(REVIEW ARTICLE)

Understanding the motivations behind political engagement in Zambia: A comprehensive review

Chanda Chansa Thelma [1, *] and Lufeyo Chitondo [2]

[1] Chreso University, Lusaka, Zambia.
[2] Twin Palm Leadership University, Zambia.

Abstract

Political engagement refers to the active participation of individuals or groups in the political process, such as voting, campaigning, attending rallies or protests, contacting elected officials, or joining political organizations. It encompasses any action taken by citizens to influence public policy, government decisions, or the political landscape in general. Political engagement is crucial for a functioning democracy, as it allows citizens to voice their opinions, hold elected officials accountable, and contribute to shaping the direction of their society. Hence, this journal article explored the multifaceted motivations that drive individuals to join politics in Zambia. Drawing upon a wide range of scholarly literature, empirical studies, and expert analyses, this paper examined the various factors influencing political engagement in the country. From historical legacies to socio-economic conditions, cultural dynamics, and institutional frameworks, the motivations for entering politics in Zambia are diverse and complex. By synthesizing existing research and providing critical insights, this article contributes to a deeper understanding of the dynamics shaping political participation in the Zambian context. This study aimed to delve into the motivations driving political engagement in Zambia, seeking to provide insights that can inform policy interventions and enhance democratic practices.

Keywords: Drivers; Socio-economic Factors; Institutional Frameworks; Motivations; Politics; and Political Engagement.

1. Introduction

Politics refers to the activities, actions, and debates that involve governance, decision-making processes, and the distribution of power within a society. It encompasses the pursuit and exercise of power, authority, and influence to shape the direction and policies of a government or other social structures. Politics can occur at various levels, including local, national, and international arenas, and it often involves competing interests, conflicting ideologies, and negotiation (Resnick and Casale,2011).

Motivation, on the other hand, refers to the reasons or driving forces behind a person's actions, desires, and behaviors. It involves the psychological processes that initiate, direct, and sustain behavior toward achieving particular goals or fulfilling certain needs. Motivation can stem from internal factors, such as personal beliefs, values, and aspirations, as well as external factors, such as social norms, rewards, and pressures (UNHCR,2020).

Political motivation, therefore, refers to the specific reasons or incentives that drive individuals, groups, or organizations to engage in political activities or pursue particular political goals. These motivations can vary widely and may include factors such as ideological beliefs, personal ambitions, desire for power or influence, pursuit of social justice or equality, economic interests, or concerns about issues affecting a community or society. Political motivations can

shape the behavior of politicians, activists, voters, and other participants in the political process, influencing their decisions, alliances, and strategies (Hyden,2013).

2. Contextualizing Political Participation in Zambia

Political participation in Africa and Zambia in particular is a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by a variety of historical, cultural, social, and economic factors. Understanding political participation in Zambia requires examining both formal and informal mechanisms through which individuals engage with the political process. Colonialism has deeply impacted the political landscape of many African countries and Zambia is no exception, shaping their systems of governance, political institutions, and social hierarchies. Post-independence struggles for self-determination and democratization have left a lasting imprint on the continent's political culture. Political participation in Zambia often takes place through formal mechanisms such as voting in elections, joining political parties, and holding public office (Simabwachi,2022). However, challenges such as electoral fraud, voter intimidation, and limited access to information can hinder the inclusivity and fairness of these processes. In addition to formal channels, Zambians engage in political life through informal means such as community organizing, grassroots activism, and traditional leadership structures. These forms of participation often reflect cultural values, local norms, and historical modes of governance.

With a significant portion of Zambia's population being under the age of 30, youth engagement in politics is increasingly important. Young people are utilizing social media, advocacy groups, and civil society organizations to demand greater representation, accountability, and inclusion in decision-making processes. Women's political participation in Zambia varies widely across provinces, districts, rural and urban areas. While some countries have made strides in promoting gender equality in politics through quota systems and affirmative action policies, women continue to face significant barriers such as patriarchal attitudes, cultural norms, and limited access to resources. Civil society organizations, including human rights groups, labor unions, and religious institutions, play a crucial role in mobilizing citizens, advocating for policy change, and holding governments accountable (Tembo and Mwanaumo,2022) However, they often face restrictions and crackdowns from authoritarian regimes seeking to suppress dissent. Ethnicity and identity-based politics are prominent features of the Zambian society, influencing patterns of political mobilization, party formation, and electoral dynamics. While ethnic diversity can enrich democratic discourse, it also poses challenges to nation-building and social cohesion.

Socioeconomic inequalities, poverty, and access to resources profoundly shape political participation in Zambia. Marginalized communities often face barriers to accessing political power and in some countries in Africa this resorts to protest movements or insurgencies to assert their rights and grievances. Political participation in Africa varies across regions, reflecting diverse historical legacies, cultural traditions, and levels of economic development. Regional organizations such as the African Union (AU), Southern African Development Cooperation (SADC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) play a role in promoting democratic governance, peace, and security on the continent. Zambia's political landscape is also shaped by global factors such as foreign aid, international trade, and geopolitical competition (Mengistu,2017). External actors, including Western powers, China, and multinational corporations, can exert influence on African governments and shape their policy decisions. Nevertheless, political participation in Zambia is a complex and dynamic phenomenon shaped by historical, cultural, social, and economic factors. Effective governance and democratic consolidation require addressing challenges related to inclusivity, accountability, and representation to ensure that all citizens have a voice in shaping their countries' futures.

2.1. Significance of Understanding Motivation for Political Engagement in Zambia

Zambia has experienced a variety of political systems, including plural politics, one party participatory politics and nascent democracy. Understanding the motivations behind political engagement can provide insights into the factors that drive citizens to participate in the political process, whether through voting, activism, or other means. This understanding is crucial for fostering democratic development and ensuring that political systems are responsive to the needs and desires of the population. Political engagement can play a crucial role in fostering social cohesion and national unity (Aborisade and Aliyyu,2018). By understanding the motivations driving citizens to engage politically, policymakers can develop strategies to promote inclusivity, address grievances, and build bridges across ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic divides. This can help mitigate conflict and promote stability in diverse societies. Political engagement is essential for holding governments accountable and promoting good governance. By understanding what motivates citizens to participate in the political process, policymakers and civil society organizations can better address issues such as corruption, abuse of power, and lack of transparency. This can lead to more responsive and accountable governance structures that better serve the interests of the populace (Gann,2022).

Understanding the motivations behind political engagement can inform the formulation and implementation of policies that address the needs and aspirations of the population. By engaging with citizens and understanding their concerns, policymakers can develop more effective policies that are tailored to the realities of people's lives, thereby promoting socioeconomic development and poverty reduction. Zambia has a youthful population, and understanding the motivations of young people for political engagement is particularly crucial. By engaging with young citizens and addressing their concerns, policymakers can harness the energy and creativity of youth to drive positive change and innovation in politics, governance, and society more broadly. Political engagement in Zambia also has implications for regional and international relations (Werner,2017). Understanding the motivations behind political movements and activism can help other countries and international organizations to better engage with Zambian nationals, support democratic transitions, and promote peace and stability in the country. Understanding the motivations for political engagement in Zambia is essential for fostering democratic development, promoting social cohesion and accountability, informing policy formulation and implementation, empowering youth, and enhancing regional and international relations.

2.2. The Impact of Colonialism on Political Structures in Zambia

The impact of colonialism on political structures in Africa and Zambia has been profound and far-reaching, shaping the country's governance systems in numerous ways. Some of the key impacts include: European powers carved up Africa during the Scramble for Africa in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, often disregarding pre-existing ethnic, cultural, and linguistic boundaries. This led to the creation of arbitrary borders that divided ethnic groups and traditional territories, causing ongoing tensions and conflicts. European colonizers imposed their own bureaucratic structures and administrative systems, often with little consideration for indigenous governance practices(Simabwachi,2022). This included the establishment of centralized governments, legal systems, and taxation mechanisms, which replaced or marginalized existing indigenous political institutions. In some cases, colonial powers employed a policy of "indirect rule" whereby they governed through local traditional leaders or chiefs. While this approach allowed for the continuation of indigenous authority structures, it also reinforced the power of certain elites and undermined the development of modern democratic institutions.

Colonialism undermined or weakened many indigenous political institutions and systems of governance, disrupting traditional power structures and social hierarchies. This often led to the loss of traditional knowledge, practices, and leadership roles, which continue to have repercussions in post-colonial Africa and Zambia as well. Colonial powers often exploited existing ethnic, religious, and tribal divisions to maintain control over their colonies. This legacy of divide and rule has persisted in many post-colonial African nations, contributing to ethnic tensions, political instability, and even civil conflicts. Many post-colonial African states inherited centralized and authoritarian political systems from their colonial rulers. This legacy of autocracy and lack of democratic governance has contributed to political instability, corruption, and challenges in achieving sustainable development (Gann,2022). Colonialism entrenched systems of racial hierarchy and discrimination, which continue to impact political structures and power dynamics in Africa. The legacy of colonial-era racism can be observed in issues such as minority oppression, ethnic marginalization, and unequal access to political and economic opportunities. Overall, the impact of colonialism on political structures in Africa and Zambia has been complex and enduring, shaping the continent's and Zambian governance systems and socio-political landscape in profound ways that continue to be felt today.

2.3. Persistence of Historical Inequalities and Power Dynamics in Zambia

The persistence of historical inequalities and power dynamics in Zambia has had multifaceted effects on the continent, influencing various aspects of social, economic, and political life. Historical inequalities have contributed to wide disparities in wealth and economic development across Zambia. The legacy of colonialism, including unequal resource extraction and exploitative economic systems, has resulted in some regions being significantly more developed and prosperous than others. This economic inequality perpetuates poverty, hinders economic growth, and exacerbates social tensions. Historical inequalities have deepened social divisions within the Zambian society, often along ethnic, racial, or class lines. Persistent disparities in access to education, healthcare, and other basic services further entrench social stratification and limit social mobility, leading to social unrest and marginalization of certain groups (Simabwachi,2022). The persistence of historical inequalities and power imbalances has fueled political instability in many African countries though in Zambia, those who feel marginalized resort to form their own political parties. Marginalized groups may resort to political activism or rebellion to address grievances related to historical injustices, leading to conflicts, civil wars, and state fragility. Additionally, entrenched elites may resist efforts to democratize or redistribute power, perpetuating authoritarian rule and governance crises.

Historical power dynamics have contributed to widespread corruption and governance challenges across the country. Elites who have historically held economic and political power often use their influence to maintain their privileged

position, leading to corruption, nepotism, and the erosion of state institutions. This undermines efforts to promote transparency, accountability, and good governance. Historical inequalities have resulted in unequal access to resources, including land, water, and natural wealth. This unequal distribution of resources exacerbates poverty and food insecurity, particularly among marginalized communities (Gann,2022). It also fuels conflicts over resource control, further destabilizing fragile regions. Historical inequalities perpetuate the marginalization of certain groups within the Zambian society, including indigenous populations, ethnic minorities, and women. These groups often face discrimination, exclusion, and limited opportunities for social and economic advancement, hindering efforts to achieve inclusive and sustainable development. Historical power dynamics have contributed to significant regional disparities within Zambia, with some regions enjoying greater political influence, economic development, and access to resources than others. These regional disparities can exacerbate intra-provincial tensions and hinder efforts at regional cooperation and integration. Addressing the effects of historical inequalities and power dynamics in Zambia and Africa requires comprehensive efforts to promote social justice, economic equity, and inclusive governance. This includes initiatives to address the root causes of inequality, promote reconciliation and social cohesion, strengthen democratic institutions, and ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities for all segments of society (Warner,2017).

2.4. Statement of The Problem

The motivations behind political engagement in Zambia are complex and varied, often intersecting with issues of identity, governance, socio-economic status, and historical context. While there is a growing body of research on African and Zambian politics, understanding the underlying reasons why individuals choose to participate or disengage from political processes remains a significant challenge. Addressing the questions on motivation for political engagement requires interdisciplinary approaches that draw on insights from political science, sociology, anthropology, psychology, and history. By unpacking the motivations behind political engagement in Zambia, this research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of democratic governance, social cohesion, and citizen empowerment on the continent (OECD,2019). Moreover, it seeks to inform policymakers, civil society actors, and international partners in designing interventions that promote inclusive and participatory political processes not only in Zambia but in Africa as a whole.

2.5. Purpose of The Study

The purpose of the study on understanding the motivation behind political engagement in Zambia is multifaceted and the overall purpose is to advance knowledge, inform policy, and promote democratic governance by unraveling the motivations behind political engagement in Zambia. Through rigorous research and analysis, the study seeks to contribute to efforts aimed at building more inclusive, participatory, and responsive political systems not only in Zambia but across the African continent.

2.6. Objectives of The Study

- To identify the socio-political factors that motivate Zambian citizens to engage in politics.
- To explore the aim of political participation patterns of political engagement among different demographic groups within Zambia.
- To assess trust of political institutions, play in motivating or discouraging political engagement and understand the factors influencing trust.
- To examine perceptions of political efficacy and agency and attitudes to influence political outcomes.

2.7. Theoretical Framework

One theory that can guide the study of understanding the motivation behind political engagement in Zambia is the Social Identity Theory (SIT). Social Identity Theory, developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner, suggests that individuals' motivations and behaviors are influenced by their identification with particular social groups. In the context of political engagement in Zambia, this theory can be applied to understand how individuals' identification with certain political, ethnic, religious, or regional groups shapes their motivation to participate in political activities. How can Social Identity Theory (SIT) be applied to the study of political engagement in Zambia? According to SIT, individuals tend to favor members of their own group (in-group) over members of other groups (out-group). In the Zambian context, people often identify strongly with their ethnic, tribal, or regional group. Understanding how these group identities influence political engagement can shed light on why individuals choose to participate in certain political activities or support specific candidates or parties(Ruedin,2017). Social Identity Theory suggests that group members are more likely to engage in collective action when they perceive a strong sense of identity and cohesion within their group. In Zambia, political movements often mobilize people based on shared identities and grievances. Studying how these group dynamics influence political engagement can provide insights into the factors driving participation in political processes.

SIT proposes that threats to group identity can lead to increased solidarity and collective action among group members. In Zambia, factors such as ethnic tensions, discrimination, or marginalization can threaten the identity of certain groups, leading to increased political mobilization. Examining how perceived threats to identity influence political engagement can help understand patterns of activism and participation. Social Identity Theory also highlights the role of inter-group relations in shaping individuals' behaviors and attitudes. In Africa and not necessarily Zambia, where inter-group conflicts and rivalries are common, understanding how these dynamics affect political engagement is crucial (Anderson,2011). This includes studying how perceptions of other groups, inter-group competition, and historical grievances impact political participation. By applying Social Identity Theory to the study of political engagement in Zambia, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the motivations driving individuals' involvement in political processes, the dynamics of group mobilization, and the factors influencing inter-group relations in the political sphere.

2.8. Significance of the Study

Understanding the motivation behind political engagement in Zambia holds significant importance for several reasons. Zambia has seen significant political transitions in recent decades, transitioning from what could be termed as authoritarian regimes or one party rule to more democratic systems. Understanding the motivations behind political engagement can help strengthen democratic governance by identifying the factors that drive citizen participation in political processes. This understanding can inform policymakers on how to enhance civic engagement, promote political inclusion, and strengthen democratic institutions. Zambia grapple with internal political misunderstandings, often fueled by political, ethnic, or social grievances. Understanding the motivations behind political engagement can help address the root causes of conflict by identifying and addressing underlying grievances. By promoting inclusive political processes and addressing the concerns of marginalized groups, it becomes possible to foster peace and stability in conflict-affected regions. Political engagement plays a crucial role in fostering social cohesion and national unity. By understanding the motivations behind political participation, policymakers can work towards building inclusive political systems that accommodate diverse perspectives and interests. This can help bridge societal divides, promote tolerance, and strengthen social cohesion across ethnic, religious, and regional lines. Effective governance requires the active participation of citizens in the political process. Understanding what motivates individuals to engage politically can help policymakers design more effective governance structures and policies that are responsive to the needs and aspirations of the population. This can lead to more accountable, transparent, and responsive governance, ultimately improving the quality of life for citizens. In addition, political stability and effective governance are crucial for economic development and social progress. Understanding the motivations behind political engagement can contribute to the design and implementation of development strategies that are contextually relevant and responsive to the needs of the population. By promoting political participation and inclusive decision-making processes, it becomes possible to harness the talents and energies of the population towards sustainable development. Therefore, understanding the motivation behind political engagement in Zambia and Africa as a whole, is essential for fostering democratic governance, resolving conflicts, promoting social cohesion, ensuring effective governance, and driving sustainable development. By addressing the underlying motivations that drive political engagement, policymakers can work towards building more inclusive, responsive, and prosperous societies across the continent.

3. Literature review

3.1. Social Economic Factors

Social economic factors such as poverty, inequality, and economic marginalization can significantly shape political participation in Zambia, as they do in many countries around the world and these factors may influence political participation in Zambia: Zambia faces significant poverty challenges, with a large portion of its population living below the poverty line. Poverty can limit individuals' ability to engage in politics actively. When people are struggling to meet their basic needs, they may not have the time, resources, or energy to participate in political activities such as voting, attending rallies, or engaging in community organizing (Acemoglu and Robinson,2012). Additionally, poverty may lead to feelings of disenfranchisement or apathy toward the political process, as individuals may perceive that their voices won't make a difference in improving their circumstances. Economic inequality in Zambia, like in many countries, can create disparities in political participation. When there is a significant gap between the wealthy elite and the rest of the population, marginalized groups may feel excluded from the political process. They may perceive that political decisions primarily benefit the wealthy and powerful, further discouraging their participation. Additionally, inequality can lead to social tensions and unrest, which may manifest in various forms of political engagement, including protests or demonstrations (Mengistu,2017).

Economic marginalization, particularly of certain demographic groups such as rural communities or ethnic minorities, can hinder their political participation. These groups may face barriers such as limited access to education, healthcare,

transportation, and information, which can impede their ability to engage in politics effectively. Additionally, economic marginalization can exacerbate feelings of alienation and distrust toward political institutions, discouraging participation. Economic factors also influence access to resources that facilitate political participation, such as transportation to polling stations, communication tools to engage with political candidates or parties, and funds to support political campaigns (Ahlquist and Levi,2011). Those who are economically disadvantaged may lack access to these resources, further limiting their ability to engage meaningfully in the political process. Economic conditions shape the policy priorities of both voters and political candidates. Individuals experiencing poverty or economic hardship are likely to prioritize policies that address these issues, such as social welfare programs, job creation initiatives, or efforts to reduce inequality. Conversely, those who are economically privileged may prioritize policies that protect their interests, potentially leading to divergent political agendas and engagement patterns. Overall, addressing socio-economic factors such as poverty, inequality, and economic marginalization is essential for fostering inclusive and equitable political participation in Zambia. This may involve initiatives to reduce poverty, promote economic development, increase access to education and healthcare, and enhance transparency and accountability in political processes (Anderson,2011). By addressing these underlying issues, Zambia can work toward a more participatory democracy

In Zambia, social economic factors play a significant role in shaping political participation. Education is a crucial determinant of political participation. Individuals with higher levels of education often have better access to information, critical thinking skills, and confidence to engage in political activities such as voting, advocacy, and leadership roles. However, disparities in educational access and quality exist in Zambia, particularly between urban and rural areas and among different socioeconomic groups. Socioeconomic status profoundly influences political participation. Wealthier individuals may have more resources to engage in political activities such as funding political campaigns, lobbying, or joining political parties. Economic disparities can also affect perceptions of political efficacy, with marginalized communities feeling disempowered and less likely to participate in formal political processes (Gann,2022). Access to resources such as land, finance, and technology can impact political participation. In Zambia, rural communities often face challenges accessing basic resources, which can limit their ability to engage in political activities. Additionally, disparities in access to media and communication channels may hinder marginalized groups from participating effectively in political discourse.

Social networks and identity play a crucial role in shaping political participation. Affiliation with social groups, ethnic communities, or religious organizations can influence individuals' political beliefs and behaviors. In Zambia, ethnic diversity is significant, and political participation is often influenced by ethnic identity and social networks. Gender inequalities affect political participation in Zambia. Despite efforts to promote gender equality, women continue to face barriers such as discrimination, cultural norms, and limited access to resources and decision-making positions. These factors contribute to women's underrepresentation in politics and decision-making processes (Van Gyampo and Anyidiho,2019). The overall governance framework and political environment in Zambia impact citizens' willingness and ability to participate politically. Issues such as corruption, lack of transparency, and weak democratic institutions can undermine trust in the political system and deter citizens from engaging in formal political processes. However, addressing these social economic factors requires comprehensive policies that promote inclusive economic development, equitable access to education and resources, gender equality, and good governance. Empowering marginalized communities and fostering a culture of civic engagement are essential for enhancing political participation and strengthening democracy in Zambia.

3.2. Cultural Dynamics and Identity Politics

In Zambia, cultural dynamics and identity politics play significant roles in shaping political participation, with factors such as ethnicity, religion, and tribal affiliations heavily influencing political behavior and decision-making. Zambia is home to numerous ethnic groups, with the major ones being the Bemba, Tonga, Lozi, Ngoni, and Lunda, among others. Ethnic identity often influences political loyalties and voting patterns. Political parties may align themselves with specific ethnic groups to gain support, and voters often rally behind candidates from their own ethnic backgrounds. This can lead to ethnic polarization and competition for resources and power along ethnic lines (Simabwachi,2022). Religion also plays a role in political participation in Zambia, although to a lesser extent compared to ethnicity. The majority of Zambians are Christian, with various denominations represented across the country. Religious leaders and organizations can influence political discourse and mobilize voters based on shared religious values and beliefs. Additionally, religious affiliations may intersect with ethnic identities, further shaping political allegiances.

Tribal affiliations, which are closely related to ethnicity, also impact political participation in Zambia. People often identify strongly with their tribes, which can influence their political preferences and decisions. Political parties may seek support from specific tribal groups and tailor their messages and policies to resonate with their interests and

concerns. Tribalism can sometimes lead to divisions and conflicts within the political landscape. These cultural dynamics and identity politics can both enhance and hinder political participation in Zambia. While they provide avenues for people to connect with political movements and express their grievances, they can also exacerbate divisions and perpetuate inequalities (Gann,2022). Addressing these dynamics requires efforts to promote inclusive politics, respect diversity, and foster national unity beyond ethnic, religious, and tribal lines. Political leaders and institutions play a crucial role in promoting dialogue, reconciliation, and building a more cohesive society where all citizens feel represented and valued.

Traditional institutions and leadership play a significant role in shaping political participation in Zambia, often intersecting with cultural dynamics and identity politics. Here are several ways in which they influence the political landscape: Traditional leaders hold considerable sway and authority within their communities. They are often respected figures who are perceived as custodians of culture and tradition. As such, their endorsement of political candidates or parties can lend legitimacy and influence to those candidates among their followers. Political aspirants frequently seek the support and blessing of traditional leaders to gain credibility and garner support from the local population (Loudon, Goemans and Koester,2021). Traditional leaders and institutions serve as important channels for mobilizing communities and disseminating information, including voter education. They have established networks and structures through which they can communicate with their constituents and encourage political participation, such as voter registration and turnout during elections. Additionally, they may organize community meetings or events where political issues are discussed and debated.

Traditional leaders often play roles in conflict resolution and mediation within their communities. In the context of politics, they may intervene in disputes arising from elections or political rivalries, helping to mitigate tensions and foster reconciliation. Their influence can contribute to peaceful elections and political stability by promoting dialogue and consensus-building. Traditional leaders may control resources and land within their jurisdictions, which can be significant in rural areas where the majority of the population resides. Politicians may leverage relationships with traditional leaders to access these resources or gain favor among their constituents through patronage networks. However, this can also lead to accusations of corruption or favoritism if resources are perceived to be unfairly distributed. (Tembo and Mwanaumo,2022) Traditional leaders often serve as symbols of cultural identity and heritage. In a country as ethnically diverse as Zambia, they play a crucial role in representing the interests of different ethnic groups and ensuring that their voices are heard in the political arena. Their involvement in politics can help safeguard the cultural rights and identities of marginalized communities. Overall, traditional institutions and leadership wield considerable influence in shaping political participation in Zambia, serving as mediators, mobilizers, and custodians of cultural identity. However, their role can be both empowering and contentious, as they navigate the complexities of modern politics while upholding traditional values and customs. Efforts to strengthen democracy and governance in Zambia should take into account the role of traditional leaders and seek to engage them constructively in the political process while promoting accountability and transparency(Rocca,2020).

3.3. Institutional Frameworks and Governance

An overview of the institutional frameworks and governance of democratic institutions in Zambia can generally be categorizes in strengths and weaknesses. On strengths, Zambia has a history of holding regular multi-party elections, which is a fundamental aspect of democracy. The country has seen peaceful transitions of power through the electoral process. Zambia generally upholds freedom of speech and press, allowing for diverse voices and opinions to be expressed. There is a range of media outlets providing different perspectives. There's a vibrant civil society in Zambia, comprising NGOs, advocacy groups, and grassroots organizations, which play a crucial role in advocating for democratic principles, human rights, and good governance (Anderson,2011). Zambia has a constitutional framework that outlines the separation of powers, fundamental rights, and responsibilities of the government, providing a basis for democratic governance. Also, there are multiple political parties in Zambia, allowing for a variety of political ideologies and viewpoints to be represented.

As regards weaknesses, corruption remains a significant challenge in Zambia, affecting various levels of government and undermining democratic principles such as transparency, accountability, and the rule of law. Despite holding regular elections, concerns about the integrity of the electoral process have been raised, including allegations of irregularities, voter intimidation, and lack of transparency. Some democratic institutions in Zambia, such as the judiciary and electoral commission, have faced criticisms regarding their independence, impartiality, and effectiveness. Zambia grapples with ethnic and regional divisions, which sometimes influence political dynamics and can undermine national unity and democratic stability (Njovu,2021). Persistent poverty, inequality, and economic instability can impact the functioning of democratic institutions and create social tensions, which could potentially undermine democratic

governance. Hence, addressing these weaknesses and building on the strengths of democratic institutions is crucial for Zambia's continued progress towards a more robust and inclusive democracy.

In the political landscape of Zambia, political parties and the electoral system play crucial roles in shaping governance, representation, and political dynamics. Political parties in Zambia serve as vehicles for representing various interests, ideologies, and constituencies within the country. They provide platforms for citizens to engage in the political process and articulate their preferences. Parties develop and articulate policy proposals and platforms that reflect their vision for governance and address societal challenges. Through political competition, parties offer alternative approaches to addressing issues such as economic development, social welfare, and governance. Political parties play a central role in mobilizing support during elections through campaigns, rallies, and outreach efforts (Gann,2022). They seek to persuade voters to support their candidates and platforms through various means, including media campaigns and grassroots organizing. Parties with representation in the National Assembly participate in lawmaking and oversight processes. They introduce legislation, participate in debates, and hold the government accountable through parliamentary mechanisms such as question sessions and committee work. In Zambia's parliamentary system, the party or coalition that wins a majority of seats in the National Assembly typically forms the government. The ruling party appoints the president and forms the executive branch, shaping policy implementation and governance.

The role of the Electoral System is that the electoral system determines how representatives are elected and allocated seats in the National Assembly. Zambia employs a mixed-member proportional representation system, where voters cast ballots for both individual candidates in single-member constituencies and party lists for proportional representation seats. Also, the electoral system influences the inclusivity of political representation by determining the threshold for parties to enter the National Assembly. Proportional representation elements allow smaller parties to gain representation, promoting diversity and pluralism in the legislature. Elections serve as mechanisms for holding political parties and elected officials accountable to the electorate. The electoral process allows citizens to express their preferences and sanction parties through voting, encouraging responsiveness to public concerns and preferences (Werner,2017). A well-designed electoral system contributes to political stability by providing clear rules for political competition and power transitions. Transparent and fair elections enhance confidence in the democratic process and reduce the likelihood of disputes and conflicts over election outcomes. Free and fair elections conducted under a transparent electoral system enhance the legitimacy of elected representatives and the government. Legitimate electoral processes contribute to public trust in democratic institutions and strengthen the overall democratic system. However, political parties and the electoral system are essential components of Zambia's political landscape, shaping representation, governance, and democratic processes. Strengthening these institutions and ensuring their transparency, inclusivity, and accountability are crucial for promoting democratic stability and development in the country.

3.4. Personal Ambitions and Aspirations

In Zambia, career opportunities and social status can indeed serve as significant motivators for political engagement. Political engagement can provide individuals with access to resources and opportunities that they might not otherwise have. In Zambia, where economic opportunities can be limited for many people, engaging in politics can be seen as a means to gain access to government contracts, jobs, and other resources that can enhance one's career and social status. Active involvement in politics often involves networking with influential individuals and making connections within political circles. These connections can open doors to career advancement and social mobility (Loudon, Goemans and Koester,2021). In a country like Zambia, where personal connections and networks can play a significant role in accessing opportunities, political engagement can be seen as a way to expand one's network and social influence. Public office or active participation in political activities can bring individuals visibility and recognition within their communities. This visibility can enhance their social status and prestige, leading to increased respect and influence in both social and professional spheres. In Zambia, where social hierarchies and status are important, being involved in politics can elevate one's standing in society.

Beyond personal gain, some individuals may be motivated to engage in politics in Zambia due to a genuine desire to bring about positive change in their communities or the country as a whole. While career opportunities and social status can still be factors in this motivation, the desire to make a difference and contribute to societal development can be a powerful driver for political engagement. In many Zambian communities, there may be expectations for individuals, especially those from influential or affluent families, to be actively involved in politics as a way of upholding family or community honor and legacy. Failing to engage in politics when one has the means and opportunity to do so may be seen as a failure to fulfill these expectations, leading individuals to participate in political activities to maintain or enhance their social standing within their families and communities (African Union,2019). Overall, career opportunities

and social status can be significant motivators for political engagement in Zambia, alongside other factors such as a desire for change, family expectations, and the potential to make a positive impact on society.

Desire for influence and power is indeed a significant motivator behind political engagement in Zambia, as it is in many other parts of the world. Political engagement offers individuals the opportunity to attain positions of power and authority within the government or political parties. This includes roles such as members of parliament, government ministers, or party leaders. Holding such positions not only provides individuals with decision-making authority but also gives them influence over policies, resources, and the direction of the country. Political power often comes with access to resources, privileges, and perks. This could include access to government contracts, control over development projects, or the ability to influence the allocation of resources such as funding and infrastructure (IPU,2015). For individuals seeking to enhance their wealth and status, political engagement can be a means to gain control over such resources. Holding political office or being actively involved in political activities can elevate one's social status and prestige within Zambian society. Politically influential individuals are often respected and admired, not only within their own communities but also at the national level. This can lead to increased recognition, social connections, and opportunities for advancement in other spheres of life.

Political engagement allows individuals to participate in shaping policies and governance structures that affect the lives of millions of Zambians. For those with a desire to enact change or promote specific agendas, holding political office or being influential within political circles provides a platform to advocate for their interests and implement their vision for the country. Some individuals may be motivated by a desire to leave a lasting legacy or imprint on Zambian society. By wielding political influence and power, they hope to enact policies or initiatives that will positively impact the country for years to come (Krook,2017). This desire for a legacy can be a powerful motivator for sustained political engagement and involvement in shaping the nation's future. However, the desire for influence and power is a key motivator behind political engagement in Zambia, driving individuals to seek positions of authority, access resources, enhance their social status, shape policies, and leave a lasting impact on the country's trajectory.

3.5. External Influences and International Relations

Foreign aid, investments, and geopolitical interests often play significant roles in shaping Zambian politics, as they do in many countries across the globe. Zambia, like many other developing nations, relies on foreign aid and investments to support its economy and development initiatives. However, these external influences can also impact the country's political landscape in various ways: Zambia receives substantial foreign aid from various countries and international organizations to address development challenges such as poverty alleviation, healthcare, education, and infrastructure development. However, the allocation and utilization of foreign aid can sometimes be influenced by political considerations, both domestically and internationally. Donor countries may attach conditions to their aid, such as governance reforms, human rights improvements, or economic policy changes, which can influence Zambia's political decision-making processes (Werner,2017). Foreign investments in Zambia, particularly in sectors such as mining, agriculture, and infrastructure, can have significant implications for the country's politics. Large-scale investment projects often involve negotiations between foreign companies and the Zambian government, which can be influenced by political interests and considerations. Additionally, the socio-economic and environmental impacts of foreign investments can become political issues, leading to debates, protests, and policy changes.

Zambia's strategic location, abundance of natural resources, and relatively stable political environment make it a focal point for geopolitical interests, particularly among major powers and regional actors. Geopolitical considerations, such as competition for influence, access to resources, and regional stability, can influence the relationships between Zambia and other countries or international organizations. Political leaders in Zambia may navigate these geopolitical dynamics to secure support, investments, or strategic partnerships that align with their interests. Overall, foreign aid, investments, and geopolitical interests are integral components of Zambia's political landscape, shaping policies, decision-making processes, and international relationships. However, managing these external influences requires careful consideration to ensure that they contribute to the country's development goals and serve the interests of its citizens (Gann,2022).

Global institutions and donor agencies exert significant influence on the motivation behind political engagement in Zambia through various mechanisms. Many global institutions and donor agencies attach conditions to the aid they provide to Zambia. These conditions often relate to governance, human rights, economic policies, and transparency. As a result, political actors in Zambia are motivated to engage with these institutions to ensure continued access to financial support. This engagement may involve implementing reforms, enacting certain policies, or demonstrating progress on specific indicators, all of which can shape the political landscape (Virendrakumar et al,2017). Global institutions and donor agencies often provide support for capacity building, training, and technical assistance to political actors, civil society organizations, and government institutions in Zambia. This support aims to strengthen democratic governance,

improve public service delivery, and enhance the effectiveness of institutions. As individuals and organizations receive training and build their capacity, they become more empowered to engage in political processes, advocate for change, and hold leaders accountable.

Global institutions and donor agencies also influence political engagement in Zambia by shaping the policy agenda and priorities. They provide funding, expertise, and technical assistance for the development of policies and programs in various sectors, such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, and agriculture. Political actors may align their agendas with the priorities set by these institutions to access funding and support, which can influence the direction of political engagement and policymaking. Global institutions and donor agencies often conduct monitoring and evaluation of development programs and projects in Zambia to assess their impact and effectiveness (Dye,2017). This scrutiny can incentivize political actors to demonstrate progress, accountability, and transparency in their actions. It can also prompt them to engage more actively with civil society, media, and other stakeholders to address concerns and improve governance practices. Overall, the influence of global institutions and donor agencies on the motivation behind political engagement in Zambia is multifaceted. While their support can contribute to positive changes in governance, development, and accountability, it also poses challenges such as dependency, conditionality, and potential interference in national sovereignty. Balancing these dynamics requires careful consideration of the interests and priorities of both domestic and external stakeholders

3.6. Case Studies and Empirical Evidence

Political engagement in Zambia, like in many other countries, is motivated by a variety of factors that are influenced by the socio-economic, cultural, and historical contexts of the nation. Here are some specific cases and contexts that can shed light on the motivations behind political engagement in Zambia. Zambia, despite being rich in natural resources like copper, faces significant economic inequality. Many citizens are motivated to engage politically to address issues such as poverty, unemployment, and unequal distribution of wealth. Those marginalized by economic disparities may join political movements or parties that promise economic reforms and social justice(Williams,2013). Also, Zambia has experienced both democratic transitions and authoritarian tendencies in its political history. Individuals motivated by the desire for democratic governance may engage in politics to advocate for transparent and accountable leadership, free and fair elections, and the protection of civil liberties. Movements advocating for democratic reforms often gain momentum during periods of political repression or electoral irregularities. In addition, Zambia is home to over 70 ethnic groups, and ethnic identity often plays a significant role in politics. Some individuals may engage politically to advance the interests of their ethnic group or to resist perceived marginalization by other ethnic communities or the government. Ethnic-based political mobilization can influence voting patterns and party allegiances (Simabwachi,2022).

Zambia has a youthful population, and youth unemployment rates are high. Many young people are motivated to engage politically to demand better education and employment opportunities, as well as to challenge the entrenched power structures that may exclude them from meaningful participation in decision-making processes. Youth-led movements and initiatives often emerge as platforms for political activism and advocacy. Corruption is a pervasive issue in Zambia, affecting various sectors including politics, business, and public services. Individuals motivated by anti-corruption sentiments may engage in political activism to demand accountability, transparency, and the prosecution of corrupt officials. Civil society organizations and grassroots movements often play a vital role in exposing corruption and mobilizing citizens for political change (Njovu,2021). Concerns about human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests, police brutality, and restrictions on freedom of expression, motivate many Zambians to engage politically. Activists, civil society groups, and opposition parties often mobilize around issues related to human rights and social justice, advocating for legal reforms, institutional accountability, and respect for fundamental freedoms. Zambia's political landscape is also influenced by international actors, including foreign governments, multinational corporations, and international development organizations. Political engagement may be motivated by concerns related to foreign investment, trade agreements, development assistance, and geopolitical alignments. Debates over sovereignty, national interests, and dependency on external actors shape political discourse and mobilization. In analyzing specific cases and contexts of political engagement in Zambia, it's essential to consider the interplay of these factors and how they intersect with individual motivations, collective identities, and broader socio-political dynamics (Wener,2017).

Examining individual paths to political engagement in Zambia reveals diverse motivations, experiences, and strategies that drive citizens to participate in the political process. Here are some common paths individuals may take towards political engagement in Zambia: Some individuals become politically engaged through formal education or exposure to civic education programs. Learning about democratic principles, governance structures, and the importance of citizen participation can inspire individuals to get involved in politics. Educational institutions, NGOs, and government

initiatives often play a role in promoting civic awareness and political literacy. Personal experiences of injustice, discrimination, or socio-economic hardship can propel individuals towards political engagement (Tembo and Mwanaumo,2022). For example, someone who has been a victim of corruption or human rights abuses may feel compelled to take action to address these issues. These personal experiences often fuel a sense of indignation and a desire to bring about change. Family and community dynamics play a significant role in shaping political attitudes and behaviors in Zambia. Individuals may be influenced by the political views and affiliations of their family members, community leaders, or peers. Growing up in politically active or socially conscious environments can instill a sense of civic duty and encourage individuals to engage in political activities. Additionally, scholars of feminism and gender equality have long argued that women's ability to make an impact in male-dominated institutions will be limited until they are represented in numbers large enough to have a collective voice (Chanda, 2023).

Some individuals are drawn to political engagement through activism and grassroots organizing. They may join or form civil society organizations, community associations, or youth groups focused on specific issues such as human rights, environmental protection, or social justice. Grassroots activism provides opportunities for direct action, mobilization, and advocacy at the local level. Joining a political party or movement is a common path to political engagement in Zambia. Individuals may be attracted to parties or movements that align with their ideological beliefs, policy preferences, or identity-based interests. Political parties serve as platforms for individuals to participate in electoral politics, campaign for candidates, and influence policy agendas (Gann,2022). Access to information through media channels, including traditional outlets like newspapers and radio as well as digital platforms and social media, can shape individuals' political awareness and engagement. Exposure to news, analysis, and political discourse can spark interest in current affairs and motivate individuals to become active participants in the political process. Inspirational leaders and mentors can inspire individuals to become politically engaged. Whether it's a charismatic political figure, a respected community leader, or a mentor who provides guidance and encouragement, positive role models can influence individuals' decisions to get involved in politics and civic affairs. Crises or mobilization events, such as protests, elections, or social movements, can serve as catalysts for political engagement. These events draw attention to pressing issues, galvanize public opinion, and mobilize citizens to take action. Individuals may become politically engaged in response to perceived injustices or as part of broader collective efforts for social change. These individual paths to political engagement are interconnected and may overlap, reflecting the complex interplay of personal, social, and contextual factors that shape citizens' involvement in the political arena in Zambia (African Union,2019).

3.7. Challenges and Constraints

In Zambia, like in many other countries, there are several barriers to political participation that can hinder citizens from engaging fully in the political process. These barriers can vary in nature and severity but often include the following. Inadequate access to information about political processes, parties, and candidates can deter individuals from participating effectively. This lack of information may be due to factors such as limited internet connectivity, illiteracy, or insufficient civic education programs. Economic disparities can pose significant barriers to political participation. Poverty, unemployment, and lack of resources can prevent individuals from actively engaging in political activities, such as attending rallies or running for office(IPU,2015). Certain groups, such as women, youth, and marginalized ethnic or religious communities, may face systemic discrimination and exclusion from the political process. This can manifest in limited representation in political institutions, unequal access to resources, and cultural or societal barriers to participation. Inadequate institutional frameworks for political participation, including weak electoral systems, lack of transparency, and corruption, can undermine citizens' trust in the political process and discourage their engagement.

Political violence, intimidation, and harassment can create a climate of fear that suppresses political participation. This includes threats against opposition members, activists, and journalists, as well as restrictions on freedom of speech and assembly. Insufficient civic education programs may result in a lack of understanding of democratic principles, rights, and responsibilities among the populace. Without proper education on the importance of political participation, citizens may be less inclined to engage in the political process. Zambia's geographic vastness and dispersed population can present logistical challenges for political participation, particularly in rural and remote areas where access to political institutions and information may be limited. However, addressing these barriers requires comprehensive efforts from both the government and civil society to promote inclusivity, strengthen democratic institutions, and foster a culture of active citizenship and political engagement (Rose-Ackerman,2017). This may involve initiatives such as improving access to information, enhancing civic education programs, ensuring equal representation and participation opportunities for all groups, and strengthening democratic governance and accountability mechanisms.

Gender disparities and youth marginalization can act as significant barriers to political participation in Zambia, as in many other countries. Here's how each factor can hinder engagement. Women in Zambia are often underrepresented in political institutions, including parliament, local government, and political parties. This lack of representation limits

women's ability to influence decision-making processes and policies that affect them. Deep-rooted sociocultural norms and discriminatory practices can restrict women's participation in politics. Traditional gender roles, stereotypes, and expectations may discourage women from pursuing political careers or engaging in public discourse (OECD,2019). Women in Zambia may face challenges accessing resources such as education, finance, and networks, which are essential for political participation. Economic disparities and unequal opportunities further exacerbate these barriers. Women in politics often face gender-based violence, harassment, and intimidation, which can deter them from actively participating in electoral campaigns, public debates, or grassroots activism. Inadequate gender-responsive policies, including quotas or affirmative action measures, can perpetuate gender disparities in political representation and participation. Without supportive structures and mechanisms, women may struggle to overcome institutional barriers.

Young people in Zambia are often underrepresented in formal political institutions, with few opportunities to hold leadership positions or influence decision-making processes. This marginalization alienates youth from the political system and diminishes their sense of political efficacy. High levels of youth unemployment, poverty, and economic insecurity can hinder young people's ability to engage in political activities. Financial constraints may prevent youth from participating in campaigns, joining political organizations, or running for office   Disparities in access to quality education and civic engagement opportunities can impede youth political participation. Limited civic education programs in schools may fail to equip young people with the necessary knowledge and skills to engage meaningfully in the political process (Resnick and Casale,2011). Many young Zambians may feel disillusioned with politics due to perceived corruption, nepotism, and a lack of accountability among political elites. This disillusionment can lead to political apathy and disengagement among youth. Youth often feel excluded from decision-making processes that affect their lives, such as policies related to education, employment, and social services. Without meaningful opportunities for participation, young people may become disconnected from formal politics. Nevertheless, addressing gender disparities and youth marginalization requires targeted interventions aimed at promoting inclusivity, empowering marginalized groups, and creating enabling environments for political participation. This may include implementing gender-sensitive policies, promoting women's leadership and representation, enhancing youth civic education and engagement programs, fostering intergenerational dialogue, and strengthening youth-friendly political structures and mechanisms (IPU,2015).

4. Methodology

4.1. Research Design

The research design was descriptive survey with both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection in order to attain the comprehensive results (Kumar,2011). Qualitative methods were appropriate to this investigation as it produced detailed data from a small group of participants, while exploring feelings, impressions and judgments. On the other hand, quantitative method made the use of questionnaires, surveys and experiment to gather data that is revised and tabulated in numbers, which allows the data to be characterized by use of statistical analysis (Martyn, 2008).

4.2. Research Sites

The study was carried out in five institutions of Government Ministries, Universities, Political Parties, Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) offices from which respondents were also sampled.

4.3. Population, Sample and Sampling procedure

The population for the study was purposefully drawn from the Lusaka province of Zambia where all the respondents are found. Purposive sampling procedure was used to select the institutions (5) while the simple random sampling procedure was used to select the University lecturers (50); five from each institution, University students (50); five from each institution, Senior Civil Servants (50); five from each Ministry, Senior Officers at ECZ (50) ten from HQ and forty from the councils from Lusaka Province, senior political party official (50), five from each political party and NGO executive members (50); four from each organization (Bickel, 2007). The sample size comprised of 250 respondents. Also, the primary data was complimented by the secondary data which was derived from government policy documents, ministerial reports and relevant literature on language use. In the sampling of districts and institutions, the study adopted the stratified cluster random sampling technique. Sampling of the province was done on the basis of concentration of respondents and institutions were then done zone by zone. Universities and other institutions were clustered by zones. Two zones were purposively selected based on the basis of concentration of respondents. The sampling was done at three levels: Sampling zones, universities and other institutions- level 1, Sampling University lecturers and Civil servants in Ministries-level 2, Sampling Senior Officers at ECZ, District Officers, senior party officials and NGO Executive members-level 3.

4.4. Data Analysis

In this research, data was analyzed qualitatively as in-depth interviews, questionnaires and observation schedules were used as data collection instruments. Thematic approach was used, where data analysis started with the categorization of themes from the structured interviews, questionnaires (Khan ,2011). Charts and graphs were used to analyze data. The data gathered was analyzed according to the themes of the study and per the order of the research objectives. Data generated from the interview guide was analyzed manually and also, a combination of software MS Access, SPSS and MS Excel was used to analyze data. Analysis was mainly descriptive, that is, mean, median, mode, range, and standard deviation. Related statistics were applied where possible. Statistical testing took the form of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), correlation and regression both simple and multiple, (Morales and McKenzie,2019).

4.5. Ethical Issues

The researchers avoided pressuring respondents to take part in the research. Alternatively, permission consents, assents were obtained from respondents involved in the research and the research topic was strategically selected to ensure that there was no harm whatsoever to the research respondents. In this research, the study was fully conscious of the need to abide by the ethical rule of respecting the privacy of individuals taking part in the research. In the same way, all the respondents of the research were to remain unidentified to the public as all their valuable views, opinions and perceptions were only known by the researchers for use only in the research and participant's identities will forever remain hidden.

The study got permission from the Vice Chancellors to interview lecturers and students, from Permanent secretaries to interview senior civil servants in the Ministries of Local Environment and Water Development, the Permanent Secretary to interview ECZ Officers at HQ, District Council Mayors/Chairpersons to interview ECZ District Officials and Executive officers to interview NGO members. The names of respondents would remain anonymous for the sake of confidentiality, Babble,2010). However, the identity of respondents was concealed in the article but for identification in the article, the fifty lecturers were allocated numbers 1 to 50, the fifty students were allocated ordinal numbers 1st to 50th, the fifty NGO members were allocated names of fifty Primary schools in Lusaka, the fifty Civil servants were allocated names of fifty secondary schools in Lusaka and the fifty ECZ Officers at HQ were allocated names of ten famous roads in Lusaka, the forty District ECZ Officers were allocated names forty famous streets in Lusaka while fifty party officials were allocated names of fifty private schools in Lusaka and then Zones and institutions used pseudo names.

5. Findings and discussions

5.1. Socio-political Factors that Motivate Zambian Citizens to Engage in Politics

According to study findings, there are several social-political factors that motivate Zambian citizens to engage in politics, as per the specified criteria, the highest in terms of percentage being economic welfare at 25%, followed by governance at 20%, ethnicity at 15%, education and corruption both at 10%, social services at 8%, infrastructure at 7% and environmental concerns at 7% as illustrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Social-political Factors that Motivate Zambian Citizens to Engage in Politics

Serial Number	Social Factor	Description	Percentage in Importance
1	Economic Welfare	Concerns related to jobs, income, and poverty alleviation	25%
2	Governance	Desire for transparent, accountable, and effective governance	20%
3	Ethnicity	Identification with ethnic group and its political representation	15%
4	Education	Awareness of political rights and issues, driven by education level	10%
5	Corruption	Frustration with widespread corruption and its impact on society	10%

6	Social Services	Access to healthcare, education, and other public services	8%
7	Infrastructure	Demand for better infrastructure development and maintenance	7%
8	Environmental Concerns	Interest in environmental protection and sustainable development	5%

The study reviewed that many Zambians are motivated to engage in politics due to economic factors such as poverty, unemployment, and economic inequality. They may seek political change to improve their economic conditions and opportunities. Zambia is a diverse country with many different ethnic groups. Ethnicity often plays a significant role in politics, with citizens aligning themselves with political parties or candidates based on ethnic identity. This can motivate citizens to engage in politics to support leaders who they perceive will protect the interests of their ethnic group. Concerns about corruption and governance issues can motivate citizens to engage in politics to hold leaders accountable and demand transparency and integrity in government institutions. Access to basic services such as healthcare, education, and clean water can be a motivating factor for citizens to engage in politics. Many Zambians may participate in political activities to advocate for improved service delivery and infrastructure development in their communities (Heywood,2013).

Further, the study reviewed that Zambia has a significant youth population, and young people are increasingly becoming politically active. Youth are motivated to engage in politics to address issues that affect them directly, such as unemployment, education, and political representation. As a democratic country, citizens are motivated to engage in politics to exercise their democratic rights and participate in decision-making processes. This includes voting in elections, joining political parties, and engaging in civic activism (Hout,2014). Zambia has a history of political activism and struggle for independence from colonial rule. This historical context can motivate citizens to engage in politics as a means of continuing the fight for social justice, equality, and national development. Access to information through media channels, including social media, can influence citizens' political engagement by raising awareness of political issues and events. Media platforms provide opportunities for citizens to express their opinions, organize movements, and hold leaders accountable.

5.2. The Aim of Political Participation Patterns of Political Engagement Among Different Demographic Groups in Zambia

According to study results, studying political participation patterns among different demographic groups in Zambia involves examining how various factors such as age, ethnicity, urban or rural residence, and socio-economic status influence individuals' engagement in political processes. An exploration of the aim and significance of understanding these patterns in statistical terms were that the highest was age at 40%, followed by ethnicity at 35%, urban or rural residence at 15% and the last but not the least was social economic status at 10% as illustrated in Figure 1.

The study reviewed that the aim of studying political participation patterns across age groups is to understand how generational differences influence political engagement. Younger individuals might have different priorities and methods of political expression compared to older generations. Analyzing these patterns helps identify potential barriers to youth participation and develop strategies to enhance their involvement in the political process. Exploring political participation patterns by gender aims to uncover disparities in political engagement between men and women. This analysis helps identify factors contributing to gender gaps in political representation and decision-making (Werner,2017). Understanding these patterns is crucial for promoting gender equality in politics and ensuring that women have equal opportunities to participate in and influence political processes. The aim of examining political participation patterns across ethnic groups is to assess how socio-cultural factors shape political engagement. In Zambia, where ethnic diversity is significant, understanding these patterns can reveal dynamics of political representation and power-sharing among different ethnic communities. It helps in addressing ethnic inequalities in political participation and fostering inclusive governance.

Also, the study reviewed that studying political participation patterns in urban and rural areas aims to explore disparities in access to political resources and opportunities for civic engagement. Urban populations may have greater access to political information, institutions, and platforms compared to rural areas. Understanding these differences helps in designing policies and initiatives to bridge the urban-rural divide and ensure equitable political participation across regions. Analyzing political participation patterns based on socio-economic status aims to uncover inequalities in political engagement related to wealth, education, and occupation. Individuals from higher socio-economic

backgrounds may have more resources and networks to participate actively in politics, while those from lower socio-economic backgrounds may face barriers such as limited access to education or financial constraints (Ahlquist and Levi,2011). Understanding these patterns is essential for promoting social inclusion and addressing disparities in political representation. Overall, exploring political participation patterns among different demographic groups in Zambia helps in identifying inequalities and barriers to inclusive political engagement. It provides insights for policymakers, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders to develop targeted interventions and policies aimed at enhancing democratic participation and representation for all citizens.
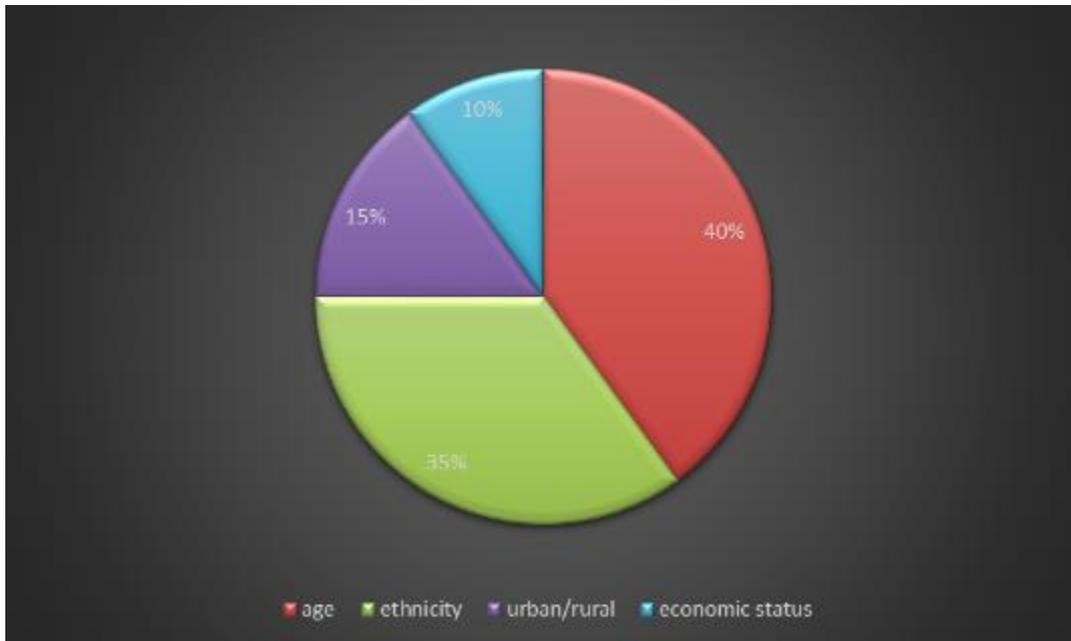

Figure 1 Political Participation Patterns of Political Engagement Among Different Demographic Groups in Zambia

5.3. Trust of Political Institutions in Zambia, in Motivating and Demotivating Citizens' Political Engagement

According to study results, trust of political institutions in Zambia including the government, electoral body, political parties, and judiciary, in motivating or demotivating citizens in political engagement requires a multifaceted analysis of various factors influencing trust and political engagement. Let's break down each institution and the factors influencing trust: With government, trust in the government in Zambia can be influenced by perceptions of its effectiveness, honesty, and responsiveness to citizen needs. Transparency depends on the degree to which the government discloses information and operates in an open manner can affect trust. Lack of transparency in decision-making processes can erode trust while as regards accountability, citizens' belief that government officials are held accountable for their actions, including through transparent investigations and consequences for misconduct, is crucial for fostering trust (Ruedin,2017). Responsiveness is the government's ability to address citizen concerns and deliver public services efficiently can enhance trust and political engagement. Conversely, perceived neglect or unresponsiveness can diminish trust. With the Electoral Body, trust in the electoral body, such as the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ), is essential for the legitimacy of elections and the democratic process. On transparency, electoral processes must be transparent, from voter registration to ballot counting, to ensure trust in the integrity of elections while as regards accountability, the electoral body should be accountable for conducting free, fair, and credible elections. Any perception of bias, irregularities, or lack of accountability can undermine trust in the electoral process. Responsiveness is in addressing concerns related to voter registration, polling station accessibility, and addressing complaints promptly can bolster trust in the electoral body (Alt and Lassen,2014).

Also, the study reviewed that with Political Parties trust in political parties is crucial as they represent the interests of citizens and compete for power within the democratic system. On transparency, political parties should be transparent about their agendas, funding sources, and internal decision-making processes to maintain trust among supporters and the general public while as regards accountability, political parties should be accountable for their actions, including adherence to democratic principles, ethical conduct, and fulfilling their campaign promises. On responsiveness, political parties that listen to and address the concerns of citizens are more likely to gain trust and support. Engaging with constituents through dialogue and policy responsiveness can enhance trust (Aborisade and aliyyu,2018). With Judiciary, trust in the judiciary is fundamental for upholding the rule of law and ensuring access to justice. Judicial proceedings

should be transparent, with decisions based on law and evidence, to maintain trust in the impartiality and fairness of the judiciary while Judicial accountability involves ensuring that judges adhere to ethical standards and are held accountable for their decisions. Mechanisms for addressing judicial misconduct are essential for maintaining trust. As regards responsiveness, the judiciary's ability to provide timely and fair resolutions to legal disputes, protect individual rights, and uphold the constitution can influence trust in its effectiveness and integrity.

Further, the study reviewed factors influencing trust as political culture since historical experiences, cultural norms, and societal attitudes towards authority and governance can shape trust in political institutions. On corruption, perceptions of corruption within political institutions can significantly undermine trust. Efforts to combat corruption and promote transparency are essential for rebuilding trust. As regards communication, effective communication and public engagement strategies by political institutions can enhance transparency, accountability, and responsiveness, thereby fostering trust. On economic performance, socio-economic factors, such as poverty, unemployment, and inequality, can influence perceptions of government effectiveness and trust in political institutions (Acemoglu and Robinson,2012). Another factor reviewed was media and civil society as an independent media and civil society organizations play a crucial role in holding political institutions accountable and fostering informed citizenry, which can contribute to trust-building efforts. However, trust in political institutions in Zambia is influenced by various factors, including transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to citizen concerns. Enhancing these aspects can help build and maintain trust, thereby motivating political engagement and strengthening democracy in Zambia.

5.4. Perceptions of Political Efficacy and Agency to Influence Political Outcomes in Zambia

According to study results, examining perceptions of political efficacy and agency in Zambia involves understanding citizens' confidence in the electoral process, their perception of government responsiveness to their needs, and their attitudes toward influencing political outcomes. Zambia, like many other countries, experiences varying degrees of political efficacy and agency among its citizens, influenced by historical, socio-economic, and cultural factors. An analysis of this is that first of all, confidence in the electoral process and voter turnout and participation rates can be indicative of citizens' confidence in the electoral process. High turnout suggests trust and belief in the effectiveness of elections in bringing about desired political change. Public opinion surveys and polling data can gauge citizens' perceptions of the fairness, transparency, and integrity of elections. Questions may focus on issues such as electoral fraud, manipulation, or bias in media coverage while observations from domestic and international election monitoring bodies provide additional insights into the credibility and legitimacy of electoral processes (Alt and Lassen,2014). The second pattern is perception of government responsiveness and this involves citizen satisfaction surveys and assessments of public service delivery can reveal how responsive the government is perceived to be in addressing citizens' needs. Analysis of government policies and initiatives, particularly those related to social welfare, healthcare, education, infrastructure development, and poverty alleviation, can shed light on the extent to which citizens feel their concerns are being addressed while media reports, social media discussions, and civil society engagement can offer qualitative perspectives on citizens' experiences with government responsiveness. The third pattern is attitudes toward influencing political outcomes by civic engagement activities, such as protests, demonstrations, petitions, and community organizing efforts, reflect citizens' willingness to exert influence on political outcomes (African Union,2019). Public opinion on the effectiveness of different forms of political participation, including voting, advocacy, and activism, can be assessed through surveys and focus group discussions while analysis of political discourse and rhetoric in public spaces, including traditional media, social media, and public gatherings, can provide insights into prevailing attitudes toward political engagement and activism.

Further, the study reviewed challenges and considerations and it is essential to recognize the diversity of opinions and experiences within Zambia's population, considering factors such as urban-rural divides, ethnic diversity, and socio-economic disparities. Access to information and freedom of expression are crucial considerations, as they can impact citizens' ability to form informed opinions and engage meaningfully in political processes while historical legacies, including experiences of authoritarianism, political violence, and corruption, may shape citizens' trust in institutions and their willingness to participate in political activities (Gann,2022). However, examining perceptions of political efficacy and agency in Zambia requires a multifaceted approach, incorporating quantitative and qualitative data sources to capture the complexity of citizens' attitudes and experiences in relation to the electoral process, government responsiveness, and political engagement.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, understanding the motivation behind political engagement in Zambia requires a nuanced appreciation of historical legacies, socio-economic realities, cultural dynamics, and aspirations for democratic governance. While intrinsic motivations such as a desire for justice and equality drive citizens to participate actively, external factors can

either facilitate or hinder their engagement. Building a more inclusive and responsive political system that addresses the diverse needs of Zambians is crucial for fostering sustained and meaningful political participation. Understanding the motivation behind political engagement in Zambia reveals a complex interplay of historical, socio-economic, and cultural factors that shape citizens' participation in the political process. Through an analysis of various dimensions, it becomes evident that Zambians engage in politics driven by a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Firstly, historical context plays a pivotal role. Zambia has a rich history of political activism, stemming from its struggle for independence from colonial rule. The legacy of leaders such as Kenneth Kaunda and the formation of political parties during this period laid the groundwork for a culture of civic engagement and political awareness among Zambians. Secondly, socio-economic factors significantly influence political engagement. Zambia faces numerous challenges, including poverty, unemployment, and inadequate access to essential services such as healthcare and education. These issues often drive citizens to engage politically as they seek solutions to improve their livelihoods and address systemic inequalities. Thirdly, cultural values and identity contribute to political participation. Zambia's diverse ethnic landscape, characterized by numerous languages and cultural practices, shapes citizens' perceptions of governance and their roles within the political sphere. Traditional leadership structures and community ties often intersect with formal political processes, influencing patterns of engagement. Moreover, aspirations for democratic governance and social justice serve as intrinsic motivators for political participation. Zambians aspire to have a voice in decision-making processes, hold leaders accountable, and advocate for policies that promote equity and inclusivity. This intrinsic motivation fuels grassroots movements, civil society activism, and electoral participation. However, external factors such as political polarization, corruption, and electoral malpractice can also influence political engagement negatively. Cynicism and disillusionment may arise when citizens perceive that their voices are not heard or that the political system is inherently unfair.

Recommendations

Understanding the motivation behind political engagement in Zambia requires a multifaceted approach that considers historical, social, economic, and cultural factors. Here are some recommendations and by combining the following approaches, government can gain a comprehensive understanding of the motivations behind political engagement in Zambia and the complex interplay of factors that shape its political landscape.

Historical Context: Studying Zambia's history, including its pre-colonial, colonial, and post-independence periods. Understanding key events, such as the struggle for independence and the political transitions since then, can provide insights into the roots of political engagement.

Political Landscape: Familiarizing with Zambia's political parties, their ideologies, leaders, and policies. Analyze how these parties appeal to different segments of the population and how they mobilize support.

Socioeconomic Factors: Exploring the socioeconomic conditions in Zambia, including poverty levels, unemployment rates, access to education and healthcare, and income inequality. These factors often influence people's motivations for political engagement, as they seek solutions to address their needs and improve their livelihoods.

Cultural Dynamics: Considering cultural norms, values, and traditions that shape political behavior in Zambia. This could include the role of traditional leadership, ethnic diversity, and the influence of religious beliefs on political attitudes and participation.

Youth Engagement: Investigating the role of young people in Zambian politics. Understanding their aspirations, frustrations, and the issues that motivate them to engage or disengage from the political process.

Media and Communication: Examining the role of media, including traditional outlets like newspapers and television, as well as social media platforms, in shaping political discourse and mobilizing citizens. Analyzing how information is disseminated and how it influences public opinion and participation.

Civil Society and Activism: Looking into the role of civil society organizations, advocacy groups, and grassroots movements in Zambia. Understanding how these entities mobilize citizens around specific causes and amplify their voices in the political arena.

International Relations: Considering Zambia's relations with other countries and international organizations. Exploring how geopolitical dynamics and foreign policies influence domestic politics and public opinion.

Academic Research and Reports: Consulting academic studies, reports from think tanks, and analyses by experts on Zambian politics. These sources can provide valuable insights and perspectives backed by research and data.

Engage with Local Communities: Whenever possible, interacting with Zambian citizens directly to understand their experiences, perspectives, and motivations for political engagement. Fieldwork, interviews, and focus group discussions can provide firsthand insights that complement academic research.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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Authors' Short Biography

	Chanda Chansa Thelma specializes in Social Sciences, Political Science and Education. She has lectured and still lecturing at the University level under the school of Humanities and Education.
	Lufeyo Chitondo specializes in Language Education and Research and is currently lecturing Language Education at Twin Palm Leadership University in the Languages and Literacy Department.