cooperation mechanisms contribute to social empowerment by improving their skills, knowledge and self perception. Involvement of youth in local associations can also act as self mechanisms through which the community can organise their economic activities (Kasmel, 2000).

Lord & Hutchison (1993) argue that a welcoming and safe environment is an important part of social empowerment in which young people have the freedom to be themselves, express their own creativity, voice their opinions in decision-making processes, try out new skills and roles, rise to challenges, and have fun in the process. Environments conducive for youth empowerment are those in which youth have a sense of ownership and yet are challenged and supported to move beyond their usual comfort zone; such environments are co-created by youth and adults. Kasmel (2000) goes on to add that although adults are often instrumental in bringing youth into programs and helping sustain their interest and participation, these activities and roles are not the exclusive domain of adults. For youth to fully participate and have ownership of the process, adults need to be able to ensure the necessary level of support, trust, and encouragement.

Morrow et al (2005) state that political empowerment is essential to youth empowerment in the sense that youth participation within the community includes engagement in socio-political processes and social change. Opportunities for youth to engage in governance and participate in political, socioeconomic and cultural contexts where social norms are restrictive can result in multiple forms of discrimination against the youth. In order to respond to the needs of young people and to guarantee that their basic human rights are recognised and enforced, young people's active and meaningful participation in their societies and in democratic practices and processes is of crucial importance (Hutchison & Lord, 1993). Issues affecting young people are usually attempted to be solved by political authorities and older generations without truly consulting young people for their inputs to address youth problems. This results in young people facing challenges of exclusiveness from decision making processes because they are perceived as ignorant, problematic and useless. All these leads to undermining the right to participation by young people in decision making processes (Rappaport & Seidman, 1999).

Empowered persons are the basis for developing responsible and participating communities. According to empowerment theory, empowering processes are the ones in which attempts to gain control, obtain needed resources and critically understand one's social environment are fundamental. Young people develop responsibility for their society when they are given opportunities or even mandates to be civically engaged. A lack of civic education as identified by Milner (2002) is therefore a major challenge resulting in the decline of youth's participation in the civic sphere. Political knowledge lies in the background of any discussion of civic engagement. Research on empowerment at individual level states that knowledge is power, that the competent active citizen is the knowledgeable citizen. Civic competence which is defined as the knowledge and habits of knowledge acquisition relative to politics has been found to be very closely related to civic engagement. When citizens are not empowered with the skills to understand their socio-political environment there is a tendency for them to develop feelings of mistrust of those in power or just a general loss of interest in issues of the public sphere (UNESCO, 2011).

Application of Empowerment Theory to youth civic engagement

In this study youth empowerment is presented as the acquisition of skills and opportunities for young people. In addition these skills should be sustainable and relevant to the changing demands of the youth population. As much as empowerment is a process it should be a process that seeks to change the way that power is distributed among the different sectors of society. Empowerment theory is therefore applicable to this study because it considers youth civic participation and youth empowerment as going hand in hand. This is evident in the sense that discussions about youth empowerment often hinge upon the contribution of young people to different aspects of civic life either as active volunteers or as members of organisations.

Moreover empowering someone is to help them to address their problems and enabling them to take back some control in their lives. It is argued that the presence of a helping agency or organisation is important in every government to empower young people (Helve & Wallace, 2001). These organisations can empower young people to solve their own problems or even to solve problems of the entire social group. With young Batswana, the youth portfolio rests with the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture more specifically under the Department of Youth. According to empowerment theory a process is said to be empowering if it helps people to develop skills so they can become dependent problem solvers and decision makers.

In this case the Department of Youth has been mandated to oversee the coordination of youth affairs in Botswana, this includes youth empowerment programmes. For example the youth of Botswana have been given the opportunity to access empowerment programmes such as the YDF. It is through such programmes that young Batswana have been empowered with the skills and knowledge to run sustainable business projects either in service provision or agriculture. Not only have these business projects helped the owners to be financially stable but they have also contributed to employment creation which in a way gives young Batswana a platform to address a national problem of unemployment.

As stated by Rappaport & Seidman (1999) mechanisms of empowerment include proactive behaviour, helping systems in the community and access to resources. If there is an absence of a helping system like the Department of Culture and Youth, youth grow up lacking the proactive behaviour to be engaged in civic matters because the necessary machineries have not been set up in order to help them to participate in the public sphere. In addition the youth will not be empowered to identify those with power to influence decision making thus resulting in them having a sense of powerlessness, alienation and a withdrawal from the public sphere into their own private lives (Ntongana, 2004).

Empowerment theory recognises that empowerment can also be political and this is the capability to analyse and understand one's social and political situation. One way that youth can develop such skills is through participating in political activities such as being members of political parties or taking part in the democratic process of voting. The recent Botswana general elections were characterised with a significant number of young people running for political office such as the leader of Umbrella for Democratic Change Duma Boko, mayor of Gaborone Kagiso Thutwe, member of parliament for Gaborone Central Phenyio Butale and member of parliament for Phikwe Dithapelo Keorapetse to name a few. Through their line of work these young Batswana have developed the skills to feel empowered to stand for political office, for example the mayor of Gaborone has once served as the University of Botswana Student Representative Council (SRC) president. Civic learning has then been seen as a form of empowerment to students, with students movements such as the Student Representative Council. These students movements have played a crucial role in a number of major social and political transitions that have occurred in various countries. According to Ginwright (2006) politically empowered youth have been seen to be at the forefront of major changes in

the world for example the significant number of young people in political office in Botswana which is a major change in the political arena of Botswana.

Research by Hill (1991) reported in the literature that youth who participate in community organisations often feel more empowered or have a greater sense of control than non participants even before embarking on the participation experience. These citizens have a greater sense of efficacy or belief in their personal abilities and become involved when they believe that they can make a difference. In addition young people experience feelings of greater control over their own lives and a deepened competence, following active involvement in groups or participation in social movements. A lawyer by profession Uyapo Ndadi who has been the Director of a non profit organisation BONELA is a great example of a young motswana who has been actively involved in community issues. In his leadership role he grew professionally to point of being selected to go through the Obama's Young Leadership Initiative programme which is open to a limited number of young Africans in leadership positions aged 25-32 . Youniss (1995) goes on to argue that young people in voluntary organisations learn civic skills such as leadership for example leading a meeting or writing an effective proposal.

2.5.2 Learning Theory

A widely known theory of learning which speaks to civic engagement is that of experiential learning. Kolb (1983) suggests that we have individual preferences for learning but we learn best when four things happen in a cyclical way; concrete experimentation, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation. Except for elementary reflexes people are not equipped with inborn repertoires of behaviour. They must learn them. New behaviour can be acquired either by direct experience or by observation (Bolles, 1979). Furthermore in the course of learning, people not only perform responses but also notice effects they produce. By observing the different outcomes of their actions, they develop hypotheses about which responses are most appropriate in which settings. This acquired information then serves as a guide for future action (Bolles, 1979). The youth learn to be active citizens because learning is a process whereby individuals are constructing and transforming experience into knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, beliefs, emotions and the senses. Individuals give meaning to experiences in relation to their biography (past experiences) in new social situations. Learning occurs when that meaning is transformed as a result of reflecting on the new experience (Goldstein, 1981).

Social learning requires attention to the processes and structures necessary to involve a heterogeneous set of actors in analysing and making decisions about complex and value laden problem situations. Schunk (2011) states that social learning is concerned with the ways in which different individuals or groups within the society engage with each other to understand, contest and influence the direction of social change. It looks at how society understands both itself and its relation to the external environment, and then adapts its assumptions, beliefs system, approaches to problem solving and systems of social organisation either to achieve particular ambitions or cope with external and internal threats.

Learning situations can be formal, self directed or informal however merely knowing something does not make us act upon it. The youth being taught about being an active citizen does not mean they will do anything about it because action for active citizenship demands motivating factors such as beliefs, emotions and values. In order for the youth to act on their new knowledge, there is a need for motivation and the belief in the worth of their actions (Andolina et al, 2005).

Application of Learning Theory to youth civic engagement

It is believed that one of the central purposes of education is to develop informed and active citizens. Learning theory is applicable to this study because Aristotle noted that citizens are made not born therefore schools are the sole institutions available to society as a whole to train youth in the theory and practice of democratic citizenship. Learning theory states that individuals learn through reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation (Laugo & Oia, 2006). Furthermore Andolina et al (2005) states that educating students for civic engagement therefore must entail their active involvement in the life of the school and community. Students get to work on complex community problems, they develop the potential to learn not only the skills and knowledge necessary for civic action but also democratic attitudes-the will to participate and the ability to care for others. Department of Economics and Social Affairs (2005) argues that service learning promotes good deeds and academic achievement but its greater potential lies in preparing students to be independent. In Botswana primary school for example there are clubs such as Boy Scout, Girl Scout and 4B students are given the opportunity to learn basic survival skills or interpersonal skills such as public speaking through school debate, in turn students grow up to feel empowered. These kind of learning gives students a sense of independence.

Civic learning also prepares students to become engaged citizens by expanding their understanding of social problems and the role of civic action in solution to these problems. Projects in school with civic engagement goals such as tracking levels of pollutants in a local river for science class exposes students to social problems such as environmental pollution and public agencies responsible for addressing such problems.

Since learning theory is concerned with observation and experimenting on the learned behaviour students engaging in community service learning get to learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organised service experiences. These experiences meet actual community needs that are coordinated in collaboration with the school and community (Wade, 2001). Wade (2001) continues to state that direct experience and reflection are essential to effective learning. The essential argument in social learning is that real learning and intellectual development occur as the individual interacts with the environment with experience. Kolb (1983) argues that students observe or experience events then they reflect on their experiences. They then develop interest that explain the events and allow them to generalise from their experience. Finally they test these concepts in varied situations.

Active involvement of youth in service learning will therefore generate their interest to make use of their learned behaviour in real life situations such as taking part in community organisations, voting and so forth. Young people in Botswana are in leadership positions today because they have been groomed by their mentors to attain the positions they are in today, they learnt from their mentors through their daily interactions. These experiences of learning then motivate them to excel in what they do. This evident in the current political situation in Botswana whereby young political leaders have been groomed by their senior political members to take up leadership positions in the party or in parliament.

According to Laugo & Oia (2006) because a successful democracy requires informed participation, citizens must first understand ideas about citizenship, politics and government. Civic education is a critical and effective empowerment tool for promoting youth civic participation in democratic processes. It empowers young people both as individuals and as part of collective groupings. It can help young people better understand their individual rights and responsibilities and position them to be active participants in making decisions. It is through such that in Botswana, social studies is taught in primary and junior schools with the broad goal of teaching students on citizenship. Children are taught to grow up as responsible

citizens of Botswana so that they will engage in the responsibilities of maintenance, defence and improvement of their society. Social studies teaching in Botswana is regarded as the core knowledge base for citizenship education in schools. The focus is to develop citizens who are informed, autonomous and respectful of others, who participate in the political process, who keep the common goal in mind in their decision making and finally citizens who act responsibly (Adolina et al, 2005). In essence it is believed that students in their youth will have then developed a sense of confidence to participate in civic and engage in political processes. Civic knowledge among the youth will mean that they understand their political and civic context and economic rights as well as their political and civil rights. They would have acquired the skills to explain, analyse, interact, evaluate, defend and monitor civic processes and outcomes.

2.6 CONCLUSION

From the literature civic engagement has been defined as taking part in the public domain through political or non-political actions. These include membership in voluntary organisations, voting, being youth leaders to name a few. However youth have been found out to be faced with challenges in actively engaging in the civic sphere such as not being able to access opportunities to participate in civic activities, lack of information on civic engagement and unstable political situations. Social workers can play a pivotal role in promoting youth civic engagement through their specialised skills such as advocacy, youth work and activism. Youth civic engagement can also be explained using empowerment and learning theory. Youth empowerment is therefore seen as youth acquiring the skills and opportunities to actively engage in their communities. Civic education on the other hand promotes good citizenship because young people learn through observation and actual practice on what is expected in order to be active member of the society.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will introduce the research methodology that has been used in the study. It describes the document/content analysis method which was used to collect data on youth civic engagement. In addition ethical considerations and limitations of the study have been discussed at the end of the chapter.

3.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out using the exploratory approach in order to investigate the nature of youth civic engagement in Botswana. Babbie & Mouton (2001) state that exploratory approach is typically used when a researcher wants to examine a new area of interest. The study sought to investigate issues around youth civic engagement in Botswana particularly with regard to their attitudes towards their civic duties. This included finding out the challenges they come across in being active members of the civil society. The study is also exploratory because methods of data collection is through content analysis, which involved a search of popular press, academic literature or published statistics from private organisations or government for insight into the problem at hand.

3.1.2 Research Method: Document Analysis

Keywords: civic engagement, youth civic engagement, citizenship, civil society, youth empowerment,

The study involved the employment of a qualitative research method of document analysis. Qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviours and social contexts of particular populations. A qualitative study can give an analysis of the condensed literature since method of data collection involved going through documents written on the topic of civic engagement (Rajasekar et al, 2013). In using the qualitative approach a detailed picture of youth civic engagement in Botswana has been built up about why the youth of Botswana act in certain ways when it comes to them being engaged in the civic sphere and the challenges they come across in youth civic engagement.

When analysing print media various methods of analysis can be employed such as content analysis. Document analysis is primarily a method of describing and categorising

communication messages in specific contexts (Hansen et al, 1998). Content analysis can be said to be a research tool that is used to determine the presence of certain words, concepts, themes, phrases, characters or sentences within texts or sets of texts and to quantify this presence in an objective manner (Riffe et al, 2005). According to Merrigan & Houston (2009) content analysts believe that the nature of messages can be discovered by any careful knower through precise, systematic and repetitive observations. The goal is to sort messages into categories and compare the frequency with which different categories of messages occur.

When evaluating communication using textual data, attention needs to be paid to both manifest meanings, that is, 'those that are evident on the surface and latent meanings, 'those below the threshold of superficial observation' (Mayring, 2000). The analyst's decision in content analysis on what represents appropriate and meaningful content for content analysis must be based on the task that the analyst wants to embark on and be specified clearly (Hansen et al 1998). This means that when analysing a text an analyst should clearly state what is being analysed, that is, what they will be looking for in the text. For the purposes of the study for instance, certain keywords have been used in searching for relevant documents on the topic of youth civic engagement. Appropriate communication content or keywords for the study might thus be individual words, phrases or themes in speeches or news stories such as civic engagement or youth civic engagement or youth in leadership etc. Within these texts the focus was to address whether they cover issues on youth civic engagement in Botswana or a likelihood of a resolution of the social issues raised about youth civic engagement in Botswana.

The study employed an open analysis where the point was to identify the dominant messages on youth civic engagement within the documents. The idea was to try to find out what messages were the writers trying to put forward to the readers and their standpoints on youth civic engagement, that is, their views and beliefs on youth civic engagement. Samples for qualitative content analysis were purposively selected texts on youth civic engagement which informed on the research questions being investigated. Sources of data were taken from annual reports, commissioned studies, print and electronic media.

3.2 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Babbie & Mouton (2001) ethics are associated with morality as both deal with matters of right and wrong because social research often represents an intrusion into people's lives. It is with such that researchers should carry the responsibility to guard against any harm towards participants. Key ethical principles of research publication that have been considered in this study are;

- Guarding against plagiarism which entails that appropriate credit be given when using other people's work. Plagiarism in the study has then been avoided by fully acknowledging all content belonging to other authors. Texts belonging to other authors that have been used in any part of this study have been referenced.
- Honesty which according to Wholey & Simson (2010) is when a researcher reports findings with complete honesty. No data therefore has been used to misrepresent, misinform, mislead, and/or intentionally misinterpret the audience of the study.

3.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- Qualitative research findings cannot be generalised to the entire population therefore the findings of this study will not be generalised to the whole population of the youth of Botswana. The results may not be a true representation of youth civic engagement in Botswana because observed trends in literature may not be an accurate reflection of the reality of youth civic engagement in Botswana.
- A content analysis study such as this one is limited by availability of material on the topic of study. For example literature on youth civic engagement in Botswana is relatively low. Most research that has been done is from the western countries therefore findings of the study were generally dependent on the information that is available.

3.4 CONCLUSION

Exploratory approach was utilised in this study in order to find out more on issues in youth civic engagement in Botswana. Sources of information were taken from annual reports, commissioned studies, print and electronic media by identifying emerging themes in youth civic engagement. During data collection ethical considerations such as guarding against plagiarism and honesty in reporting findings.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.0 FINDINGS

The government of Botswana found it necessary to set up the Department of Culture and Youth under the Ministry of Youth Sports and Culture to address youth related issues including the active participation of youth in the civic sphere. The Department of Culture and Youth is guided by the National Youth Policy in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of youth related programmes. The first National Youth Policy was passed in 1996 with the overall objective of ensuring that the youth were given every opportunity to reach their full potential both as individuals and as active citizens of Botswana (Ministry of Youth Sports and Culture, 2010). Although the government of Botswana has implemented many programs aimed at youth civic engagement, many of these programs are still finding their footing with most of them not gaining much popularity from the youth. The first National Youth Policy of 1996 included Tirelo Sechaba as an initiative to promote youth civic engagement among the youth of Botswana.

According to the 1996 National Youth Policy, Tirelo Sechaba was introduced as a national programme for all young Batswana as a mechanism for their participation in national development. Volunteers in this youth service were to deliver health and human services such as working as health assistants at local clinics, working at rural veterinary stations or as assistant teachers at schools to promote community development. Youth service was introduced because it had been found to enhance civic responsibility among participants. Tirelo Sechaba was closely associated with nation building and national development efforts. It provided an experiential opportunity for the youth to contribute to the development needs of different sectors of the society (Donald, 1992).

However in 1999 Tirelo Sechaba was discontinued due to high costs to run the programme and to allow for the government to come up with an improved programme. This resulted in a number of youth being left in the dark and feeling let down by the government for stopping a programme which they felt gave them an opportunity to be active citizens. The National Youth Policy was revised again in 2010 to cater for emerging new issues in youth development. This included the re-introduction of Tirelo Sechaba. The programme has since been re-introduced in April 2014. This time around under the name Botswana National

Service Programme. The focus of Botswana National Service Programme is different from Tirelo Sechaba however, in the sense that this time around it aims to close the gap in youth unemployment by empowering the youth with the skills and knowledge to prepare them for the labour market. Participants of this programme are mostly Form 5 or JC matriculates. Nevertheless shortly after its inception the programme has been clouded by challenges such as large number of participants quitting. So far out of the 15 000 participants that were enrolled at the beginning of the programme 65% of them have already quit opting to go for temporary jobs or short term casual jobs (Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture, 2014).

This large number of youth who have quit clearly shows that they are not happy with the programme. The participants of the programme receive P600 allowance which is lower than the minimum wage. With the current high costs of food and transport this money can barely cover the needs of young people. A young person cannot feel to be civically engaged while they lack the basics of life which is a decent job meeting their needs. Jobless youth can be desperate and easily lose faith in their country's future. For that reason youth development programmes such as Tirelo Sechaba can make young people feel abused and suffocated. Unemployment rate among the youth currently stands at 27.65% according to the 2011 Population and Housing Census (Central Statistics Office, 2014).

Still under Department of Youth, Botswana National Youth Council (BNYC) was established in 1974 through a presidential directive to be the coordinating body of Non-Governmental Organisations dealing with youth matters. Its mandate is to primarily facilitate, coordinate and implement youth focused activities in the non-governmental sector. BNYC is responsible for lobbying and advocating for development policies and programmes affecting the youth as well as to give advice to the government on matters relating to youth development (McBride, 2009). In an interview by the Botswana Youth Portal the 2013 BNYC Chairperson pointed out that BNYC was set out as a central point for youth in Botswana, to be a one stop centre for youth offering researched data about the youth situation in Botswana, government policies on youth, to meet the varied needs of young people. It is set out to research challenges and opportunities that exist for the youth and partner with government to develop policies that can be used to help address them. Its targets the youth in set categories such as unemployed youth, youth in remote areas, youth living with disabilities, youth at tertiary institutions, youth in politics and business.

However according to a newspaper article written by Letswamotse in the Botswana Gazette dated August 29th 2014 for a long time BNYC has not been enjoying any peace at all due to the recurring leadership crisis with suspicions and perceptions of financial mis-management and other official wrongdoing whereby at one point the executive director was suspended from work. Due to these problems BNYC has gone through a long period of instability and uncertainty resulting in some youth not recognising it as an important body which can help the youth to actively participate in their development. The article reported that the youth president of Botswana Movement for Democracy Youth League (BMDYL) Pheny Segokgo said that the youth league had taken the decision to boycott the BNYC Annual General Meeting. Pheny Segokgo said that, “the youth in this country are unemployed, students in different universities have problems but BNYC find no need to intervene and address such issues. What will be the point in BMDYL rallying behind BNYC?”. In response to this the BNYC Public Relations Officer Motshegwa Thekiso acknowledged that the BNYC needs to do more and intervene on issues that are of concern to the youth (Letswamotse, 2014 in Mmegi).

In a newspaper article titled, “Rural youth ask: What kind of animal is this BNYC?” a young person from Nata village was quoted saying, he does not think the council can benefit the youth in anyway because it is event-oriented. The only time he hears about the organisation is during the Month of Youth Against AIDS and waits for a whole year to hear the acronym BNYC again. Adding that even those who usually attend some of its event may not know what it stands for and how beneficial it is to young Batswana, as entertainment pieces usually overshadow informative activities. Another young person based in Shakawe said they did not know much about BNYC. He did not think that BNYC is doing enough to bring the youth closer to it as a way of bringing awareness and promote utilization of its services. "As I speak I don't know or see the importance or even the role of the BNYC in the life of the youth here," he said. It is rather quiet worrying to learn that some youth do not view the council as a structure with any relevance to them even after 38 years of its operation. This shows that BNYC is not fully engaging the youth to be active participants in the development of their country (Keoreng & Baboki, 2012 in Mmegi).

One of the strategic areas mentioned in the Revised 2010 National Youth Policy as needing special attention is Strategic Area 5.1, Youth Employment and one of the strategies to be employed was to establish micro-credit and saving schemes as well as Youth Development

Fund (YDF) to provide business loans, training and advise on entrepreneurship. Programmes such as YDF were rolled out by the government to economically empower the youth and in turn give them an opportunity to contribute to the economy of Botswana. According to the Ministry of Youth Sports and Culture the Youth Development Fund is a youth development scheme aimed at promoting active participation of youth in the socio-economic development of the country (Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture, 2010). It aims to encourage the out-of-school, marginalised and unemployed youth to venture into sustainable and viable income generating projects. Speaking at the first YDF Pitso the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture Ruth Maphorisa mentioned that although the programme is a good initiative it has been riddled with a lack of entrepreneurial skills among its beneficiaries which has resulted in high projects failure and high loan defaulters. Government has been blamed for such by not putting appropriate measures such as extensive entrepreneur training to ensure that the youth are well equipped to run sustainable projects upon receiving the loans (Ntongana, 2004).

The role of social workers in youth civic engagement includes monitoring youth programmes offered by the Department of youth such as the Youth Development Fund and Poverty Eradication Scheme. Social workers are employed as Youth Officers to be responsible for screening of applications, coordination of appraisal and adjudication of all submissions and monitoring of approved projects. The Department of Youth recruit social workers in order to help in pursuing the department's mandate of creating an enabling environment for young people to participate in the development of their country and empower them to be self reliant. The Department of youth is however failing to tap on the expertise of social workers as youth workers in order to make their youth programmes a success.

4.1 CONCLUSION

This study has revealed that the government of Botswana is playing an active role in promoting youth civic engagement through the Department of Culture and Youth. The National Youth has been formulated to promote youth civic engagement among young Batswana. Young people are therefore contributing to their country's economy by accessing youth services such as Youth Development Fund and Youth Empowerment Scheme. Other programmes that promote youth civic engagement include Botswana National Service Programme where young people are attached to different institutions, departments or organisations to gain skills in order to prepare them for the job market. Botswana National

Youth Council has also been given the mandate to lobby and advocate for development policies and programmes affecting the youth as well as to give advice to the government on matters relating to youth development.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter entails a discussion on the findings of the study. The chapter ends with a conclusion and recommendations to different stakeholders in Botswana on how they can help improve on youth civic engagement.

5.1 DISCUSSION

In Botswana the National Youth Policy has been developed as a framework to target young people's well being and to promote their constructive participation in national society and culture. It was developed to promote civic engagement among the youth in Botswana. However to be in the space of youth according to the National Youth Policy is to be able to claim certain rights and responsibilities. The Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture is the principal body that formulates youth programmes in line with the Youth Policy. It has been given the responsibility to come up with programmes that promote youth civic engagement. These programmes include the Botswana National Service Programme, Internship Programme, Youth Development Fund and the Graduate Voluntary Scheme. These were formulated in order to empower the youth with the knowledge and skills to be active participants in the development of their country. This is in line with empowerment theory which purports that youth empowerment is the acquisition of skills and opportunities for young people to be active in their development and that of their communities. Youth empowerment programmes have then been availed to the youth of Botswana to give them the skills and knowledge to improve their employment readiness through on the job training and experience.

Besides the programmes designed for the youth by the government the youth are also involved in a number of civic engagement activities such as volunteering in Non Governmental Organisations or community organisations. Organisations such as ACHAP for example often recruit youth volunteers to be their community mobilisers to spread messages about the health services ACHAP offers. It is within such organisations that youth learn to be responsible and active citizens. This learning can be both formal or informal whereby volunteers go through training before starting their work. They can on the other hand learn through their mentors or supervisors through their everyday interaction. This supports

learning theory's principal argument that social learning is learning and intellectual development which occurs as the individual interacts with the environment they operate in. It is through volunteering that youth learn the principles of self reliance, democracy and development. Involvement of youth volunteers in providing services to citizens therefore increase their interest to be more active in community development organisations. For example the Botswana Police Service has also found it fit to involve the youth of Botswana in the fight against crime in their communities by recruiting them as police volunteers. This gives young Batswana the opportunity to actively engage in solving community problems such as crime and in turn learn to be responsible citizens.

Young Batswana are also active in professional sports, for example Nigel Amos who is involved in athletics is using his status to act as a role model to upcoming athletes. He is also a brand ambassadors for different companies such as NIKE including the government of Botswana as the Botswana brand ambassador which is a form of civic engagement.

Despite the government's efforts in promoting youth civic engagement the youth are still faced with a number of challenges in their efforts to participate in the civic life of their communities. Some youth feel that programmes that have been developed by government to promote youth empowerment are largely failing them. Host organisations in programmes such as Internship Programme have been accused of using interns as cheap labour. Instead of being empowered with the skills and knowledge on their areas of study they are given work which does not give them any on job training or experience. Empowerment theory argues that in order for individuals to act on their new knowledge there is a need for them to believe in the importance of what they are learning in order to be motivated.

Some organisations given the mandate to coordinate non -governmental organisations with youth matters have been as not easily accessible to all youth of Botswana. Youth in rural areas seem not to be satisfied with the presence of organisations such as BNYC in their areas which makes them to miss out on the opportunities availed to them to be active citizens. From this study it therefore evident that the nature of youth civic engagement in Botswana is consistent with the literature on youth civic engagement from a global or continental context, that is to say it is similar to that of other countries. Young people in Botswana are engaged in civic engagement activities just like their fellow youth in other parts of the world and they all come across certain challenges which often make their participation to be somehow limited

as highlighted in the literature. The youth of Botswana are engaged in both political or non-political activities such as taking part in the democratic process by casting their votes or being members of voluntary organisations respectively. This is consistent with the definition given in the literature that civic engagement can be engaging in political or non-political activities.

5.2 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Youth civic engagement is the youth working to make a difference in the civic life of their communities and developing their knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make a difference. It means the youth promoting the quality of life of a community through both political and non political processes. The non political processes include activities such as volunteering, being members of community organisations. The political processes on the other hand include voting or standing for political. However citizens including the youth need a foundation of basic knowledge about taking part in civic activities and this can be done through civic education. The Department of Curriculum Development and Evaluation in the Ministry Of Education and Skills Development should therefore look into early introduction of civic education in the curriculum to empower students with knowledge on their rights and responsibilities as active youth citizens of Botswana.

The old saying that “youth are the leaders of tomorrow has come to pass, the youth now need to be seen as citizen leaders and be treated as such. There is need is need for young people to be given opportunities to participate in the development of their communities. The Department of Youth and Culture as the youth policy makers should therefore liase with different youth organisations to take advantage of young people’s passion and enthuasim to lead by giving the youth the opportunity to become leaders in youth organisations. Allocation of a certain number of seats in parliament could also be one of the measures that can be taken to motivate youth to take up leadership positions.

The Department of Culture and Youth has played an instrumental role in encouraging civic engagement among the youth of Botswana through various programmes such as the Youth Development Fund (YDF). With YDF youth can also be active participants of the socio-economic development of their country. Although the youth are interested in this programme there is however a lack of entrepreneur skills among its beneficiaries. There is the need for

the Department of Youth and Culture to engage expert institutions to carry out extensive entrepreneurship training to the beneficiaries to give them skills to run sustainable projects. Policies that guide programmes such as the Youth Development Fund also need to be youth friendly and make the youth central to the formulation of such policies. For example access to programs such as YDF should not come as a challenge because of restrictive requirements.

Promotion of youth employment has been realised to play a role in encouraging youth civic engagement and Botswana National Service Programme is one of the programmes that was introduced in Botswana to do such. In order for the programme to largely contribute in the promotion of youth civic engagement, challenges such as large dropout of participants from the programme due to exploitation by host organisations need to be addressed. The labour and Security Department in the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs should then come up with a legislative framework/policy framework that will protect the rights of youth. Living allowances can also be reviewed to reflect the current economic standards that way the youth will be motivated to stay in the programme.

Even though it is the responsibility of the government of Botswana to provide youth with opportunities to be active members of the society the youth also need to take the responsibility of owning up and taking part in the development of their countries. Self empowerment is the core of any real empowerment.

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