

Unearthing Elements Associated with Electoral Violence in Kanyama Constituency of Lusaka District, Zambia

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ABSTRACT

This study explored elements associated with electoral violence in Kanyama Constituency of Lusaka District, Zambia. The study rids on case study design which was employed on a targeted population that comprised 28 participants. The data were generated through interviews and document review. The main findings of this research were that electoral violence was associated with low socio-economic status, hunger for power, political immaturity and cadreism, selectivity in the application of the law by the law enforcement agencies, low education background and ethnicity. Further, the study found that high population density coupled with bad road network was difficult to police during election period. Therefore, this study concludes that electoral violence impacts the electoral process negatively as electorates are subjected to exercise their political rights under hostile conditions. Thus, among others, it is recommended that the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development should speed up the process of creation and enhancing of youth skills training centers so as to help them acquire necessary surviving skills in lower income Constituencies as youths were cited to be perpetrators of violence due to them being exposed to poverty and high levels of unemployment.

Keywords: constituency Zambia, electoral violence, political violence.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Literature shows that the shift to multiparty politics in Sub-Saharan Africa in the early 1990s raised hopes for democratization across a continent where most countries had limited experiences of competitive elections (Johan *et al.*, 2019). The election views were seen as a great transition to real democracy. However, in the last three (3) scheduled cycles of Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government elections, Zambia has been rocked by unprecedented levels of electoral violence perpetrated by holders of divergent views against each other (Ndulo and Emeziem, 2022). Those perceived to be opponents are attacked, assaulted or have had their meetings disrupted while law enforcement agencies have tended to be incapable of controlling the vice. A trend that has been reported by various media outlets remains unattended by the law enforcement agents. Civil Society Groups, Organizations, prominent citizens, and religious leaders appear to be reluctant to assign blame to the perpetrators and instead call for restraints on both sides (Fischer, 2017).

Several studies have been conducted to ascertain the causes and effects of electoral violence. For instance, Sialombe (2019) in a study of the role of political parties in the promotion and prevention of electoral violence established that lack of trust in Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) and Zambian Police, institutional weakness of political parties, and those mandated to manage the elections, ineffective conflict resolution mechanisms by various political parties, does enhance electoral violence in Zambia.

Chebii (2014) conducted a study on the role of media in conflict management, with reference to 2007/08 Post Election Violence in Kenya and Uasin Gishu County as a case area. The study found that to some extent, media caused electoral violence. Some of the negative media roles include encouraging hate speech, running parallel tallying centers, misrepresentation of information, and incitement. However, media has low influence on people based on religious factors. The study recommended stringent measures for negative journalism while highlighting the merits of peace journalism.

Similarly, Phiri and Hamauswa (2017) conducted a study on causes and effects of electoral violence in Africa focusing on Zambia in particular. The study found that delayed announcing of results (25.9%) and corruption (18.1%), are the leading causes of electoral violence. Findings also revealed that the main effects of electoral violence are social psychological effects (43.9%) characterized by regionalism, division of tribal groupings, hatred, lack of freedom of speech, movement and association, stress trauma and loss of self-esteem. Political effects of electoral violence (25%) included reduced desire to participate or contest in elections, loss of trust in Zambian politicians, and perceptions of political instability. Economic effects

(21.9%) are characterized by destruction of buildings and property, reduction of economic activity and unwillingness of investors to invest in the country.

Literature also shows that electoral violence is levied by political actors to purposefully influence the process and outcome of elections, and it involves coercive acts against humans, property, and infrastructure (Bekoe, 2012; Harish & Toha, 2019; Hoglund, 2009). A study by Muchanga (2017) also found that politicians have a tendency of influencing the voter's choice by way of bribing them. This tendency impacts decision making and electoral outcomes negatively (Yaren, 2021).

Liswaniso (2016) explored how Tagwira and Owour present political violence in their fictional writing which is the uncertainty of hope and Dust. The study found that political violence is still prevalent in some of the post independent states due to political leaders who still want to hold on to power, discrimination among ethnic groups (favoring their own tribes) and dissatisfaction on government's ruling system. This shows that political players have no regard for the positive norm of sharing power in the process of democratic dispensation.

In spite of the above narratives, the effects of the electoral violence on the voter's turnout and elections outcome have never been systematically explored while the cause of the electoral violence appear in many instances to be attributed to factors that somewhat have been muddled by the views of those who hold preferences of candidates on many sides of political view holders.

In reference to the period 2011 to 2021, the most prominent political parties who have been involved in electoral violence includes Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) which was formed in 1990 "in defiance of the government's one-party declaration by pro-democracy groups, initially encouraged by the trade union movement lead by Frederick Chiluba and University students" (Report by National Democratic Institute for International affairs and Foundation for Democratic Process, 2003, p. 6). The other political party is Patriotic Front which was formed in 2001 by Michael Chilufya Sata as a result of succession disputes in MMD when tenure of Office for Fredrick Chiluba came to an end (European Union, 2006). The party was established on the premises of putting more money into people's pockets and lowering taxes. The other prominent political party that has been involved in electoral violence is the United Party for National Development (UPND) which was formed in 1998 by Anderson Kambela Mazoka. The founder established the UPND on a social democratic platform of providing free health and educational services to the Zambian people, a promise which is taking the right shape under the New Dawn Government led by President Hakainde Hichilema.

In 2011, PF won the general elections to unseat the MMD that had been in power for twenty (20) years. In 2015, Zambia again went to the polls to hold Presidential by-election as a result of the demise of the seating President Micheal Chilufya Sata. The elections were again won by PF under President Edgar Chagwa Lungu beating UPND, the strongest opposition by then under Party President Hakainde Hichilema. Again, in 2016, General elections were held, and PF became victorious with a small margin from the UPND (Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ), 2011, 2015 and 2016 Reports).

Despite holding periodic elections in Zambia, the process has been very controversial. For instance, the August 2016 elections were associated with allegations of vote-rigging and electoral violence which prompted the UPND to petition the results in the Constitutional Court in which the Court ruled in favor of PF. Further, Fischer (2017) stated that Zambia experienced electoral violence in the run-up to the 2016 general elections to the extent that the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) suspended campaigns for ten (10) days in Lusaka and Namwala districts. The UPND and PF supporters had violent clashes. In one incident, UPND supporters refused to cancel a campaign rally as advised by the police. Consequently, the police opened fire on UPND gathering, killing one supporter.

In response to electoral violence during the 2016 general elections, on 21st October 2016, the President of Zambia, Mr Edgar Chagwa Lungu appointed a Commission of Inquiry into voting patterns and Electoral violence in Zambia. He obtained authority from Chapter 41 of the Inquiries Act which states that "The President may issue a Commission appointing one or more Commissioners to inquire into any matter in which an inquiry would, in the opinion of the President, be for the public welfare" (Republic of Zambia, 1967, Inquiries Act 2(1)).

The President gave the Commission a hundred and twenty days (120) mandate. It consisted of fifteen (15) Members. The President mandated the Commission among others to inquire into the cause of the voting patterns that emerged from 2006 to 2016 and establish the cause or causes of electoral violence. To date, the results from the Commission remain unknown, a situation that may be described as a sheer waste of resources.

However, as of the year 2018 through 2021, the party under President Lungu was criticized for increased corruption allegations, cadreism and having diverted from its original pro-poor approach to governance, more money into peoples' pockets and lower taxes. In the 2021 general elections, UPND under President Hakainde Hichilema won the election to out seat PF with a landslide victory. Similarly, Zambia experienced electoral violence in the run-up to the 2021 general elections to the extent that the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) again suspended campaigning activities in Kanyama Constituency. The UPND and PF

supporters had violent clashes leading to physical injuries, loss of lives and disturbing campaign road shows (United Nations, 2021).

Given all these problems caused by electoral violence, there seemed to be limited studies that have been conducted on this matter and hence an attempt was made through this study to explore the elements associated with electoral violence in Kanyama Constituency of Lusaka District, Zambia.

A. *Statement of the Problem*

In a political landscape, citizens are supposed to tolerate divergent views for the stability and growth of democracy (Kaumba, 2015). However, in Kanyama Constituency of Lusaka District Zambia, physical violence especially during the election cycles of 2011, 2016 and 2021 may appear to have escalated while its causes remain a poorly studied area. It may be assumed that if violence and tyranny are allowed to take root in Zambia, it may deprive the people of the capacity to resist bad governance because of the pervasive atmosphere of terror, fear, and insecurity. Citizens may also be intimidated and induced to take a cautious approach so as not to risk their lives, property or liberty, resulting in an attitude of resignation. They also may be pushed away from electoral politics and coerced into submissiveness and timidity (Covenant of the Civil and Politics Rights, 2021).

B. *Specific Objective*

The key objective of this study was to explore the elements associated with electoral violence in Kanyama Constituency of Lusaka District, Zambia.

C. *Theoretical Framework*

This study was guided by Greed-Grievance Theory propounded by Collier and Anke (2001). “Greed” is shorthand for the argument that rivals in conflicts are motivated by a desire to better their situation than others. In this case, the benefits derived from organizing violence or motivations of greed must pay well for the organizers.

Collier and Anke (2001) holds that politicians employ the hungry, unemployed, and vulnerable youths paying meagre hand-outs to unleash violence/terror and mayhem on the poor and the opponents during elections. The basic tenet of the greed theory is that greed is about opportunities faced by the rebel group. Greed is used here as a desire for private gain. It is argued in this theory that the political leaders see some opportunities to gain either politically, economically, or socially through engagement in violence by disadvantaging the opponents to interact with the electorate. Political opportunities would include political leadership, which at times serves narrow and selfish interests. This is also apparent in the manner in which incumbent politicians embark on extending their terms beyond the stipulated periods, a situation likely to cause political instability (Collier & Anke, 2001; Centre for Democracy and Development, 2010).

Thus, this theory provides two variables (Greed and grievances) that could be intertwined in such a way that it may be difficult to tell from the face value, which is the main motivating factor in a conflict situation. However, whereas grievance would provide a legitimate course of violence as it is assumed that the result could be positive for the larger society, greed is not. Understanding the possible factors that have been contributing to electoral violence was a concern of this study.

Further, Collier and Anke (2001) contend that violent conflicts may either result from “grievances”, for example related to economic inequality, discrimination, or political exclusion, or from the “greed” of opportunistic, political entrepreneurs, who organize violence if this provides the shortest way to power and wealth. Alternatively, political and criminal leaders may have more self-centered motives. It is further argued in this theory that violence may arise when a politician wishes to engage in ethnic cleansing in order to drive out groups traditionally backing political opponents. He or she may also wish to drive certain groups off the location, in order to make way for occupation by supporters. This is always associated with criminal leaders who wish to have taken the opportunity to increase their areas of control. They may also exploit episodes of violence to recruit new members. Based on this line of reasoning, it was important to adopt this theory when exploring elements surrounding electoral violence in Kanyama Constituency.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. *Research Design*

Case study design was ideal for this study as it allowed the researcher to explore causes of electoral violence in a detailed manner (Yin, 2018). Due to its qualitative nature of the design, it offered an opportunity to the researcher to interact with the study participants from various organizations who shared their real experience concerning factors behind electoral violence.

B. *Study Population*

A population or target population is a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects, or events,

that conform to specific criteria and to which we intend to generalize the results of research. The characteristic of the unit or group distinguishes that group from others. It is the total number of units from which data can potentially be collected (Bryman, 2012). In this study, the population comprised the following key stakeholders from Kanyama Constituency and those with a strong foothold in electoral process outside Kanyama district but located within Lusaka district: All Political parties with structures across Zambia, Faith Based Organizations (FBO), Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ), Governance Elections Advocacy Research Services (GEARS), Transparency International Zambia (TIZ), Human Rights Commission (HRC), Ministry of Justice (MOJ), and Zambia Police (ZP) based in Kanyama. The researcher also generated views from Civil Society Organizations (CSO) with interest in governance, elections, and democratic stability. These groups were considered to have information on electoral violence in Zambia because they are key stakeholders in politics and electoral processes.

C. Sample Size

The sample for this study was twenty-eight (28) participants. This sample depended on data saturation where there was no more new information coming from the participants concerning the study themes (Patricia & Lawrence, 2015). See Table I below for sample segmentation details.

TABLE I: SAMPLE SEGMENTATION

S/N	Nature of the institution	Designation of the participants	Target sample size
1	Political Parties	Senior Party Officials.	9
2	Electoral Commission of Zambia	Principal Electoral Officer and Senior Electoral Officer.	2
3	Zambia Police	Officer in charge and those in charge of operations	3
4	Faith Based Organisations	Clergy Men /Women	6
5	Civil Society Organisations	Directors and Programme Officers	4
9	Human Rights Commission	Senior Staff	2
10	Ministry of Justice	Deputy Chief Legal Officer and Senior Research Governance Officer.	2
	Total		28

D. Sampling Technique

The researcher used homogenous purposive sampling to select participants from political parties. This means that the researcher focused on participants with similar or specified characteristics with interest in electoral violence. The researcher also used expert purposive sampling to select officials from Electoral Commission of Zambia, Zambia Police, MOJ, HRC, TIZ, GEARS and Faith Based Organizations. This type of purposive sampling focuses on participants with technical know-how on a particular issue. In light of this study, the aforementioned officials were expected to provide valuable insights on electoral violence in Kanyama Constituency by the virtual of them being key stakeholders in the electoral process in Zambia (Hamed, 2016).

E. Instruments for Data Generation

This study used interviews and document review to generate primary and secondary data, respectively. These methods of data generation/production were appropriate for generating a great deal of information about electoral violence in Kanyama Constituency.

1) Semi-structured interviews for primary data

Interviews are the predominant modes of data generation in qualitative research. The study employed semi-structured interviews with all categories of participants. The semi structured interviews were employed because they are more flexible, and they yielded extra rich information. The semi-structured interviews helped in making follow up questions and seeking clarifications on specific information (Barret, 2018). Each interview lasted for about 20 minutes.

F. Document Analysis for Secondary Data

Secondary data was obtained through desk review. This involved reviewing published books, journals, articles, dissertations and thesis, policy documents on electoral violence. The study also benefited from electronic information available on electoral violence focusing on its causes and how it can be managed.

1) Data analysis

Data generated was analyzed using thematic method. The data analysis began with a transcription of all the 28 interviews. This was followed by data cleaning to ensure only necessary information remains. This process required reading through the transcribed texts several times. Thereafter, themes were identified by highlighting key issues in the interview transcripts. The information from document review was analyzed by identifying key issues related to the information obtained from the interviews.

G. Data Quality Assurance

Trustworthiness was employed to ensure consistency with naturalistic inquiry since the study involved human beings. Four elements of trustworthiness were employed which included credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability.

H. Ethical Considerations

The researcher considered a range of ethical considerations as ethics are key aspect in conducting meaningful research involving human beings. All ethical issues were followed. Firstly, a clearance letter was obtained from the Directorate of Research and graduate Studies. Secondly, permission letters were also obtained from the secretariat of targeted organizations. Thirdly, participation by participants was through consent. No one was coerced to participate.

III. RESEARCH FINDINGS

A. Elements Associated with Electoral Violence during Elections in Kanyama Constituency

The researcher had an opportunity to engage stakeholders from various institutions as a way of soliciting their views, perspectives and thoughts on the elements associated with electoral violence during elections in Kanyama Constituency. The analysis of data established seven major themes: Low socio-economic status, hunger for power, political immaturity and cadreism, selectivity in the application of the law, low education background, high population density and ethnicity groupings.

1) Low socio-economic status

The study revealed that the low socio-economic status of Kanyama residence was among the major causes of electoral violence. Participants mentioned that the majority of the people, especially the youths, were living in poverty due to high levels of unemployment. It was stated that during election period, politicians could take advantage of this situation by giving these youths small hand outs in the range of k20 and k50 to cause violence to the opponents. The following oral responses substantiate the stated theme:

P20 (Male) from organization U stated that:

The moral ground of the Zambian people is not upstanding to a point where if you are given money, you don't actually resist, you end up accepting it because you need to attend to one or two things. Otherwise, the bottom line is that what causes violence is poverty.

P3 (Male) from organization N observed that:

I think the main cause of electoral violence in Kanyama is poverty itself. You know you have high levels of poverty in Kanyama, a high number of youths are not working. so, most of them are just idle and hence the political players both the opposition and the ruling would use these youths by enticing them with small token of amount or gift like beer to propagate violence.

Similarly, P10 (Male) from organization R observed that:

Kanyama has high levels of poverty, so it is easy to pay the poor and send them to do acts of violence. Sometimes a political party member will just pay people to go and destabilize the rally which is taking place.

2) Hunger for power

Hunger for power was another theme which was established as one of the causes of electoral violence in Kanyama Constituency. Participants mentioned that in most cases, politicians would do whatever it takes in order for them to emerge victorious for the contested position. It was stated that some of them could use violence in order to intimidate the opponents. The following oral responses substantiate the stated theme:

P11 (Male) from organization R stated that:

What causes electoral violence is greed among the leadership, especially the previous regime. They did not want to lose power, they just wanted to hold on to power at all costs, even forcing people to support them when they did not want. So, they did not want anyone to go against their party and if you do that, you are deemed to be an enemy.

P1 (Male) from organization N narrated that:

You know elections at Parliamentary and Local Government levels are a winner takes it all. So, people want to win an election at all costs, and they will do anything within their powers to ensure that they win or return their seats. So, the competitive nature of elections in our country also allows for violence to thrive therefore we need to find a way to redefine the process of elections.

3) Political immaturity and cadreism

The study found that political immaturity which encompasses character assassination, tribal remarks and politics of insults and disturbing of political rallies triggers electoral violence in Kanyama Constituency. Participants mentioned that some politicians have a tendency of not embracing the value of democracy by focusing on issue-based politics on how they intend to address social problems faced by electorates. Instead, they focus on attacking others who also do not receive this in good faith, which in most cases degenerates into violence. The following oral responses substantiate the stated theme:

P6 (Male) from organization O stated that:

In the previous Government there were a lot of cadres, and those cadres had more powers than any other person. Let me say they took over the management of the country and in that respect, because cadres were supported, and they couldn't be controlled. So, the wings that involved in policing and implementing whatever laws were powerless because cadreism was at highest pick and that caused the biggest problem.

P14 (Female) from organization P stated that:

On the causes of electoral violence, I would say open careless statements by political players. That's by embracing offensive political slogans. For instance, when someone just says Pamaka. So, for the street kids, the moment they see a punch, they will think that is a fight.

P7 (Male) from organization Q had the following views to share by mentioning that:

Mostly what has been causing electoral violence in Kanyama Constituency is the reaction from some cadres especially of the ruling party as a result those from the opposition would want to react back. Some cadres would actually attack some of the branches of the opponents and leaders of the party, as a result, the cadres would want revenge. Mostly that has been the cause of the violence.

4) Selectivity in the application of the law

The study revealed that the wings of the Government that have a mandate to conduct elections and those bestowed with a responsibility of policing elections have a tendency of being selective in applying the law in an event there was breach of electoral code of conduct either by a candidate or supporters. Participants mentioned that the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) in most cases could pay a blind eye to the offenders especially those from the ruling party. It was stated that those from the ruling party were untouchable and as such, punishments were rarely levelled against them hence promoting the culture of violence as a new normal. Participants also mentioned that the police service in most cases only saved the interest of ruling party especially in the manner they administered the Public Order Act (POA). The following oral responses substantiate the stated theme:

P26 (Male) from organization X when asked to comment on what has been causing electoral violence in Kanyama narrated that:

I think it is the way the police manage the Public Order Act (POA), and this has been a trend. This is related to the freedom of association, especially during the campaigns. The biased manner in which they administer the POA angers certain groups of the people, especially in the opposition. They will feel that the police are there just to support the ruling party and so they would want to oppose at almost every instance. So, in most instances this causes violence because you have this angry mob who feels that their rights are being trampled on so they would want to do something outside the law.

P9 (Male) from organization Q stated that:

According to my observation is that most of the things are not done fairly. You will find that

the ruling party would use the police in order to intimidate others, so people resort to violence because they feel that they are not treated fairly, so the only way to fight fire is fire with fire.

5) Low education background

Findings also suggest that electoral violence in Kanayama Constituency escalated due to high levels of illiteracy among the residence. Participants mentioned that the majority of Kanyama residents do not understand the value of democracy and why leaders should be voted for in a free and fair manner. It was stated that causing violence was perceived as the only way of championing the agenda of winning an election as opposed to using democratic means such as tolerance of divergent views, freedom of assembly, speech and preaching of peace among others. The following oral responses substantiate the stated theme:

P4 (Male) from organization M commented that:

Kanayama Constituency is always a hot spot for electoral violence and the obvious reasons are that first of all you need to be cognizant that Kanyama sits in some kind of settlement, and you find a lot of people. The population is too much and in as much as the population is too much, there is little information in terms of civic and voter education. Most of our brothers and sisters who are there are not enlightened on what is wrong and okay during campaigns.

Similarly, P13 (Male) from organization P remarked that:

From my own perspective, what has been causing electoral violence in Kanyama Constituency is ignorance. That is a major ingredient. What I mean by this is that the elite who participate in elections from different political parties from time in memorial take advantage of the uneducated. They think fighting and insulting is what makes someone popular. So, they take advantage of the people and the bedrock of all that is ignorance.

6) High population density

Findings also revealed that the presence of electoral violence in the past general elections in Kanyama Constituency was as a result of high population density. Participants mentioned that the Constituency was a hot cake for the politicians and perhaps they could use all possible means to win the majority votes. Participants also mentioned that high density population was difficult to police during elections as the security wings could not manage to reach the scene of violence in time. This was coupled with the nature of Kanyama constituency where there is no proper road network to facilitate quick movement of the law enforcement agencies. The study also indicated that the police force was not enough to police the large population. The following oral responses substantiate the stated theme:

P26 (Male) from organization X commented that:

Very interesting, politically, Kanyama has been very attractive constituency among political parties. One, because of its population. You may be aware that the Constituency is densely populated. Even in terms of voter register, we have large numbers of registered voters and that attract political interest among the participating political parties leading to more competition and that competition sometimes leads to frictions were even electoral violence erupts.

P1 (Male) from organization M went on record by stating that:

What leads to repeated violence is that Kanyama itself is a place which is difficult to police because of one, the large population and two, just its geographical nature. It has very few accessible roads, so it is very difficult for officers to move in in time where there is violence to quench it. so, it is very difficult to monitor other places because of accessibility. So, you will find that there is an issue in a particular area, so for the police to move in it is very difficult, it takes time. And also owing to the manpower that Kanyama has, it is very little to police the population which is currently there.

7) Ethnicity

Ethnic groupings were another factor which was cited to be among the causes of electoral violence in Kanyama constituency. Participants mentioned that Kanyama has got a history of tribal groupings who may not tolerate other tribes to dominate politically in their locality. It was stated that even before independence,

UNIP and ANC supporters could heavily crush there in Kanyama in trying to solicit for political support beyond their boundaries. The following oral responses substantiate the stated theme:

P26 (Male) from organization L narrated that:

Like I said, it is the issue of intolerance, issue of co-existence and if you remember, Kanyama has got a history of violence from the time of colonial days. You remember that Kanyama was a battle ground between UNIP and ANC and even after independence Kanyama remained a hot cake for political intolerance. So, there is that history of Kanyama being notorious for violence. Why? Because there could be ethnic dominance. You know Kanyama is basically more of people from Northern Rhodesia and later on they were now blending with North Eastern Rhodesia with their own political affiliation. So that could be the cause of electoral violence. So, any political party that has established itself in Kanyama Constituency would want to dominate the politics there. Anything outside that, there is a fight.

Similar to the above sentiments, P5 (Male) from organization O stated that:

What has been causing violence here in Kanyama is tribalism. Here we have a lot of Lozies and Tongas and these tribes do not want another one to rule apart from theirs.

IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

A. Elements Associated with Electoral Violence during Elections in Kanyama Constituency

1) Low socio-economic status

The study revealed that what perpetuated violence in Kanayama Constituency was as a result of poverty levels that people were going through. The study also demonstrated that the majority of the youths in Kanyama constituency had no employment that could help them earn a living. There was an impression that when it was an election period, it was an opportunity for the people, especially the youths, to make some money in order for them to meet some basic needs. This was influenced by selfish politicians who took advantage of these youths by hiring them to cause mayhem so that they could intimidate the political opponents. However, the results tend to suggest that the amount that the youths were given by the politicians who hired them to cause mayhem could not even sustain them as it was not enough. The implication of this finding is that poverty levels can cause someone to make irrational decision against the principles of democracy which focuses on upholding of the rule of law, accountability, fair and free elections among others (Mupeta *et al.*, 2020; Muntengwa *et al.*, 2020; Mwanangombe *et al.*, 2020).

The above findings do not tally with Sialombe (2019) who found that lack of trust in ECZ and Zambian Police, institutional weakness of political parties, and those mandated to manage the elections, ineffective conflict resolution mechanisms by various political parties enhanced electoral violence in Zambia.

On the other hand, this could be a confirmation that Political instability is something that happens in political systems that are not developed. Such political systems and their societies show certain characteristics that are conducive to political instability, including dysfunctional political structures, weak political organizations and procedures that are not institutionalized, structural simplicity, economic backwardness, and individuals with a high propensity to invest in power. As these characteristics diminish, that is to say, as these societies become more “developed,” more “Westernized,” more “modern” and older, political instability would end (Centre for Democracy and Development, 2010).

There is an impression that poverty causes serious problems to the electoral process in Zambia. For instance, in the context of Mandevu and Munali Constituencies of Lusaka district, Zambia, Muchanga (2017) on the study of factors that influenced voters’ choice during tripartite elections found that the electorates were mostly influenced by the candidates who had financial muscles to bribe them. There is an impression that poverty is responsible for driving people to be impatient, short-sighted, easier to ignore useful information and making unreasonable decisions (Yaren, 2021). Based on this line of reasoning, there is no doubt that high levels of poverty in Kanyama constituency influenced the youths to make unreasonable decisions by accepting little amount of money ranging from k20 and k50 so that they can cause mayhem on the political opponents.

2) Hunger for power

The study revealed that hunger for power was one of the factors that caused violence in Kanyama Constituency. Participants felt that there was a tendency among politicians wanting to cling to power and as such, they could do anything in order for them to emerge victorious for the contested position. There was an impression that some of them could use violence in order to suppress the opponents. The implication of this finding is that hunger for power could be one of the reasons why some politicians find it hard to quit

politics, accepts electoral results or the Courts decisions in an event that illegality were noticed in the manner they won an election. This finding tallies with Greed-Grievance Theory where politicians employ different tactics just to win an election or remain in power (Collier & Anke, 2001). There has been an observation that electoral violence is levied by political actors to purposefully influence the process and outcome of elections, and it involves coercive acts against humans, property, and infrastructure (Bekoe, 2012; Harish & Toha, 2019; Høglund, 2009). Liswaniso (2016) also argued that the prevalent electoral violence in some of the post independent states is due to political leaders who still want to hold on to power.

3) *Political immaturity*

The responses of the study paint a picture that political players in Kanyama Constituency were not basing their campaigns on issue-based politics instead, their messages focused on character assassination, tribal remarks and politics of insults and disturbing of political rallies. The implication of this approach to campaigning angered the opponents who could not receive these remarks with open hands as a result it triggered electoral violence. Participants felt that those who seek public office in Kanayama Constituency had no regard for multiparty politics which should be anchored on unity, peace, respect and embracing of political divergent views. There was an observation that most of the political players in Kanyama Constituency had not yet known how to practice real politics which focuses on telling the electorates on how they intend to address social challenges that communities are crippling with. This finding resonates well with Chebii (2014) who found some cheap conduct of media houses during election period in Kenya by arguing that, to some extent media encourages hate speech, running parallel tallying centers, misrepresentation of information, and incitement.

4) *Selectivity in the application of the law*

The study revealed that electoral violence was triggered in Kanyama Constituency due to the manner in which the wings of the government like the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) who are mandated to conduct the elections and the Zambia Police (ZP) who are mandated to police elections applied the law. These wings of government were perceived not to execute their duties diligently. In the light of the Electoral Commission of Zambia, participants felt that the Commission in most cases could pay a blind eye to the offenders especially those from the ruling party. It was perceived that those from the ruling party were untouchable and as such punishments were rarely levelled against them. In the light of the police, findings give the impression that the police service in most cases only saved the interest of the ruling party especially in the manner they administered the Public Order Act (POA). It was perceived that the police in most cases restricted or denied the opposition political party to hold their meetings on the pretext of less manpower. Therefore, the findings suggest that when the other political players were denied permission to conduct their campaigns as planned, it became a source of problems as the party in question could go ahead and have a political meeting which sometimes resulted into attacks. The implication of this is that those that were unfairly treated could take the law into their own hands by defending themselves in an event that they were attacked by those from the ruling party as a result degenerating into electoral violence. This situation can be likened to the claim made by Fischer (2017) who observed that when there is violence, Civil Society Groups, Organizations, prominent citizens, and religious leaders appear to be reluctant to assign blame to the perpetrators and instead call for restraints on both sides.

5) *Low education background*

The study also revealed that electoral violence in Kanyama constituency escalated due to high levels of illiteracy among the residents. There was an impression that the majority of Kanyama residents had limited understanding of the purposes of an election and as to why leaders should be voted in a free and fair manner. As observed by Muleya (2015), Muleya *et al.* (2019); Simwatachela *et al.* (2020) and Mwase *et al.* (2020).

Education plays a vital role in the communal well-being of a given society. In this instance, responses suggest that for them, violence was perceived as only way of championing the agenda of winning an election as opposed to using democratic means such as tolerance of divergent views, freedom of assembly, speech and preaching of peace among others. The implication of low education background to the electoral process is that politicians do take advantage of such communities by manipulating the residents to cause mayhem on their behalf. The finding on low education background departs from Phiri and Hamauswa, (2017) who found that delayed announcing of results (25.9%) and corruption (18.1%), were the leading causes of electoral violence in Zambia.

6) *High population density*

The study also revealed that electoral violence in Kanyama Constituency was associated with high population density. The first impression of high population density was for the political players to win the majority votes by all possible means. There was a clear indication that Kanyama constituency was a hot cake for the political players as the Constituency had a potential to swing the election results obtained by a candidate. Therefore, each and every political party participating would want to gun as many votes as possible. The second impression was that high density population was difficult for police during elections

as police could not manage to reach the scene of violence in time. This was coupled with the nature of Kanyama Constituency where there is no proper road network to facilitate quick movement by law enforcement agencies. The study also revealed that Kanyama Constituency had limited security personnel to contend with the high population especially during the election period. The implication of the limited security and densely population is that when there is violence, the security wings become overpowered by the political party mobs henceforth, leading to escalated violence. This finding is not in tandem with factors that cause violence like greed among politicians and anger of deprivation advanced by Greed-Grievance Theory (Collier & Anke, 2001).

7) *Ethnicity*

The study also revealed that ethnicity grouping had a role to play in repeated electoral violence in Kanyama Constituency. There was an impression that the Constituency has some sought of tribal groupings who may not want to be ruled by others. Thus, it was observed that anything outside their wish, for instance imposing a candidate from another grouping could result in violence. There was also an impression that the narrative of tribal grouping in Kanayama constituency could be traced back to the days of UNIP and ANC before independence. The study observed that UNIP and ANC supporters could heavily crush in Kanyama if they made any attempt to solicit for political support beyond their boundaries. After independence, the study revealed that the Constituency has been dominated by those from Northwestern, Western and Southern provinces of Zambia respectively. However, there is no empirical study that has been conducted in Kanyama to ascertain the extent to which tribal groupings is the source of violence in Kanyama Constituency as other tribes from other parts of the country have won several positions in the Constituency.

The above finding is in tandem with Phiri and Hamauswa, (2017) who associated the causes and effects of violence to regionalism, division of tribal groupings, hatred, lack of freedom of speech, movements and associations, stress trauma and loss of self-esteem. The above findings can also be likened to the situation in Namibia where political violence was influenced by discrimination among ethnic groups (Liswaniso, 2016).

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. *Conclusion*

The study found that electoral violence during elections in Kanyama Constituency was caused by low socio-economic status, hunger for power, political immaturity and cadreism, selectivity in the application of the law, low education background, high population density and ethnicity groupings. While some stakeholders are engaged in fighting electoral violence, they have failed to address this conflict due to the focus on intermediate measures which are only seen during election period as opposed to finding permanent solutions. Thus, if elections in Kanyama are to be free from violence, it is cardinal that the fight against poverty is escalated and the laws that regulates elections must be applied fairly.

B. *Recommendations*

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made among others.

- 1) The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development should speed up the process of formation and enhancing of youth skills training centers so as to help the youths acquire necessary surviving skills in lower income Constituencies.
- 2) There is a need for the Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security to beef up the presence of police in the area. Generally, the current police force may not handle the large population in Kanyama.
- 3) There is need for Electoral Commission of Zambia through the Ministry of Justice to enact the law that will make busing of political cadres from outside Kanyama illegal. The busing of cadres increases the likelihood of electoral violence as the bused cadres cannot be easily identified by the locals hence, they may not fear to engage in acts of violence.
- 4) The Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) to operate on an open policy which allows all stakeholders to have full knowledge of its operations as lack of open policy causes suspicions which is a source of anger which sometimes leads to violence. The open policy should cover the entire process of election from the point of nominating candidates up to the point of announcing the results and the winners.

VI. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Authors declare that they do not have any conflict of interest.

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