3. Zimbabwe

Higher Education and
Student Politics in Zimbabwe

Annie Barbara Chikwanha

Introduction

This chapter analyzes the nature and role of student activism in Zimbabwe since 1980. As in many other countries, students in Zimbabwe have been at the forefront of the democratization debate and process since colonial rule. Since the early 1990s, they have become more organized to respond to societal demands and to demand good governance by forging alliances with other civic groups. Changes in the political and economic environment played a significant role in shaping these attitudes. After the long war for independence in the early 1980s, students rallied behind the government in the transformation phase and back then, most of their energy was directed towards community service. Towards the end of the 1980s, prescriptions of the economic structural adjustment programme had begun to affect the education sector and suspicions of the government's intentions towards the student body began to surface. By 1989, the one party state advocated by the government had become the pivotal point in student activism (Sithole 2001). Students felt the government was reneging on the democratic ideals fought for and this was a clear betrayal of the liberation struggle. The current government, led by architects of the armed struggle, hailed student activism during the struggle but in the post liberation war period, it has systematically denied students political space. This marginalization has compelled students in institutions of higher learning to organize and reclaim political space they had before (Melucci 1996). They therefore expressed their disenchantment through radical activism and did not accept their expected roles with a minimum of protest as the ruling party would have liked.

Throughout Zimbabwe's twenty-year democracy, students have functioned as an episodic oppositional force. They have periodically demonstrated against the government's policies which they view as violating their freedom and dignity. At times they demonstrated in solidarity with whichever group had grievances against the government but most of the time, they demand the improvement of their own conditions as students. This included constantly checking the environment so as to ensure their employment prospects. They in fact occupy significant political space and yet their ultimate aim appears to be the carving out of a desirable future for the university's educated.

Does this mean then that their rallying behind calls for change is merely instrumental? Could it be then that since one-party parliamentary 'democracy' works in clientelist networks, this compels students to constantly check their opportunities for mobility? What ideas of society and citizenship are implied in their activism? And how does religious belonging affect ideas about citizens or constructions about citizenship? Whilst an overview of the University of Zimbabwe's students' union and the Zimbabwe National Students' Union (Zinasu)[1] activities shed much light on the activities and orientations of the student body, it is important to note that this obscures those activities students participate in as individuals. The national students' union has shifted to become the fulcrum for most student activism in the country and behavioural cues for the student body seem to emanate from there.

The chapter starts off with a background briefing on the issues that have impacted significantly on student activism since 1980. The focus is on key events and legislation that are largely viewed as trigger points in student activism. This is followed by a brief description of the methodology employed in the study and an exposé of who the students are. This is done by seeking answers to the following questions: What is their background and how does it influence how they fit onto the intellectual social map? What are their aspirations as individuals? How do they intend to achieve their dreams? This is followed by a section on select forms of activism and it contains findings on student patterns of activism. The main issues addressed are: How is their activism defined? How do students deal with intra-student body tensions? How much space is there for female students to participate in student activities? and How has the government responded to student activism over time and space? The chapter concludes with a brief analysis of the implications of this activism on democratic governance. It is important to understand here what trigger points are in student activism since 1980.

Every group of student leaders in Zimbabwe has been arrested since 1989. The university has also been frequently closed by the university authorities and at times, those deemed to be disruptive were expelled. The longest shutdown of the university was in 1989 when the institution was closed for ten months as students resisted the University Amendment Act which came into effect in 1990.

The act was viewed all round as a clear attempt to curb academic freedom by breeding an educated patriotic class that was desired by the regime. The academic community was appalled as they thought the demise of the colonial regime would also be the end of all forms of repression, intellectual repression included. Unfortunately for Zimbabwe, the gagging of academics led to a loss of many bright lecturers who as immigrants, the government argued, should not have meddled in local politics. Shaddreck Gutto, a Kenyan law academic teaching at the university then, was amongst the casualtiess that were declared *persona-non grata*. Many lecturers were accused of fomenting student unrest. Student marches and demonstrations were violently disrupted but this did not stop students from devising all sorts of tactics to make their point. In some cases, they would assemble in the city in a bid to avoid the security blockages that were often placed around the city after the campus intelligence spies would have leaked the plans for a demonstration.

Towards the end of the 1980s, the University of Zimbabwe reacted very strongly to the one-party state agenda. Both students and lecturers led debates and meetings to discuss the one-party state and this became the order of life on and off campus. This was nothing new as in many other African countries, universities have been part of the various democratization struggles (Nyamnjoh and Nantang 2002). Whilst the government concentrated on control and order, neglect of academic standards became apparent as many PhDs left teaching to former teaching assistants. Likewise, many middle class parents who could afford to, began to send their children *en masse* to South African universities. The university slowly became an institution of higher learning for mostly the peasants and other low-income category earners.

In its short history after independence, the University of Zimbabwe has gone through five vice-chancellors in a period of twenty years. The president of the country, Robert Mugabe, assumed the overall position of chancellor of the university and later, when two other state universities were established, he also presided over all of them. This completed party/government control and hegemony over the direction of education and it also signaled the intolerance for diversity. With three state universities in different regions, the president as chancellor would, it was hoped by the ruling elite, symbolize the unity of the people and more importantly, of the future leaders. Naturally the confusion hampering effective and efficient governance was to replay itself in the universities as presidential appointees placed their loyalties elsewhere crucifying scholarship in the process. When Vice-Chancellor Walter Kamba resigned in 1990, he publicly cited the "the presence of many unprofessional fingers" in the running of the university. Through the Ministers of Higher Education, the universities soon became victims of the politics of exclusion. Here ethnic loyalties were superceded by liberation struggle loyalties as these ministers were often not from the ruling elite's clan but had to demonstrate their loyalty to the presidency's ideological preferences.

With such a background, it becomes important to understand what informs student activism in Zimbabwe and how attitudes to student and national politics have been formed over time.

Methodology

Semi-structured open-ended interviews were held with a wide range of students (across disciplines, gender, age, and year of study) for comparative material on how the students' struggles and how the political and economic strife in Zimbabwe contributed to the shaping of student activism. The leadership of the students' organizations (including former leaders) were interviewed for information on the organizations' goals and how these have changed over time. Selected student leaders were interviewed to get insight into their strategies and action orientations on different issues. Bearing in mind that not all students are actively involved in politics and other community-related activities, it was interesting to find out the background of those who participate. New data collected through a survey tapping into the students' attitudes, perceptions, fears and aspirations in relation to issues pertaining to governance, employment, leadership, wealth and the meaning of citizenship, makes it possible to test Mancur Olson's long standing hypothesis on collective action. Olson argues that members do not join interest groups in order to gain influence over government policy. Instead they are motivated to join by selective incentives.

The data was collected from two universities in different towns located in different provinces with different resource bases and different access to opportunities such as employment and mobility. The groups of students targeted for study were at Africa University in Mutare and at the University of Zimbabwe in Harare. All the students are organized into a national students' union, the Zimbabwe National Students' Union (ZINASU).[2]

This study took place during a very dark period in Zimbabwe's political history and the students were trapped right in the middle of the political tension. All universities were sharply divided into either ruling or opposition party enthusiasts - (at least publicly). Zimbabwe slid into anarchy in February 2000 after the public rejected the government's constitutional draft. White- owned land seizures by the war veterans of the liberation struggle did not spare the black community from the wrath of these state-backed marauding bands. A bloody post-election campaign left more than one hundred people dead after the 2000 parliamentary elections that saw a very new opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), scooping almost half of the seats. The new party had several Members of Parliament who had held leadership positions in the students' union at different times. This further heightened the tension and both the ruling party and the opposition competed hard to win converts amongst the student body. In a bid to hang on to power, the ruling party unleashed a reign of terror and many

youths (unemployed) became involved in the white-owned farm invasions and these too accused students of sleeping with the enemy, the MDC. The hostile political and economic environment undoubtedly influenced the findings to some extent.

This study was delayed for some time because all public universities were closed for a long time after a spate of battles with the riot police and an indefinite strike by lecturers. Eventually the study was done when the institutions reopened but they were closed again within less than a month of reopening due to another lecturers' strike over cash flow problems. All these problems affected the originally planned methodology that was designed to target a larger sample at all four public universities in the country. As a result, only students at two universities were part of the study and other tertiary institutions were left out. The small sample, [n = 98], does not claim to be representative of the universe of students in higher institutions in Zimbabwe. Its main purpose was to reach a broader number of students that would enable the findings to be generalized to some extent. The sample was stratified by discipline of study, year of study, and gender *(See Appendix A)*.

The sample had a good gender balance (51 per cent males/49 per cent females) even though the females at the university are still outnumbered by a ratio of almost 3:1. The point was to get the female voice on student activism, hence their deliberate oversampling. Most of the students in the sample were from the Social Science Faculty which is also the largest faculty at the University of Zimbabwe. The Education Faculty is equally large but because of the closure, it was difficult to get many students. The interviewed students were the ones who had stayed on at the two campuses on the weekend the questionnaires were administered. Generally, the sample reflects the populations of the different disciplines. The low figure for the first years (16 per cent) was due to the discontinuities caused by the switch over to the Western semester system in 2000 and reverting back to the old three-term system barely two years later.[3] The result was a delayed intake of first year students. Many of the students come from other regions outside of the two cities, Harare and Mutare, where the two universities are located, hence a large number still reside on the campuses. In the sample, 71 per cent stayed on the campus and 20 per cent lived with relatives. Only two per cent lived with their parents. Students are a religious lot as evidenced by the plethora of denominations on some campuses. The largest group belonged to Pentecostal churches (49 per cent), followed by the Roman Catholic Church at 27 per cent and the other Protestant churches, seven per cent. An almost equal proportion, (eight per cent did not belong to any church.

Who are the Students?

"...the voice of reason, of the nation, the canon of the quivering and the jealous defenders of peace, freedom and justice." Editorial comment, The College Times, December 2001

Being a student, which is a transitory stage (Baizerman and Magnuson 1996:1), creates space for a large segment of the youth population to experiment with various identities. Whilst this identity protects them from exploitation and abuse, it also exonerates them from onerous responsibilities. What then are the students' conceptions of themselves, of society and of the world? And more importantly, what is their perception of their role in the political and social space they have carved out for themselves? How do students define their role and what is their ultimate goal? What does being a student involve and what are the implications? What is their background (class, area of origin -- rural/urban) and What are their aspirations? Joel Barkan's (1975) study of students in the 1970s is important here as he asked questions back then that are still relevant today.

University students' possess knowledge that is of a higher standard and it opens access to many other opportunities. It is therefore normal for them to be status oriented. As a group with some status to preserve, Barkan (1975:129) argues that 'politics of self-interest' makes them challenge the state when their interests are directly threatened and support it when it suits them. Another argument is that students are constantly aware that they are institutionally powerless, therefore they need to always engage in new methods of struggle and new forms of organization to show their disenchantment. These inner contradictions are portrayed as a challenge by the ruling party/government hence hostilities and suspicions have largely determined the relationship between the two parties.

In many cases, students portray themselves as demoralized individuals who are constantly victimized by the government. They thus view themselves as victims of an unjust system whose purpose is to redress the nation's problem. At the same time, it is important to be cautious by acknowledging that studying does have a liberating and a liberalizing effect that does create space for the taking on of multiple identities. The absence of parental control gives students a chance for various forms of social experimentation with their personal and social identity. Could the activism we see then be simply an identity-pursuing project by the students? In Zimbabwe, the absence of an effective opposition left space that was filled in by the students *(*especially university*)* for a long time and they did translate many public concerns into action. The violation of human rights by the government has been one of their issues for a long time. However, as a privileged lot with access to information, it is amazing that their activism is not only largely political but also violent. What causes this violent disposition amongst the elite of the youths? Unemployed youths in the city capitalized on every public demon-

stration ever staged by the students forcing the government to step in and contain the demonstrations militarily.

Coping with the effects of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme and the changing world has forced the students to become more organized to respond to societal demands and to demand good governance. Though most of their actions are directed against the government, for example when workers go on strike, denouncing corruption and human rights violations, they have at times taken sides with the government, confusing the public on what they actually stand for as when they demonstrated violently against the West and South Africa blaming them for Samora Machel's death in 1986.

Socio-economic Profile of the Students

The socio-economic background of university students in Zimbabwe has changed tremendously since independence. Up to 1980, the University of Zimbabwe was the only university in the country and it had a population of two thousand mostly white students from a middle class background. By the end of the 1980s, this population had increased five-fold following the increased access to secondary school education for blacks. White students withdrew from the university in droves in 1980-81 and went outside the country to finish off their degrees.[4] Whereas the colonial university had drawn its students from the middle and upper classes of the colonial society, the new government's policies opened up access to the peasant sector – a factor blamed for the political radicalism of the current crop of students.

The socio-economic background indicators relied on in this study are education and employment of parents, their occupation, and the last school attended before enrolling at the university. Employment of parents was crucial immediately after independence and after 1980. These two periods are important in that, in the immediate aftermath of independence, mainly children of prominent people were at the university with very few outstanding performers from the lower strata. By the end of the 1980s, many politicians and prominent people were again sending their children overseas to get more or less the same degrees they would get at the local university. During the same time period, only 28 per cent of the students were from subsistence farming households and by 1990 these had gone down to 17 per cent.[5] We can thus conclude that the same class background of students, from the black professional working class, continued to dominate the population at the university. As before, access to university was disproportionately in favour of children of civil servants and other public sector employees. In the sample, teachers were the largest occupational group among students' fathers.[6] The government grant and loan system could only accept surety from civil servants. Employment status of the parents does tell us a lot about access to university since only employed people qualified to guarantee the student loans. Students of unemployed parents had to seek a relative who would sign on

behalf of the parents. Whilst this assured availability of funding, it also absolved the students of responsibility as the contracts did not bind them directly.

Twenty-two years later, almost one third of the students (31 per cent) at the universities in Zimbabwe still come from the professional group that is dominated by teachers *(see Table 1)*. The second largest group is the unskilled category (26 per cent) which again is dominated by civil servants since the police force, the army and prison warders are in that category. Their service makes it easy for them to guarantee the loans. At least 15 per cent of the students have parents who are skilled workers and another 14 per cent comes from a background of subsistence farming usually in the rural areas. A few commercial farmers, (seven per cent), send their children to the local university. The educational background of parents is more likely to influence the decision to help children through college since students from such a background have a better chance (resource wise) of getting to college. Again, the majority have parents who did not go through university themselves with about 15 per cent only of the sample having parents with degrees and again most of these were teachers. A significant percentage, 17 per cent, indicated that their parents had only had seven years of primary schooling. These factors all combine to present a profile of the average student at the university as coming from the working and peasant class family. It is also important to note that the parents, just like their children in college now, are also the same generation that endured the violence associated with the liberation struggle itself.

The issue of language is important in any analysis of the socio-economic background of university students because it very often is the first insignia of what the student is. It denotes everything about the students' background from the school they went to, where one's parents currently live, that is, whether it is a former white suburb or a black township, the ethnic group they belong to and what to expect from them in the event of a social relationship. With the majority of the students coming from rural areas and having attended 'rural' mission Group C and government Group B schools, many students spoke English with a heavy African accent and these were referred to as having Strong Rural Backgrounds (SRBs). The label is all encompassing of their traditional values, beliefs and decorum. These SRBs use their indigenous languages for communication both at home and socially. On the other hand are the 'nose brigades'. These are the ones who attended the government's Group A schools where English was the only acceptable medium of communication. Likewise, these students, mainly from the former white suburbs, spoke fluent English with a 'white accent' all the time even to communicate with their parents. Their mannerisms are equally reminiscent of television personalities and everything else that is modern and foreign. Nose brigades or 'salads'[7] as they later came to be known, hang out on their own, greet each other in English with affectionate hugs and can be easily singled out from their clothes (designer labels /hip-hop fashion) and gestures.

The school one attended before joining university is important in that it also tells a story about the background of the student. Many students from the working class (composed of teachers and nurses) attended mission schools that were established before independence. Since schools that offered advanced level studies were very few, it was easy to identify this professional working class and the business class by the schools the children went to.

Table 1 : Socio-economic Background of the Students

Parents Occupation	%	Parents Education	%
Subsistence farmers	15	Primary school	17
Skilled workers	14	High s chool	35
Unskilled	26	Tertiary college	15
Professional (teachers, nurses)	31	Graduates	15
Unemployed	3	Refused to say	5
Self-employed	1	None	9
Retired	1	Don't know	2
Commercial farmer	7	Missing	2
Not applicable	2		
Home language	**%**		**%**
Shona	87	Mission	62
Ndebele	10	Government-Group A	7
English	1	Group B	30
Ndebele and Shona	1	Private	1
Shona and English	1		
Language mostly used with friends			
Shona	51		
English	19		
Ndebele and English	1		
Shona and English	29		
School attended			

After independence, the government restructured the education system and removed the colonial barriers at least in government schools and these came to be known as Group A and B schools. Nothing changed about the location or resource base of these schools. One would expect that the former white schools, the Group A, attracted all the students from privileged backgrounds (initially professional working class) who could afford to pay for the costly uniforms and compulsory sports gear (Bennell and Ncube 1994). School fees was controlled by the government which was also spending less on the Group A child. This is where the 'nose brigade' culture was bred and nourished. Up to 1981, all black students at the then only university came from about five government schools and the rest were from mission schools. By 1990, 40 per cent were coming from mission schools, 35 per cent from the Group B category and a modest 24 per cent from the Group A schools. Since entry requirements had not changed at the university, access was strictly on merit and the entire high school student body strove to meet the high qualifications. Access to elite schools was no longer essential to enter university.

At the time of the survey, mission schools were producing more students who qualified for university than the government schools. In the sample, 62 per cent had attended boarding mission schools, followed by 32 per cent who had been to the Group B government schools and lastly, seven per cent, only were from the former Group A schools where facilities are good but the quality of results is low. This is attributed mainly to the background of the children (nose brigades) who do not have the same zeal for education as do the disadvantaged Group B students. It is important to point out that students in the day government schools, the largest category countrywide, have never gone on strike to air their grievances on educational issues whereas all mission schools have been plagued by strikes and violent demonstrations since independence. It was also mission schools that led and participated in the anti-colonial struggles twenty-three years ago. Is it possible then that mission schools, most with 'missionary' ties overseas, have failed to transform themselves into democratic institutions that give students a voice? Does the university then become their outlet for the longed for freedom of expression?

Professional Aspirations

The realities of mobility that is prescribed by high academic qualifications drives the students to recognize the value of pursuing higher education. Almost the entire sample indicated that higher education is an important characteristic for getting where they want in their careers (98 per cent) (Table 2). That only 11 per cent find political careers as important implies an awareness of the devastating effects of the abuse of office and power by the current crop of politicians. Worse still, is the general lack of prosperity, expansion and sustenance of politically

acquired wealth. Even though political office has been the main avenue for the current crop of indigenous entrepreneurs, a new spirit that shies away from the benefits of patronage/clientelism seems to be dominant in the student body. And contrary to what many observers state — that the entrepreneurship spirit is missing in Africa — a very high percentage of the respondents (87 per cent) did express a desire to run their own business empires.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said about community leadership which has lost its luster, with only 27 per cent stressing its importance. Though community was not defined in the questionnaire, it was assumed that the concept was applied to the wider social organizations outside of the family that were not profit-oriented. In this sense, it would cross over into political boundaries. However, individual success does matter more than the service and upliftment of a community. More students appear to have 'Messianic' tendencies as portrayed by the world of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO). NGOs provide increased opportunities to access foreign currency, international travel and exposure. The last two are some of the most desirable pecks that drive these desires. The question is: Could the 'Messianic' tendencies be more dominant than the desire to join the lucrative private sector? The private sector very often provides career channels unlike the NGO world where jobs do not necessarily lead to careers. However, students tend to find the realities of the 4X4 wheel drive NGO world more appealing. After all, NGOs are slowly catching up with the private sector in terms of their numbers and diversity that still, amazingly enough, address more or less similar issues.

Table 2: Important Characteristics for a Successful Future %: How important are the following characteristics for your success in future?

Acquire higher education	98
Career in politics	11
Career in private business sector	60
In the NGO sector	78
Becoming successful in a personalbusiness	87
Becoming a community leader	27

There is a good match between the students' likely professions and the characteristics they require for the careers. Most of those studying in the professional qualifications sector, (38 per cent), indicated that they would like to work in the private sector except for the four per cent who were more realistic and indicated that their chances of working as lawyers for the government were better

(*Table 3*). A large percentage, (24 per cent), are more likely to work as teachers and this is more so with students from Africa University and the Arts students who are not necessarily trained to fit into general employment categories as they are offered very academic courses only. The university is seriously lagging behind in terms of training students for the information and technology sector. With the whole government still running on a manual basis, coupled with the spiraling economy and government attempts to stifle the growth of the communication industry,[8] it is no wonder that many students do not seem to realise the opportunities that lie in this sector.

The administrative positions that eight per cent of the respondents prefer raise queries on the actual value of the qualifications the students are getting. On the other hand, it could be a warning against degrees that do not have a clear target out there and yet there are also areas out there that call for specific skills. Other than the Business Administration degree, the universities do not offer general management courses except for the elitist and expensive Masters in Business Administration programme for working professionals only. Likewise, the Masters in Public Administration course only takes about fifteen students a year and this includes those directly from undergraduate classes. The any job category, mentioned by 10 per cent, fits the sometimes stereotyped erratic behaviour of the youth who will simply go with the tide because it is expected of them to do so. However, in Africa, the reality is that many students have to figure out what they intend to do before they leave university but even then, the job market has been stagnant for some decades making it difficult to secure employment in the desired areas. This prompts many to leave for the diaspora.

Table 3: Professional Aspirations %: With your educational background, what job are you likely to secure upon your graduation?

Teaching	24
IT industry	3
NGOs	4
Professional-private sector [accountants, lawyers, engineers]	38
Administrative positions	8
Any job	10
Don't know	2
Public service	4

How likely is it that students will realize their career hopes? The question: *What do you think about your prospects of becoming successful in the areas you said are important to you?* was posed to the interviewees. Just over half of the respondents,(53 per cent), are very confident that they can realize their aspirations and the other 42 per cent think they are likely to be successful as well. Many students tend to take up other professional studies such as accounting, personnel management and marketing with other private institutions outside of the university. They then use credits already acquired from the university to skip some of the modules in these professional courses and earn themselves qualifications that make up for the 'deficit of experience' demanded by the business world. Whilst this can be applauded, it also is evidence of the abundant time on their hands. This is a reason sometimes used by politicians to explain their meddling in national politics.

Most of the students,(48 per cent), plan to secure jobs in the near future and the presumption is that this will be in the country *(Table 4)*. Almost ten per cent of the respondents intend to leave the country to pursue higher education. Another 31 per cent indicated that they intend to leave the country in search of work bringing the total of those who want to leave after their studies to 40 per cent. And an almost similar percentage,(nine per cent), indicated that they intend to pursue higher education - probably in the country as this was not specified. More social science students intend to pursue further studies than from any other discipline (32 per cent). Most lawyers pointed to the intention to secure jobs locally and the largest category intending to seek employment outside the country are the education students at 60 per cent. Fuelled by the current British recruitment exercise for teachers and nursing professionals and the economic problems that are mostly a result of bad governance, many educated Zimbabweans have left the country since 2000. This leaves the universities with the role of developing human capital that will not realize its full potential since those that leave the country with high academic qualifications will only qualify for menial tasks in the West.

Table 4: Future Plans and Prospects %: What are you plans after you finish your training/degree?

Get a job	48
Pursue a higher degree	9
Leave the country for further studies	9
Leave the country to seek employment	31
Missing	4

History of Student Activism

The Students' Union at the university has been a tool of political socialization since the mid-1980s. Many of the current political leaders were all active in the union and some students who aspire for political office still learn the tricks of the trade in the union. Of late, the students' slogan has become, "change the world". Students explain their activism as a revolution within a revolution that addresses the injustice in the society. It is important to point out that students were socialized into a culture of violent demonstrations that has been institutionalized over time by their predecessors. Violence is more of a trademark of the organization but it is clearly not the dominant action.[9] The nature of political socialization and the political culture in Zimbabwe are such that violence is perceived and accepted as the only language understood by authorities and opponents alike.

To get more insight into the nature and factors related to student activism, a series of questions required answers and these are: What are the students' ideas of a just society? What is the nature of their social and political activism? How do state institutions and civic organizations respond to their demands? How much space exists for them in these institutions to shape policies that affect them and To what extent do global influences orient their activism? In a previous research exercise, several students remarked that, because they were educated, it was their right to lead other 'youths out there who need to be led'.[10] The assumption was that only knowledge acquired from distinct institutions (universities) allowed people to lead others. With such an openly arrogant world-view, we are right then to ask: Does the student body then provide effective guidance to youth public action?

A number of factors were identified as having an impact on student activism in this study and what is presented here is not an exhaustive list. The factors are religion, discipline of study, year of study, gender and residential status of the student. With many of the student belonging to Pentecostal churches that openly call for disengagements from unreligiously fulfilling activities, it is assumed that those who consider religion to be of fundamental importance would not be active in politically-related issues. When we turn to the discipline factor, we look at the tensions caused by the different types of knowledge. For a long time, there has been some tension between the hard sciences and the soft sciences as students from the former discipline often ignore calls to boycott classes with the rest of the students. There is a general attitude that they feel superior and they therefore attempt to detach themselves from the main students' union activities. First year students are blamed for most of the violence that occurs during student demonstrations and likewise third year students are blamed for planning demonstrations in order to disrupt examinations because they will not be ready for them. Though this cannot be tested in this paper, it will be possible to analyze the nature and level of activism by year of study. Also we expect male students to

be more active in student politics as most of the activities require the ability to engage in running battles with the riot police. Finally, students resident on campus have always been blamed for the radical activism within the student body. What this survey sought to find out was the general pattern of activism without necessarily accounting for the violence.

Religion and Activism

Student politics in Zimbabwe has been dogged by religious tensions since 2000. For example, when the multi-denominational 2001 students' union office bearers assumed office, they were a solid diverse group that seemed fit for executive duties.[11] However, within a short time, the camp had been split into several camps, the Christians (Pentecostals) and the Comrades, the Christ-like and the cadres (to use their lingo). The cadre group accuses the Christ-like for criticizing their radicalism and using heavenly logic to interpret situations that needed practical earthly reasoning. The Christian groups on campus openly throw their weight behind preferred candidates, usually known Christians, such that voting takes place not only on disciplinary and ethnic lines, but religious ones as well. These problems led to the establishment of a student Electoral Supervisory Commission to oversee student elections together with independent observers from Zinasu, the umbrella student organization. The question that arose immediately was: who monitors the umbrella body (Zinasu's) elections? This signaled mistrust within the students' union.

To find out the impact of religion on student activism, the question: *How important is your religion to you?* was posed to the respondents. Almost all the students reported that religion was important to them. Responses were rated on a four-point scale from 'essential', 'very important', 'omewhat important' to 'not important'.

The Pentecostal students are just as active as the Protestant[12] students and whereas there are points of convergence, there are also differences in the areas of emphasis. The most vibrant group are the Catholics who have several support organizations linked to the University of Zimbabwe structures. There is strong mobilization by the leaders of the Catholic organizations to encourage students to have their spiritual and social needs met through church related associational activities. This is also an attempt to detract them from reckless sexual behaviour. With regard to other activities, the Protestants are generally in the lead. Pentecostal activism is at its lowest in students' union politics (six per cent and voting in student elections (39 per cent) but highest in national elections (92 per cent) (Table 5). Even Protestant participation is low in student politics at 30 per cent. Though the two groups report high levels of membership in organizations, it is important to note that this is both in one area, religious organizations. The difference is that with the Catholic religious organizations, political debates are always part of the agenda.

Table 5 : Activism by Type of Church %

Nature of Activity	Pentecostal	Protestants & Catholics	None	Others
Participation in demo/ strike off/on campus	52	86	75	75
Attended community/ studentMeeting	46	53	63	50
Participation in student union Politics 8	30	63	25	
Voluntary service	63	57	38	25
Active member of an organization	84	86	50	25
Voting in students union Election	39	52	75	50
Voting in National Election	92	88	75	50

The non-denominational students are the most active category in student politics at 63 per cent and voting in student elections 75 per cent. They are also less likely to engage in voluntary activity (38 per cent). Overall, religious students' participation in political student affairs is on the low side and the 'cadres' (the none category) appear to be in the lead hence their being pointed out as the ones steering student activism along the violent path. Participation in religious groups is also a form of escape from the temptations of the secular world. The desire to be saved from drugs, alcohol and Aids spurs many youths to join religious groups. Zimbabwe's economic problems have also compelled the youth to turn to divine intervention in their quest for a prosperous future (Osei-Hwedie 1989).

Table 6 : Frequency of Activism by Different Variables %:

Activity	Total		Religious Essential	Residence* On Off		Yr of Study	Males		Fem	
Participation in demo/ strike off/on campus	64	28	61	61	75	79	66	35	63	22
Attended community/ Student meeting	48	47	49	46	50	58	58	51	38	43
Participation in student union politics	17	-	9	14	30	18	28			6
Voluntary service	57	30	53	59	50	55	58	24	57	36
Active member of an organization	82	63	90	49	45	82	88	59	76	67
Voting in students union election	50	60	43	49	45	67	66	41	33	40
Voting in national election	90	33	88	87	95	94	84	37	96	30

Notes: Residence Column: Reported percentages are of those who answered yes
*First figure is of those staying on campus and the second is of those staying
with relatives[13]

Generally, associational membership,(82 per cent), and participation in national
elections, (90 per cent), are both very high within the student body *(Table 6)*.
However, these are at their lowest in student union politics where only 17 per
cent reported participation in student union politics, attending student meetings
(48 per cent) and voting in student elections (50 per cent). Dissatisfaction with the
way the students' union is run has led to this disenchantment and rather than
confront their union leaders, the student body simply chooses to withdraw. Active
membership was highest in religious organizations (58 per cent), followed by
social organizations (12 per cent), in political organizations ten per cent and lastly,
sports at four per cent. The 90 per cent who say that religion is very essential are
active members of some organizations with most of them participating actively
in religious organizations (63 per cent) and the other 17 per cent in social organi-
zations. Amongst the female respondents, no-one reported being a member of
a political organisation and the paltry 10 per cent of the claims were made by
males. More than half the females, (54 per cent), reported membership in reli-
gious organizations with even more males (61 per cent) being members of reli-
gious organizations. Engineering students are the least active in religious organi-
zations (17 per cent) and the second least active are law students (31 per cent).

The most active in this realm are the usually more mature education students (80 per cent) and those studying agriculture (73 per cent). The law students are the most active in the political realm (27 per cent). This is confirmed by the fact that many of the most revered student leaders came from this faculty and some have moved on to prominent positions in the political arena.

Religiosity, as indicated by the frequency of church attendance, is high in both sexes with 60 per cent of the females attending church daily compared to 18 per cent of the males. Another 27 per cent attend at least two to three times a week compared to 44 per cent of the males who do so. Those staying on campus attend daily (27 per cent) as do the ten per cent who stay with relatives. Attendance patterns are similar between Pentecostals and Catholics with around 30 per cent reporting daily attendance. Time devoted to church certainly does compete with time that would be spent on other activities. Campus life allows the students to make almost all decisions without consulting anyone and there are no parental restrictions to control the movement and associational habits of students. As a result, many of them have plenty of time to invest in other activities. Students staying on campus and with relatives are generally more active than those staying with parents and alone as lodgers. They are also more likely to participate in student politics, demonstrations and voting in elections.

Table 7 : Activism by Type of School Attended Prior to Going to University

Activity	Group A%	Group B%	Group C%
Participation in demo/strikeoff/ on campus	29	69	67
Attended community/student meeting	57	45	48
Participation in student union Politics	14	7	23
Voluntary service	43	62	56
Active member of an organization	71	68	87
Voting in students union election	43	38	57
Voting in national election	57	90	93

Former group A students are the least active in activities that are likely to escalate into violence such as demonstrations (29 per cent) and more than two thirds of those from mission and group B schools reported participating in demonstrations *(Table 7)*. Attendance of student community meetings as well as participation in student politics is on the low side throughout with the group A lot participating more in this area. In line with the 'salad culture' which emphasizes entertainment

and hanging out in classy recreational centres, former group A students are active members in two types of organizations only, social and religious groups even though the figure of those reporting overall active membership is high at 71 per cent. Former mission students are the most active members across all organizations at (87 per cent) and they are also the only ones who report membership in political organizations (eight per cent). Again, the former group B students revealed that they are just as active as the former group A students in students' politics at 68 per cent. The former mission students report the highest levels of participation in students' union politics (23 per cent), membership in organizations (87 per cent) and voting in student elections (57 per cent). This indicates that much of the participation is spontaneous for many of the students.

It is essential to note that student activism at universities in Zimbabwe is largely viewed as a male domain mainly because the leadership is almost always exclusively male and the demonstrations the public sees all the time are always carried out mostly by the male students. Gender is a very crucial division with women facing constraints that are imposed partly by tradition. The females internalize these constrains but they also tend to specialize in different forms of participation that focus more on informal community based activities. Their participation thus becomes geared to fulfilling basic needs as shown by their opposition to violence. The male students argue that gender is never an issue as females rarely run for student affairs' leadership positions. In the few cases when they have done so, it was not clear whether it was other girls who had mainly voted for them.

The females are unhappy with the conduct of their male students whom they accuse of resorting to violence unnecessarily to seek attention. They argue that the violence, the inflammatory and vitriolic foul language used by the militant members of the union keeps them out. When compared to males, female activism is rather low in most of the activities except in voting in national elections where 96 per cent reported participation and membership in organizations where just over three quarters reported being members. Its important to emphasize that 55 per cent of this membership is in religious organizations. Their compassionate nature shows when it comes to voluntary service where they almost match their male counterparts. Females do not participate in the students' politics but they do vote during union elections (33 per cent) even though this is only half of the male population that votes (66 per cent). When females participated in demonstrations, the main reason given for their participation was exactly the same as that given by the males: demanding a new constitution and the demand for a corruption-free nation.

The only time female students initiated and staged a demonstration was in solidarity with thirty-six other girls who had been kicked out of university residence by a female warden for entertaining males after hours. The event was triggered by the eviction of a fourth-year law student who had kept a male visitor in her room after the stipulated hours. This was in fact a colleague with whom she was

working with on a project and as it was raining, he was waiting for the rain to stop before walking over to the male hostel. After her eviction following what the students called a 'kangaroo court', the girls camped in the foyer until she was reinstated. The next morning they staged a mini-demonstration outside the warden's house where they chanted and sang revolutionary songs. They alleged that wardens and hall committee members were ruthless and arbitrary in their treatment of students. Hundreds of male students converged to watch this rare phenomenon and within a few hours, they had hijacked the demonstration and all other issues such as low grants and loans and corruption were pushed to the fore-front. The police were later called in to disperse the very large crowd that had turned rowdy.

Electoral Participation

Despite the students' rhetoric about good governance and respect for human rights, students do not participate in elections, as responsible citizens should. Only 19 per cent are aware of this obligation as citizens *(Table 8)*. That as many as 52 per cent state that they do not feel anything could imply the deliberate choice to ignore peaceful means of effecting change. Or that they are simply stating that 'all politicians are the same.' Hence the foregone conclusion that students are simply interested in violence because of the anarchy it creates for other opportunities. However, if apathy is the unconscious recognition students make of the fact that they are powerless, then withdrawal from the process may also signify powerlessness. In this case, many students reported voting in national elections and the question is, why is this so? Some revealed honestly in the face-to-face interviews that they simply enjoyed the frenzy caused by the campaigning during election times. Hence they just got caught up in the heat of the moment.

Table 8 : Voting Behaviour %: Which one of the following statements best describes your feelings about voting in an election?

I get a feeling of satisfaction out of it	15
I vote only because it is my duty to do so	19
I feel annoyed, voting is a waste of time	10
I do not feel anything in particular	52
Don't know	36

Political Interest and Knowledge

To measure political interest we posed the question: *How much discussion about matters of government and politics is there at the university you attend?* and *How often do you participate in these discussions?* Though the majority (57 per cent) agree that there is a

great deal of discussion at their university, very few (29 per cent) reported that they participated in these discussions *(Table 9)*. Of these, only 13 per cent participate at least two to three times a week and another nine per cent reported participating once a month. Almost two thirds believe that they can exert a great deal of influence on the government with another 26 per cent agreeing that they can exert some influence. The largest category of 65 per cent who rarely participate in political discussions voted in national elections and again the 68 per cent who rarely participate believe that they can exert a great deal of influence on the government. This implies that students are somehow interested in deliberative democracy. Still, the question points to the preference of confrontational means for solving disagreements. It gives pointers to the lack of tolerance they accuse the government of. And perhaps, it raises questions on the link between political interest and voting behaviour?

Table 9 : Voting and Political Interest %: How often do you participate in these discussions? How much influence can students like yourself exert on the government of this country today? (% reporting a great deal)

Attendance	Voted national Election	(Yes) Great Influence
2 or 3 times a week	14	13
Once a week	6	8
Once a fortnight	2	2
Once a month	9	7
I rarely participate	65	68
I never participate	5	3

Views on Governance

Students are divided on the question that they are not willing to stand up in defence of democracy (49 per cent on both the negative and positive sides-Table 10). This apparent division has probably contributed to the marginalization of their contributions and lamentations on issues of national significance. On their own as a student body, they do not get an audience with state agents and this has pushed them towards forging alliances with other civic organizations including political organizations. This is a stance that has angered the government as they are seen as cavorting with the enemy. An interesting issue is their view on government by an educated elite. This question comes about because the main contender for the presidency in the 2000 national elections was a former workers' union leader who does not have university education. The ruling party campaign focused on this as his second weakness since the argument is that international economics and

relations are beyond his grasp as a high school graduate. This issue has left the nation bordering on skepticism as time and again they are made to question his adequacy as a presidential candidate. In the responses, 62 per cent agreed/strongly agreed that the best form of government is that run by the educated and 35 per cent felt that this was not necessarily true. More positively, a large percentage demonstrated their support for democracy when they disagreed with the statement that speech must be curtailed in the interests of state security and good government (76 per cent) but still there are traces of a significant proportion that sanctions despotic tendencies. The contradiction arises on the question that government must act in the best interests of the people even though it may not be what they want. Here almost all the students agreed with this view (92 per cent). Though this may contradict their views *vis-à-vis* upholding other freedoms, it supports their arrogant stance as revealed in interviews that they, as the educated elite of the youth, must lead the other youths out there.

Table 10 : Views on Governance %

	Ltd freedom of speech	Gov't run by educated	Defence of freedom	Gov't must act for people
Strongly agree	1	6	14	86
Agree	19	56	35	6
Disagree	59	28	37	2
Strongly disagree	17	7	12	3
Missing	3	3	2	2

1st column responses to question: Freedom of speech must be limited in the interests of security and good government

2nd column responses: The best form of government is that run by those who are most educated

3rd column responses Most students at my university do not have the courage to stand up and fight for what they believe in

4th column responses The government of a country should do what is best for the people even though it may not be what they want

The Paradox of Student Leadership

Students are generally dissatisfied with their leadership. Performance of the students' union leadership over the years has left them alienated from the student body. Only 14 per cent expressed satisfaction with the leadership and another 23 per cent felt it represented their interests. With such low levels of confidence, it is

clear that the student leadership lacks legitimacy. The student leadership has devastated resources of the union, paralyzing all other activities. The students' greatest asset is their intellectual talents but the absence of institutional support for their potential creativity hampers their development. The little support they get is from human rights groups and what they call 'counter insurgency groups' that are against the government. Their only physical asset, the Students' Union building that was donated by the British government in the-mid 1980s, has psychological significance as they feel that they belong there. It demarcates the boundary between them and the university authorities as well as the rest of the world they interact with. They withdraw to this place when they plan demonstrations and eavesdroppers are not tolerated. Space in this building is rented out to the public and the rentals are used to run the union. Elected leaders collect money for all students'-union-related business and are accused of spending it all on their salaries and perks. There are allegations of corruption and cronyism in the union, and the electoral process is divided along political parties and tribal lines. Students thus feel that they do not gain anything from being union-paying members.

To legitimize its existence, the union leadership has thus assumed a heavy human rights bias at the expense of general student welfare. Ethnic factionalism too has affected the student body with the minority Ndebele students being forced to create their own public space in their region. After failing to secure the post of secretary general in the union, a former student leader was told frankly, 'No matter how good you are, you are never voted into top office because you are Ndebele. You failed to make the Student Representative Council (SRC) presidency because you are Ndebele.'[14] The Matebeleland[15] Development Society, a Ndebele-led organization, sponsored his campaign which worsened the situation. Another eloquent, charismatic and proud student leader failed to be SRC president because he was taken to be more Ndebele than he is Shona. His father is Shona, the mother is Ndebele but he grew up in Matebeleland therefore he was seen as Ndebele. Another rival in the campaign used this in his campaign and convinced the student body not to accept him. Colleagues told him, 'We cannot vote for you because you are Ndebele.' Like the ruling politicians, the students do not want anyone from Matebeleland to be involved in student politics. For the Shonas, their superiority is also in numbers at the campus and in that the ethnic group rules the country. For the Ndebeles, their pride is in their strong cultural heritage and they call their region the home of kings. Socially, there is a lukewarm relationship between the two tribes and perhaps a former secretary general of the SRC portrayed these tribal tensions when he stated, 'I am tribal conscious, not a tribalist.' Tribal politics in the students' union does take the same character as national politics.

The administration too is accused of discriminating against Ndebele students and even the ministers of education have been known to accord audience to Shona student leaders only. Even the riot police are known to punish Ndebeles

more severely than other students. In one incident during a demonstration that had turned into a riot police invasion, a Ndebele student pleaded for mercy with a policeman in his Ndebele language and another policeman retorted, 'Rova mwana waNyongolo uyo, imbwa iyo!' *(Beat Nyongolo's relative, beat the dog!).*[16] At the social level, Ndebele boys often date Shona girls and such relationships are held in contempt by the male Shona students. The relationships are under a lot of pressure hence they do not last very long. The Shona girls also revealed parental prejudices that fuel this hostility. Many pointed out that they are cautioned at home not to date Ndebele guys as they are prone to violence.

Most Important Problems – The Students' Agenda

In a bid to understand the restless nature of students in the country, students were asked to rank four problems that had been identified earlier on in in-depth interviews as explaining all the violent demonstrations on campus. These are finance, the curriculum — irrespective of discipline, housing and security. The respondents were asked to rank these in order of priority and all mentioned finance as the most important issue, followed by housing (89 per cent) security came in third and the curriculum came in last. In 1998, there was a violent demonstration against diminishing services at the university. Bayart's (1993) 'Politics of the belly' began to dominate from then on, but still students write petitions on other issues such as improving the library and increasing investment in education. They still do not seem to be concerned with the curriculum and its relevance to the nation's circumstances and industrial needs. Petitions on curriculum-related issues are written at the departmental level usually by disgruntled students. Demands are expressed directly to the government officials responsible for higher education. The problem is that when they fail to vent their anger on university authorities, the students turn on college property and destroy everything in their way. Their priority then is to discuss hunger and their 'poverty'. Like the general Zimbabwean indigenous public, students too have a 'subsistence culture' that is exhibited in excessive and unaffordable expenditure on clothes. This subsistence culture is defined by Masunungure (2004) as action that is oriented towards the consumption of whatever there is to consume — large or small.

From 1980, all students, irrespective of need, received financial support from government in the form of a grant and loan scheme. This was an incentive to all students to join the education band-wagon even if they could afford to pay. Up to 1993, the government had never demanded that students should pay back the loans they received so that others could also benefit from what was initially designed to be a revolving fund. The best part of the financing system was the 'grant' which was part of the package intended to support the students' personal and academic needs. This of course was pocket money and it was treated as such by all students. Even those who were resident on campus with all expenses paid for

failed to channel this money towards purchasing of books. The grant pay-out was usually received about two weeks after classes started and for another week, students would continue to miss classes as they celebrated their good fortune. To legitimize missing classes, it became common for demonstrations to be planned to coincide with pay-out dates. Unfortunately, the privatization of student services in 1999 eroded the power of the pay-out tremendously as students had to provide their own food in addition to the usual extras. This slight discomfort did not last for a long time as the government completely withdrew the grant and loans and commercialized the loans in 2001. Since then, the frequency of demonstrations has increased to one every six weeks whenever the university is open.

What Values Drive the Students?

African cultures have been said to emphasize the communal good over individual destiny, leading people to think and act as passive, differential and dependant clients of external forces rather than as active agents with some degree of control over their own lives or the wider polity (Mattes and Bratton 2003:7). The findings from this study provide contradictory evidence as African students have demonstrated that whilst they do not necessarily lack a sense of responsibility, they certainly do not conform to the expectations of those in authority and are not scared to take risks necessary to effect democratic governance. This is evidenced by their participation in demonstrations discussed earlier on. But still society's views still count in their value system.

To gauge their value orientations, the following question was asked: *Which of the following would you say determines what your family members and the people in your area think of you? (a) your superior education (b) your participation in helping them and (c) your future economic success?* A very high percentage of the students,(83 per cent), reported that they enjoy a very high social status and prestige amongst their family and community members even though an almost non-existent job market probably dampens their spirits. There is a general feeling that university graduates are more respected in society (94 per cent). It is therefore logical to conclude that influence from family and one's community, no matter how subtle, does have an important effect on persistence by the student's natural desire to uphold that image. However, a significantly large percentage has come to realize that university graduates do not necessarily make more money (64 per cent). Again not all of them believe that graduates get the best jobs available. One important question to ask is: Do students feel they have the power to change their lives?

Students from all disciplines are proud of their national identity (all above 83 per cent) with medical students being the least proud (50 per cent). Education and law students both (over 95 per cent) agree that Zimbabwe is a great country signaling the opportunities that exist for them after they leave college. Almost all the respondents,(95 per cent), expressed strong attachments to their country which

contradicts their earlier stance in which as many as 40 per cent indicated their plans to leave the country after their studies. In disciplines where jobs are harder to find, a large percentage feel they have no power to change their life (Social Science 33 per cent and Arts 20 per cent). Still, Medical and agricultural students rate themselves as having very few rights (both over 68 per cent).

When it comes to the religious divide, Pentecostals feel slightly less powerful at 28 per cent when compared to the Protestants at 33 per cent and none of the females felt they had all the rights and neither did they feel they were very powerful. As can be expected in a patriarchal society, more males (30 per cent) reported having greater control over decisions affecting their everyday activities with only eight per cent of the females saying the same. Male students (14 per cent) feel they have most rights and that they are mostly powerful. Female students are less confident than the males with twice as many rating themselves as totally powerless to change their lives. Those residing on campus feel very powerful with all rights (52 per cent), as do all the lodgers. While those staying with parents all reported that they had 'some control over some decisions', lodgers reported having full control over most decisions. More females reported being somewhat happy (68 per cent) when compared to males (40 per cent) and Social Science students are the happiest lot at 26 per cent followed by Agriculture (18 per cent) and Engineering (17 per cent). Those staying alone as lodgers and on campus are all very happy with both groups reporting a record 100 per cent. All those residing with parents reported being somewhat happy (13 per cent). By discipline, the group that struggles the most to get jobs, Arts, are the unhappiest (15 per cent). Most sit on the fence (ranging from 20 to 35 per cent) across all the faculties.

Conclusion

Student activism in Zimbabwe appears to be driven by a combination of factors: historical factors (religion, high school background and ethnicity), gender, the political environment, future aspirations and global influences. Whereas traditional, mainstream religions such as Catholicism tend to instil values that lead to civic engagement, the new Pentecostal wave tends to encourage withdrawal from broader public association. This results in members harbouring a parochial mindset with regard to the exercise and duties of responsible citizens. In the same vein, older schools such as mission schools, produce students who are more likely to question governance and democratic issues as opposed to the recently opened up former white schools that had enjoyed peace and stability during the independence struggle.

On entering a restrictive and authoritarian political environment, students who have wrestled with traditional and conservative religious and educational authorities are more likely to demand justice and insist on being heard. They have grown to harbour values that orient their activism in favour of desirable change. However, the absence of the female student in active engagement in public space is a cause

for concern as their needs fail to get on the agenda of policy makers. Their continued concern for involvement in compassionate activities can and should be applauded, but it also merits attention in that transference of compassionate to political affairs could instil some pacifist tendencies in the students who believe in the use of violence to get attention.

Appendix A

Table 1. : Characteristics of the Zimbabwe Sample

Gender	%	Residence	%
Males	51	Campus	71
Females	49	With parents	20
Discipline		With relatives	
		Lodgers	1
Discipline		Year of study	
SocialSciences	24	First	
Natural Sciences		Second	37
Arts	13	Third	33
Education	5	Fourth	12
Law	11	Fifth	1
Medicine	4	Other	-
Agriculture	11		
Engineering	6		
Other	0		
Age		Religious	
Below 20	1	Denomination	
20-23	38	Catholic	27
24-27	5	Pentecostal	49
over 27		Protestant	7
		None	4
		Other	

N=98

Notes

1. ZINASU is a student initiative that came about to address national issues of access to education, governance, human rights and health. The union is made up of all students who are members of the students' union at the different tertiary institutions. The privatization of student services has re-introduced the bottleneck system (reminiscent of colonialism) as it is only the rich who can afford education now. The group lobbies for access to education through parliament and claims non-partisanship.

2. Most degree programmes at the universities take three years to complete except for agriculture, engineering and medicine.

3. The white students exodus was partly a response to the reorientation of university education advocated by the government and partly in anticipation of the inevitable fall in standards.

4. By 1985, over 40 per cent of the students' fathers were teachers. The figure rose from 25 per cent in 1980-81. Bennell and Ncube (1994) carried out a study on the socio-economic background of African University Students in Zimbabwe since independence. They used students' records to extract data on randomly selected students from four of the ten faculties at the university.

5. Nose-brigades are also called salads to denote their food preferences. Salad eating is in this sense, usually associated with dieting and balancing the diet.

6. In 2001, the government made it mandatory for all internet providers to submit all records of email correspondence by public to the government security agents. This was aimed at curbing the communication channels of the opposition party, MDC, which had established a wide network with citizens living in the diaspora.

7. Interview with former SRC president.

8. Interview with SRC member.

9. Interview with former SRC official.

10. The Protestant group is composed of the mainstream churches such as Lutheran, Methodist and Anglicans. However, in this particular table, they were added together with the Catholics.

11. Interview with former SRC secretary general.

12. Matebeleland is one of the provinces in the southern part of Zimbabwe. It is inhabited mostly by Ndebele-speaking people who fled from Tshaka Zulu's Mfecane wars in the 18th century. Ndebeles are the second largest language group in Zimbabwe after the Shonas. They have been systematically excluded from office and power since 1980.

13. Nyongolo was the name of the late vice president, Joshua Nkomo, who led the opposition party, ZAPU during the first 9 years of independence before the party united with the ruling ZANU-PF party.

References

Baizerman, M. and Magnuson D., 1996, 'Do We still Need Youth as a Social Stage?' Available online at http:/www.alli.fi/nyri/young/1996-:/www.alli.fi/nyri/young/1996-3artikkelBaizerman 3-96.htm.

Barkan, J., 1975, *An African Dilemma*, Oxford University Press.

Bayart, J. F., 1993, *The State in Africa: the Politics of the Belly*, UK: Longman.

Bennell, P. and Ncube, M., 1994, *The Socio-economic Background of African University Students in Zimbabwe Since Independence*, University of Zimbabwe.

Masipula, S., 2001, 'Fighting Authoritarianism in Zimbabwe', in *Journal of Democracy*, 12, pp. 160-169.

Masunungure, E., 2004, 'Towards Understanding Some Obstacles to Professionalism in Africa: A view Through Contextual Lenses' in F., Appiah, D., Chimanikire and T. Gran, eds., *Professionalism and Good Governance in Africa,* Copenhagen Business Press.

Mattes, R. and Bratton, M., 2003, 'Learning About Democracy in Africa, Performance and Experiences', Working Paper No. 29.

Melucci, A., 1996, 'Youth, Time and Social Movements', Available online at http:/www.alli.fi/nyri/young/1996artikkelMelucci2-96.htm

Nyamnjoh, F. and Nantang, B. J., 2002, 'African Universities in Crisis and the Promotion of a Democratic Culture: The Political Economy of Violence in African Educational Systems', *African Studies Review*, Vol.45, No. 2.

Olson, Mancur, 1971, [1965]. *The Logic of Collective Action : Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Revised edition ed.), Harvard University Press.

Osei-Hwedie, K., 1989, 'Youth Problem in a Changing World' in Osei-Hwedie K. and M. Ndulo eds., *Studies in Youth and Development, Commonwealth Youth Programme,* Multi-Media Publications, Lusaka.

The College Times, 2001, December Issue, No.3.