YOUTH CULTURE: A MELTING POT IN ZIMBABWE

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ABSTRACT

The study describes and analyzes the psychosocial dynamics of youth culture from the 1960s to the present. Emphasis was given to examine how different epochs affect the youth culture. With some exceptions here and there, it is observed that the youth of the earlier years had more in common with the general culture of their communities than the contemporary youth. Also there is a marked difference between the urban contemporary youth culture and the rural youth culture. Tsika (manners) and hunhu (an ethic or humanist philosophy focusing on people's allegiances and relations with each other) were given prominence in Zimbabwe's general youth culture during the 1960s. The same prominence is also being given to the values in contemporary youth culture. On the other hand book education, together with music, attire, entertainment, the war of liberation, multimedia, religion, labor migration, and, more recently, the internet and globalization have created a youth culture differentiated from the general culture with tsika and hunhu being given less prominence.

Keywords: Youth Culture; Melting Pot; Tsika; Hunhu

INTRODUCTION

Youth culture in Zimbabwe, at any given time, is not unitary; it consists of various subcultures based on the geographical and ethnic background. This presentation aims to explore the impact of exposure to diverse cultural sources on Zimbabwean youth. Due to book education, religions, urbanization, labor migration, technological advancement, more tolerance, and mixing among races after independence, among other developments, norms and values are brought in with potential to both degrade and enrich Zimbabwe's national character. The major focus of the study is to determine the major influence of the Zimbabwean adolescents and teenagers from the 1960s to the present and to determine whether youth culture is becoming more homogenous or more heterogeneous with time. Furthermore, it also examines the negative and positive outcome of the impact of various cultural sources to the Zimbabwean youth. The paper is divided into two components: the period before independence (1960-1979) and the period after independence (1980-2009).

THE PERIOD BEFORE INDEPENDENCE (1960-1979)

At this juncture, an exploration of the impact of both western and Zimbabwean culture on youths in Zimbabwe's

pre-independence era is done. Zimbabwe was the British colony of Southern Rhodesia from 1890 to 1980. The period focused on is between 1960s and 1970s. The factors that affected Zimbabwe's youths during this era are, among others, book education, entertainment, and the world of work, attire, pastime, and the war of liberation.

Indigenous Education

As a child grows, elders teach him tsika. *Tsika* refers to knowing/possessing and being able to use the rules, customs, and traditions of the Shona society (Pearce, 1990). According to Samkange and Samkange (1980), the behavioral signs of *tsika,* or good breeding, are politeness, civility, and circumlocution. Pearce (1990) added that *tsika* includes modesty, self-respect, prudence, and above all self-control. While all elders are teachers, the main task of teaching children, especially youth, was given to uncles *(sekurus)* and/or aunts *(tetes).* A child is expected to learn *tsika* without questioning. *Tsika* provides the framework within which actions are judged and evaluated.

Learning and understanding *tsika* prepares the youth to enter into the moral order of a responsible adult life and it is the foundation of developing *hunhu*. According to Pearce (1990), *hunhu* have cognitive elements, which must be learned to form the basis for action; however, hunhu develops later in life at about the age of puberty. Pearce (1990) noted, "A good child is expected to know the rules, customs, and principles which make up *tsika* but not to show the attributes of a morally autonomous person -*hunhu*- until around the age of puberty".

According to Nussbaum (2003), *hunhu* is the capacity to express compassion, reciprocity, dignity, harmony, and humanity in the interests of building and maintaining community culture and ethos. In the same vein, Chinouya & O'Keefe 2006) observed that the notion of *hunhu* is a key cultural resource grounded in respect, humanity, and the interconnectedness of beings. As a component of developing *hunhu* in youth, elders were also involved is teaching life skills and wisdom. In life skills, the youth are taught technical skills that enable them to develop life support skills, such as farming, building, baskets weaving, fishing, and so on. In developing knowledge and wisdom, the youth were told the history of the community, folklore, proverbs, and idioms. A holistic approach was used to develop the youth mentally, physically, and spiritually. According to Chivaura (2006), one's *hunhu* is measured by one's ability to exercise control over the overpowering urges of one's instinctual being.

In Zimbabwean culture, the concept of hunhu has been closely associated with the culture of obedience for the youths; that is, respect and being obedient to adults. Unfortunately, emphasis on youth obedience has been manipulated to exploit youths who are, in most cases, vulnerable due to their weak economic status. However, Louw (1998) suggested that the concept of ubuntu defines the individual in their several relationships with others, and stresses the importance of ubuntu as a religious concept. He stated that while the Zulu maxim *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* ("a person is a person through (other) persons") may have no apparent religious connotations in the context of Western society, in an African context, it suggests that the person who upholds the concept of ubuntu will (after death) become an ancestor worthy of respect or veneration. Those who uphold the principle of ubuntu throughout their lives will, in death, achieve a unity with those still living. Desmond Tutu (1999) reaffirms this in a book by saying, "a person with Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, and does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole

and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished when others are tortured or oppressed."

Book Education

The term 'book education' or 'book learning' is here used to refer to the type of learning that involves professional teachers and students. This type of education did have an impact on most Zimbabwean youths who managed to access it. Education was a major tool in the cultural conquest of Africa; the colonizing powers realized this quite early. Missionaries were among the first to make serious efforts to introduce a western style education in the early nineteenth century. To the same extent, different colonial powers approached the colonization and administration of their territories differently; approaches to educate the Africans differed. Western education had an impact on the African societies during colonial rule, in the process of decolonization and also in the time after independence (Huhmann, 2005). This form of book education replaced the traditional African forms of education that had always been imparted to youngsters through folktales and other forms of oral literature and traditional games, like *nhodo* and *kusika nyimo.*

The education that the youths got from most of these schools impacted negatively on their traditional African culture. The students who joined the Boys Scouts Movement were taught to serve God, the Queen or King, and their country. In the early days of colonialism, youths were compelled to sing the national anthem "God save the King." The implication of this was that African Chiefs were in the end disregarded and viewed as far less inferior when compared to the British King. They began to see the chiefs as a relic of the past, as people who had been overtaken by history.

The other impact of western education was on the indigenous languages. Most youths started making manifest their newfound knowledge by speaking in English, no matter how ungrammatical their variety was. It was, however, difficult to resist the penetration of English into the culture of these youths, as Hidalgo, 1994 (as cited by Huhmann 2005) argued that children who remain with the native language have two things in common: their mothers are monolingual and they have never been to school. The classroom forced the youth to speak the foreign language. The classroom was the principal battle ground and teachers the enemy (Hidalgo, 1994, cited in Huhmann, 2005). The speaking of English was further extended to matters of the heart. Letters to loved ones were now being written in English. If one was to profess his love to a potential lover in Shona/Ndebele, especially using proverbs, he became a subject of public ridicule. He was seen as someone who was unschooled.

The western educated youths also dissociated themselves from their roots. They severed links with their culture, families, and religion. This impacted negatively on the African culture that emphasizes on the importance of oneness. The only thing that the African Youth could aim to become was Western. They did this by wearing three piece suits in 35 degree Celsius weather and by buying into the political party contestations of greedy cabals in the name of democracy. They topped it up by toning up their skins so as to attain what was regarded as high color (browning) (Ayotunde, 2008).

The western educated youths dissociated themselves from their roots. In a move reflective of not only a sense of inferiority, but also self hatred, the youths began to embrace Western cultural values at the expense of African practices. Western education had perpetuated an ideology in Africans that their traditions are backward and their language dysfunctional (Ayotunde, 2008).

That situation was more complicated for the youths because they would be at a psychosocial developmental crossroads, which is 'identity formation versus confusion'. The youth at this stage will be struggling to come with an identity, and as such they found the Western identity enticing.

In addition to removing themselves from the family, most youths of the late 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s ignored the philosophy of humility and *ubuntuism/unhuism (humanism)*. They would not be very comfortable to accommodate visitors if they were residents in urban areas not necessarily because of accommodation problems, but because they saw it as an expense. To them, visitors would make them not only lose their freedom, but also their money (Moyo, 1975).

Western education also made some youths, especially urban ones, disrespectful and arrogant. To them, freedom and coming of age meant not greeting elders and not listening to their advice (Chinouya & O'Keefe, 2006). They spurned the advice of their parents and elders as uninformed and useless. One consequence of this rejection of advice was that some of them impregnated each other. As a result, they got into unplanned marriages, which, in most cases, ended in divorce. This was not very good from an African perspective because families are to be maintained and to grow. In some instances, the young men would refuse to get married to their female counterparts despite the advice of the elders.

Other youths showed their coming of age by rejecting or off-loading their indigenous names. They adopted western and Christian ones. Some *Shona* names were anglicized, for example*, Hazvinei* was changed to Nomatter. Others gave themselves names of their music idols, for example, Elvis from Elvis Presley. Yet others gave themselves names of cities, such as Wellington, the capital of New Zealand (Samkange & Samkange, 1980).

Entertainment

The cultural impact on the life of the pre-independence youths was also felt on the entertainment scene. There was, of course, a dichotomy between the urban and rural youths. The rural youths were also in two groups. One group participated in traditional parties, such as those characterized by traditional dances and practices. These were a main feature in winter when there was little work to be done. Those who attended were the 'uneducated' or had, at one time, attended school, but had withdrawn after failing to get school fees to go ahead with their education. For most of these youths, there was nothing to be ashamed of in participating in the traditional activities of their ancestors (Chivaura, 2006).

The other group in the rural areas was made up of those who went to mission schools. These youths participated in public debates and public speaking sessions that were held in the rural areas or in nearby farming communities. They spoke in a foreign language, possibly because they wanted to exhibit their ability to speak rather fluently the Queen's language, which they had gained and also showed to the community their newfound knowledge. During holidays, like their urban counterparts, they were entertained by various genres of western music, like Rock and Roll. Most favored were *rhumba* and *chachacha* music. For the *rhumba* lovers the most popular sub-genre was *kanindo,* a brand that was popularized in East Africa (Chivaura, 2006).

The urban youths shunned all-night parties. Maybe this was because the Black population in the, then, townships was cosmopolitan, made up of migrant laborers from Malawi, Mozambique, and Zambia, who performed their own traditional dances, like *zvigure* or *zvinyau* (Chakaipa, 1964). The most likely reason, though, is that due to western education and Christianity, Zimbabwean youths in the urban areas may have viewed their dances as evil and as a sign of backwardness. They were mainly interested in western music, like Country, Western, and Rock and Roll; these were the days of The Beetles, Elvis Presley, Dolly Parton, Porter Wagoner, and Jim Reeves. The popular dances among the youths were ballroom, foxtrot, and waltz. Portable radiograms and portable discs were used. At night, when they were not out for a disco or other musical parties, they would be entertained by listening to radio drama programs and the Colgate-Palmolive sponsored radio drama. The impact of such cultural activities was that they depicted the Western style of life as the ideal life (Dzoro, 1973).

Urban youths also attended film shows, while their rural counterparts were occasionally entertained by the 'bio-scope' that the Ministry of Information's mobile unit provided. This unit travelled the length and width of the country, showing government produced or sponsored shows. The main attractions at these rural shows were the buffoon *Tiki* (Tickey), as well as some other western film like, *Charlie Chaplin*, preceded by *The Three Stooges*. For most rural and farm youths, the bioscope was the best form of entertainment to look forward to. Such a show gave them the freedom to be away from the glare and control of parents and other guardians. This was a strive for identity for the youth, most of who were adolescents; they aspired to gain an identity separate from that of their parents.

Pastimes

Rural and urban youths also had certain pastimes that they engaged in to show their coming of age and independence. These pastimes included fishing, hunting, and trapping of animals, as well as swimming. Most rural youths saw going fishing and hunting as part of their daily life activities. The ability to come home with a bag full of fish, a buck, or a rabbit was the best way of showing that they could work independently. To successfully catch something was a clear sign of maturity. It was one of the ways of negotiating for space into the adult world. Most rural youths would go to dig in the bush in search of mice. Dzoro, 1973).

Another favorite pastime of both rural and urban youths was swimming. For areas like Harare (now Mbare) in Salisbury (now Harare), Makokoba in Bulawayo, Mucheke in Fort Victoria (now Masvingo), and Sakubva in Umtali (now Mutare), there were swimming pools that were built by the local municipalities for the Blacks. To most youths who attended the swimming sessions, swimming without the guidance of parents, who may have had genuine fears that their children could drown, was again a way of showing their independence (Chinouya & O'Keefe, 2006).

Soccer and netball were other very popular pastimes of the period. These sporting activities impacted positively on most youths in that they fostered a sense of togetherness, team spirit, and sportsmanship. This was however spoiled by violence in some instances.

Work

The world of work is one that both rural and urban youths looked forward to with anticipation. They saw this as the only way that would help them in getting one's freedom in as far as monetary matters were concerned. Comparatively, more male and fewer female youths migrated from rural to urban areas in search of employment

In the urban areas, most young men worked as cooks, gardeners, general hands, or semi-skilled laborers, while their female counterparts worked as shop attendants, baby minders, and house cleaners. In the rural areas, as in the urban centers, the world of work impacted negatively on the family as some youths asserted their freedom. Some families lost their children to prostitution, (Chakaipa, 1964), while others engaged in alcohol and substance abuse. On less serious breaks with the family, some youths chose to attend church meetings of the denominations of their choice.

The young men who were highly adventurous went to work in South Africa, especially Johannesburg. They went with or without travel documents to work in mines and hotels. Those with the necessary travel documents were recruited under a government-to-government agreement. These went to work in the Rand goldfields in South Africa. When most of these contract workers came back to Zimbabwe, they showed their newfound freedom by being disrespectful to elders, throwing around their weight and would not want to be restrained, and would not hesitate to murder their opponents with okapi knives (Nussbaum, 2003).

The world of work, like education, also had an impact on language use. Most of those who had been to the Rand goldfields and other South African cities came back speaking ungrammatical Afrikaans, English, Xhosa, or Zulu. These languages gave them room to express their freedom, as well as their distinctiveness, by virtue of speaking an unfamiliar language in their native area. By going to South Africa, there was a cultural delusion, which made most young people abandon the concepts of "*hunhu*".

Stanlake J. W. T. Samkange (1980) highlights the three maxims of Hunhuism or Ubuntuism which shape this philosophy. The first maxim asserts that 'To be human is to affirm one's humanity by recognizing the humanity of others and, on that basis, establish respectful human relations with them.' And 'the second maxim means that if and when one is faced with a decisive choice between wealth and the preservation of the life of another human being, then one should opt for the preservation of life'. The third 'maxim' is a 'principle deeply embedded in traditional African political philosophy' that says 'that the king owed his status, including all the powers associated with it, to the will of the people under him'. A key concept associated with "unhu" is how we behave and interact in our various social roles; as such, it was not expected for the youth to speak to the elderly in English.

Attire

There is an English saying that goes: 'Clothes maketh a man.' What this saying means is that what a person wears is a statement of who s/he is. This statement is also true of the attire of the youths of any given period. The type of attire for the pre-independence youth varies from place to place and also on whether one is employed or not (Samukange & Samukange, 1980).

For most of the youths who worked as clerks, teachers, office orderlies, or nurses, attire was mainly formal, even if they were not at work (Public service dress code, 1981). For the males (including hotel waiters), attire was mainly a jacket and tie. A bowler hat and a walking stick, at times, complemented this. This group of youths saw putting on T-shirts as a sign of poverty and a sure indication that one would not be a good son-in-law. For the females, the attire was an imitation of what they saw in fashion magazines. All the youths in this group saw clothes as a way of marketing themselves to prospective suitors and creating an identity of a westernized, elite, and civilized youth.

Most youths in the urban areas who were not yet working, but had working parents, had jeans as their favorite attire. They also put on T-shirts that had the names of prominent western musicians of the day, like Elvis Presley and Mick Jagger, pasted on them. Apparently, people like Presley were the models for most youths during those days. This only serves to confirm Bandura (1997)'s social learning perspective, which states that people learn from their models by way of imitating how they behave. Bandura (1997) goes on to say that people will imitate a behavior that is vicariously reinforced. This means that the youth viewed their models as successful people in society; that is to say, that they had been reinforced. This gave the youths a good reason to imitate the models. This further revealed the impact of Western education on African youths. It not only made them speak the Queen's language, but value the Queen's culture in place of the African culture.

As for pairs of trousers, they preferred those that were bell-bottomed. Most of these were made of blue cotton material and were generally called jeans. Those that were not of this material were mainly made of polyester. The polyester material made the type of bell-bottomed trousers that the youths named 'revolution' or 'revo.' The jeans that were preferred were the two piece set of trousers and jacket that was called 'Adam and Eve.' As for hats, the popular ones were caps and woollen hats. As regards to footwear, most youths, both urban and rural, liked putting on high-heeled shoes. The hairstyle of the youths of the period was mainly an Afro that they saw in magazines, like *Parade* and *Drum.* To have such a type of haircut at a time when most parents preferred short hair was a clear manifestation of freedom (Chakaipa, 2006).

The Zimbabwean youths of the 1970s wore black rubber bands on their necks and arms. In the militant days, these bands became a symbol of defiance against the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in Rhodesia. They had borrowed this from the American civil rights movement (Samukange & Samukange, 1980).

The war of liberation

The single most decisive factor that had an impact that was largely negative on both rural and urban youths was the war of liberation. Most youths of the day were actively involved in the politics, as well as in the activities of the liberation war. Those who managed to sneak out of the country went to either Mozambique or Zambia where they trained as guerrillas. Those who did not cross into these countries participated as *mujibhas* (male para-military staff) and *chimbwidos* (female para-military staff). The mijibhas and chimbwidos essentially acted as assistants to Liberation war fighters.

The liberation war impacted negatively on parental control over their children, since the youths who participated as emissaries

were as young as 14 years, or even younger. They resisted parental control to an extent that they threatened with reports to guerrillas. They got so much freedom that they called for *pungwes* (all night vigils), a task that was performed by guerrillas.

The liberation struggle also gave some youths excuses to sleep outside the home and engaged in promiscuity. Most youths, especially *chimbwidos,* became pillow friends of the combatants and some of the *mujibhas.* This did not go down well with elders, who did not have the power to reprimand the guerrillas. During this period, most youths started experimenting with *mbanje* (marijuana), which they called *mundoza*, a name given to the *marula* tree in some Shona folktales to cope with stress (Pearce, 1990).

The culture of obedience in Zimbabwe is so pervasive that it was even evident in the trenches during the liberation struggle. Tragically, Zimbabwe youth fell victim to a traditional leadership model found in most, if not all, political parties in Zimbabwe. Traditional African culture dictates youth obedience. Young people have little input in the decision-making processes. They are expected to comply without question. As a result, Zimbabwe youth are generally disempowered and prone to exploitation. What was expected of the youth wing during the liberation struggle was not anything creative or liberating for young people; it merely expected submission (Madondo, 2005).

It is not all youths who participated on the side of the liberation war. Some joined the Rhodesian security forces as either soldiers or police reservists; however, most ended up being soldiers. There were others who joined paramilitary groups that were supported by the Smith regime. These were Sithole's Auxiliary Forces and Muzorewa's Pfumo Revanhu, commonly known as *Dzakutsaku.*

The impact of the war on the youths on both sides of the military divide resulted in losing all respect of private property and the sanctity of human life. They perceived the gun as giving them unlimited power. With their guns, they trampled on a lot of people's rights.

On a positive note, most youths learned from the liberation war that the whites were not different from them; they were not a superior race. Despite this positive aspect, most Zimbabwean youths were by this time drifting away from their culture. Western education and religion entrenched in the African belief and perception that whatever was done, the Western style was not only the proper way, but also flamboyant. On the contrary, African ways of doing things were viewed as either a sign of poverty, uncivilization, or hedonism. This was largely a result of urbanization and education. All these came with capital, which led to the development of individualism, a culture that was alien to Black Zimbabweans. However, the most single factor that had a debilitating effect on culture as it relates to pre-independence Zimbabwean youths was the war of liberation. It brought with it a culture of violence and riding rough shod on people and their rights. This culture was, unfortunately, carried over into the post-independence period (Daily newspaper, 2002).

PERIOD AFTER INDEPENDENCE (1980)

In the era starting April 18, 1980, when Zimbabwe got independence from Britain, the youth got exposed to a broad spectrum of

factors that reshaped their culture. The new period marked a paradigm shift emanating from an intense rural-urban migration that came as a result of the end of the war. The new culture was a result of developments in the mass media (Haralambos, Holborn, & Heald, 2004). Most youth were attracted to urban areas by lights, better job opportunities, schools with better facilities, or just moved with their families. In the urban areas, the youth got obsessed with watching television soap operas, popular feature films (Santa Barbara, Miami Sands), recorded pop music from Western Europe and America, mass market films, like Stars Wars, the Harry Potter series (Haralambos, Heald and Holbon, 2004), and violent sports, like the World Wrestling Federation and Rugby. This brought a new dispensation to the Zimbabwean youth. These developments culminated in the youth, carving out their own space and culture to enable them to exist outside adult dominated institutions. They created physical space on the streets, jukebox, all-night parties, and dances (Haralambos, Heald and Holbon, 2004), and visited stadia, cinemas, musical shows, and many other activities outside the family and schools. Some got addicted to reggae music and the Rastafarian movement following the visit to Zimbabwe by the legendary Bob Marley from Jamaica to celebrate Zimbabwe's independence. The youth were driven by the need to create their distinctive styles in dressing, talking, and entertainment. According to Haralambos, Heald and Holbon (2004), the youth expressed themselves to protect their territory, gain status, and recreate the community. Thus, they develop their styles as a way of expressing their situation and its contradiction or their aspirations. From generation to generation, this drive continues and styles are re-modified.

In this computer age, the Internet chat programs and online games, as well as cell phones, have enabled the youths to communicate across great distances with people of diverse cultures and backgrounds. Although very convenient, there is lack of physical and social interaction, which is integral towards the development of an individual's identity and character (Anatsi, 1979). Consequently, the Zimbabwean youths of today have multiple identities. Their lifestyles are now divorced from the adult world that they physically reside in. They are secluded and detached from the real Zimbabwean society; hence, the behavior problems they present with are complicated and very difficult to manage. For example, the two identical Fichani twins from Mt Pleasant, Harare who literally walked naked, while putting on kilts that covered only their front and the area below the belt. The twins had to be arraigned before the courts of law to extinguish their unacceptable behavior (Herald, 2007).

The interplay between multi-media, music, labor migration, religion, education, and gold panning has shaped the Zimbabwean youths' identity. The youths may face several critical issues, such as socio-economic despair, pressure from gangs, lack of faith in the government, and society's concentration on materialism and individualism (Berman & Berreth, 1977, in Beachum & McCray, 2004), which have an effect on the youth identity.

Multimedia

Multimedia is a broad factor that includes television, radio, Internet, and newspapers. It has the power to alter habits, feelings, and minds of young people (Kunjuku, 1990). Television media has the potential to generate both positive and negative effects (Pearce, 1990), yet it is the source of entertainment, news, and information. They further observed that many children use TV as a source of role models and, consequently, they imitate other people's behavior, dress, appearance, and speech.

On the other hand, television media promotes aggressive tendencies among the young people as they are exposed to violence,

inappropriate sexualit,y and offensive and pejorative language (Pearce, 1990; Beachum & McCray, 2004). Kunjuku (1990) further observed that television media promotes a value system based on materialism and immediate gratifications.

Comparable to a home library, the Internet has the potential for providing young people with access to education, information, research, and communications (Pediatrics & Child Health, 2003). The Internet also enables the youths to access online games, chat programs, and the news. The impact of the internet is being felt among the contemporary youths by such social networks as Facebook and Twitter. These networks have the potential of bringing the youth together so that they work together for development or destruction of the status quo. Although very useful, they noted that the lack of editorial standards limits its credibility as a source of information. The effects of long periods of internet use include postural development problems, obesity, undeveloped social skills, visual problems, addictive behavior, and makes children with seizure disorders more susceptible to attacks (Pediatrics & Child Health, 2003). The youths also indulged in viewing pornography when they were alone at home. Although viewing pornography is illegal in Zimbabwe, it is very difficult to control access to such damaging material. As such the youths found themselves engrossed in pornography with very little restraint.

Music

Music, especially pop, is more influential than television, movies, and computers (Christenson & Roberts, 1998; O'toole, 1997). The effects of rock and roll music, included among other factors altering study habits, damaging eardrums, altering moods, furnishing slang, and causing troubled youths to commit suicide or violent crimes. The music lyrics have become increasingly explicit, particularly with reference to sex, drugs, and violence (Pediatrics & Child Health, 2003). Many youths in Zimbabwe, both urban and rural, were heavily influenced by reggae, which perpetuated the use of marijuana, spotting of dreadlocks, use of Rastafarian language, and change of dress by many young men and women. Lately, there has also been a heavy influence from popular Black American musicians on Zimbabwean youths leading to the development of a new genre called urban grooves. There has also been the regeneration of traditional *mbira* music by the youths. The fusion of *kwasa kwasa* and *sungura* dances has led to the proliferation of dancing groups, such as Mambokadzi and Amavhitikazi, that have become a source of entertainment and employment for most youths.

Book Education

After the ushering in of the new Zimbabwean government, education was made compulsory for all children up to grade seven; hence, the school played a critical role in shaping the identity of youths. Karpicke and Murphy (1996) agreed that a healthy (school) culture has a great impact on the success of students. Kunjuku (1990) concluded that parents and teachers promote long-term gratification and honesty. Although noble, it should be noted that the transfer of value systems from the television media to the school sometimes results in discipline problems and a lack of communication between students and teachers. Mwamwenda (1996) further noted that the school communicates its attitudes toward a range of issues and problems, including how they are viewed by human beings and its attitudes towards males, females, exceptional students from various religious persuasions, and cultural, racial, and ethnic groups.

Religion

The traditional cultural values that are emphasized at family and community levels seem to positively impact on some rural youths. Also, Christianity, being one of the dominant religions, plays a crucial role in shaping the youth subculture. These religions instill values that include responsibility (White, 2003), respect, acceptance, and discipline. However, other youths have become highly religious. They participate in crusades for their newfound denominations that are largely influenced by the American Pentecostal movement. In these denominations, they participated in choral groups and independent gospel musical bands to find a purpose for living.

Labor Migration

As if to demonstrate that history repeats itself, Zimbabwe is once again experiencing brain drain like the popular migration to South Africa in the 1970s when young men left the country to work in South African mines. Today, young men are leaving en masse to South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, United Kingdom, Australia, and many other countries in search of better fortunes. Their migration to different countries on the global village makes the Zimbabwean youth subculture a melting pot. They are exposed to a diverse spectrum of lifestyles (Isimbabi, 2004) and, consequently, a multi-cultured youth is emerging in Zimbabwe. The composite culture presents challenges to the home and school, the primary institutions of learning, and socialization. Fashions are changing by day. Many youths who went abroad now own immovable properties, like houses, and drive posh cars (Parthasarathi, 2004). Some of them are showy and difficult to reintegrate back into society. There are also some, especially those who have been to South Africa and normally drive cars with the check letters reflecting Gauteng Province (GP), who are violent and, at times, commit murder. Most of these carry unlicensed guns (Chronicle Newspaper, 2007).

The fast waning fortunes of Zimbabwe, due to a sharp decline in economic performance, created a politically explosive situation. The job market went dry, the cost of basic commodities spiraled, and fees charged by schools and tertiary institutions shot up drastically. Realizing the potential dangers this posed to the government, musical galas were introduced to take the youths off the political arena. The youths attended the galas in large numbers to drink, smoke, refresh, and dance the night away.

As Marx aptly put it, when humans live in freedom, they fulfill themselves through the creative activity of producing things using their imagination. They own the means of production, such as tools and lands, necessary to produce enough for their own physical survival (Haralambos, Heald and Holbon, 2004). In Zimbabwe, the renowned musician, Oliver Mtukudzi, put up Pakare Paye Arts Centre for the youths in Harare and Norton. In the field of sculpture, Dominic Benhura, who is now internationally recognized, has set up a sculpture-training center called Tengenenge Village. This center attracts both local and international tourists (Conference report, 2006).

In rural, farm, and peri-urban areas, many young people ventured into gold and of late diamond and emerald panning. The practice is commonly known as *chikorokoza* in Zimbabwe. When they sell their hard earned precious metal and stones, the young men and women usually spend the money lavishly on beer, casual sex, fashionable clothes, and other materials.

The current Zimbabwean youth sub-culture is so fluid. This scenario creates serious disciplinary problems for the parents, school, and community at large. Zimbabwe is now breeding a multi-cultured youth as they are influenced by a host of factors to carve out their own identity that is distinctively different from the adult-dominated ones. As they seek to express themselves, they display unique lifestyles.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is against a background of interplay of many factors that consequently lead to problematic multi-cultured youths that the following recommendations are made. Firstly, there is need to uphold some traditional values in order to preserve useful cultural practices. Moreover, musicians should produce culturally relevant music that appeal to all strata of the society, including the youth. Clothing manufacturing companies should be encouraged to supply wear that preserve useful cultural values. They should strike a balance between marketability and appropriateness of the wear.

Community leaders should spearhead the promotion of culturally acceptable conduct among the youth.
The media should take the lead in disseminating culturally relevant information to the youth. All stakeholders' programs should be introduced in both electronic and print media. The media should take a leading role in creating models for the youths, who are a true reflection of African values. The government should design a clear policy on the youth. This can be achieved by redirecting the educational curriculum to address cultural issues for the youth starting from as early as pre-school level. Significant people in the society, such as political, religious, ministers, local leaders and others, should act as role models in the promotion of appropriate culture for the youth. Parents should rightfully groom culturally conscious youths.
Pressure groups should be encouraged to play a significant role in enforcing Zimbabwean culture into youths. The developed culture should be able to assist youths to behave in an acceptable way both in and out of the work environment.

CONCLUSION

It is crystal clear that youth culture in Zimbabwe is really a melting pot. This has been evidenced by the fast changes and modifications in the behavior and lifestyles of many Zimbabwean youths. The changes have been noticed in both urban and rural dwelling youths across cultural groups. Factors that influence culture modifications among youths are challenging for either the government or families to tame. The government of Zimbabwe, with the help of non-governmental organizations and families that were concerned, has made an effort to curb the purported problem by socializing youths into the desirable forms of culture. Forms of media, such as radio, television, and newspapers, have been used to socialize youths, but it seems all the strategies being employed are being overpowered by other very strong antecedents, such as the internet, music, education, dress, and access to international radio stations. The youths' abandonment of their indigenous culture has adverse ramifications to them and future generations in relation to national culture. On the whole, at any given point in time, the youth in Zimbabwe were affected by at least one major socio-cultural wave that greatly distorted their culture. In the 1960s, the migration down south to South Africa had the most profound effect on the youth. This was then followed by the 1970s era where the war of liberation influenced the culture of Zimbabwean youths. Lastly, the contemporary youths are largely influenced by the internet which has significantly affected the social fabric through such social networks as the Facebook and Twitter. The internet in this

regard is such a powerful force because it carries with it all the other culturally improper values such as pornographic material.

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