



Examining Electoral Violence Mitigation: A Hermeneutic Study of Chadiza Constituency, Eastern Province, Zambia

Chishimba Ivo ^{1*}, Mulubale Sanny ², Simui Francis ³

¹⁻³ School of Education, University of Zambia, Zambia

* Corresponding Author: Chishimba Ivo

Article Info

ISSN (online): 2582-7138

Volume: 05

Issue: 06

November-December 2024

Received: 07-10-2024

Accepted: 11-11-2024

Page No: 929-938

Abstract

The study examined ways of mitigating electoral violence in Zambia. This study was conducted in Chadiza Constituency of Eastern Province, Zambia. The objectives of the study were: to interpret existing electoral violence prevention measures, describe current electoral violence situation, establish alternative electoral violence mitigation measures in Chadiza Constituency and construct Electoral Violence Prevention Framework. This was a hermeneutic study research design in qualitative research using inductive approach with 35 participants. In using the hermeneutics, the authors desired not to use statistics to answer the research question. A design that provides in-depth investigation of a contemporary, real life phenomenon in its context in order to generate reliable data was utilised.

Data was collected through interviews and Focus Group Discussion using snowball purposive sampling selection method. The results of the study were discussed in accordance to Reflexive thematic analysis, using themes that emerged during data analysis. The findings established that electoral violence prevention measures were in effect but not very helpful because elections continued to record some violence. Elections were characterised by vulgar language, physical attacks and reports of deaths in some areas around election period. The data analysis recommended that, traditional establishments, faith based organisations and opposition political parties should take a leading role in assisting police officers to curb electoral violence in Chadiza by applying appropriate measures that would lead to reconsolidation of people in Chadiza constituency.

Keywords: Conflicts, Violence, electoral violence, Political violence, mitigation, peace

1. Introduction

Next witness Brian Mulenga On oath... Brian Mulenga, 44 years old. I am a businessman. I live in Garden Compound in Lusaka. Prosecution: Tell court what happened..... Brain: We went back to our camp my lord, and we found that everything at the camp was destroyed, thrown away. I asked someone where the people who had destroyed our goods had gone and he told me that they had driven to another direction and I told my friends to follow them. We followed them and they were not far, we found the vehicle and we found the same vehicle and the same driver, the vehicle had other people behind, we started arguing. I was 20 m away from where they were. The argument was between UPND and PF.... Brian: identifies Mumbi Phiri and Shabby Chilekwa, the gun was short, it was a pistol my lord and was on a dashboard my lord (Mushipi, 2022) ^[29].

An extract from Mumbi Phiri and Shabby Chilekwa Vs People, in a 2019 kaoma, council Chairperson Bye-election, electoral violence murder case trial, published in public domain.

It could be noted that the study was worthy to be undertaken in order to elicit detailed information from voters in Chadiza constituency of their experiences during elections conducted by ECZ from 2011 to 2021. The study would help to promote active citizen participation by preventing electoral violence in any future elections to be conducted. Active citizen participation in this

sense is the ability of the people to exercise and defend their democratic rights.

The main focus of the study was to establish solutions to electoral violence by generating data through one to one interviews and Focus group discussions based on reflections of participants in Chadiza constituency in order to enhance a deep understanding and suggest appropriate intervention. However, a number of authors have tried to carry out their studies on causes of electoral violence around urban areas. As Akpan (2015) ^[2] argued that the causes of electoral violence are unfavourable socio-economic conditions of young people including unemployment, poverty, lack of good education and access to modern facilities. As such many organisations have embarked on mitigation of electoral violence in urban areas to ensure peaceful elections and close the disproportionate negative impact of electoral violence in society but to no avail (Wahman, 2023) ^[36]. It is against this background this study explore further mitigation of electoral violence in a rural district, Chadiza constituency, Eastern Province of Zambia.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Ideally the trajectory enshrined in the electoral process act no. 35 of 2016 explains that elections ought to be free, fair and peaceful. Although prescribed by the Constitution (as amended), at present the ECZ does not have the requisite decentralised permanent structures. Mushipi (2022) ^[29] explains that, as with previous elections, for the 2021 elections, local government officers were temporarily appointed as Provincial Electoral Officers. Town clerks or district council secretaries were temporarily appointed as District Electoral Officers with responsibility for co-ordinating electoral preparations in district and local government structures for the purpose of administering the polls. This has made matters to remain unattended to. Bekoe (2010) ^[7] explains that, electoral violence was accelerated by political actors to purposefully influence the process and outcome of elections. The problem is that, electoral violence perpetrators have continued violating civil and political human rights.

2. Literature Review

In this literature review, the authors interacted with other studies with similar focus on electoral violence mitigation. Consequently, knowledge gaps were identified and could be filled-up by this study. In utilisation of hermeneutics research design, it was important to note that hermeneutics phenomenology as a qualitative research method, is not a unified set of techniques or philosophies and indeed has grown out of a wide range of intellectual and disciplinary traditions (Mason, 2002) ^[26]. It represents a broad view to understanding human affairs and behaviour which is insufficient to rely on quantitative surveys and statistics (Holliday, 2007) ^[20]. Patton (2002) ^[31] argued that the qualitative research method is an in-depth and detailed inquiry of a selected issue; on the other hand, the quantitative method requires the use of standardized measures and it can be varied on perspectives and experiences of people. Patton (2002) ^[31] claimed that qualitative methods provide detailed information about a much smaller number of people and cases.

However, scholars with a more practical perspective argue that it is beneficial to “build upon earlier literature. This helps to set the platform for deeper explanation, conceptual

development, and theoretical refinement (Creswell and John, 2022) ^[13]. To this effect, the study subscribes to qualitative research approach, in line with hermeneutics design, as this study sought to build upon previous work to expand the discourse highlighted above (Creswell and John, 2022) ^[13]. Therefore, this was a study in retrospective. Learning from the past, inform the present, in order to change the future. However, Globally, International organisations advocate for peaceful elections.

2.1 Global Electoral Perspective

The United Nations (UN) charter stipulates how elections would be held in the environment that maintains human dignity. These guidelines should be so structured as to be unambiguous, understandable and transparent, and should address all components of an electoral process necessary to ensure democratic elections. Heywood (2013) a country has discretion in its choice of an appropriate electoral system. However, such discretion in choosing an electoral system is not unlimited and should be consistent with international community standards. Given the past tendency of many countries to adopt electoral systems which applied during their colonial periods or for other historical reasons, the review of a country's legal framework could usefully reflect on current cultural, political, social or other factors and realities (Stacy, 2019). A meaningful review of a country's legal framework requires more than an examination of the relevant instruments' texts. An assessment is of little value, if the thorough review, the comments, the recommendations and the advice given are in an appropriate and constructive manner. For example, Koko (2013) says, even if a piece of legislation delivers direct and serious criticisms assessment should be phrased to address the challenges of the task at hand. When reviewing a country's legal framework, all related legislation needs to be consulted and analysed to ensure that they do not conflict with one another and that they do meet international community standards.

2.2 African Electoral Perspective

Generally, elections in Africa are characterised by electoral violence. For instance, koko (2013) a researcher from South African University explains that, from Algeria to South Africa, passing through Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zimbabwe, election-related violence has imposed itself as a full continent of Africa's political landscape in the past two decades. The prevalence of such violence in Africa has led to the production of abundant literature dedicated to the matter. The central argument is that, although the patterns, causes and consequences of electoral violence do not necessarily follow the same trends in different African countries, there are commonalities in the types, causes and consequences of such violence on the continent (Fischer, 2002). While a thorough understanding of the patterns and causes of electoral violence in Africa constitutes an important point of departure in addressing the problem, an effective prevention strategy should embrace a multi-level approach targeting all significant stakeholders in any electoral process, including the political leadership, the electoral management body, civil society organisations, public and external partners. However, it should be noted that Africa consists of different sovereign countries. Therefore, it would be unfair to generalise or bundle all countries as one in terms of electoral violence prevalence levels.

2.3 Zambian Electoral Perspective

Despite minimal electoral violence reports against Zambia, it is unfair to describe elections in Zambia as violent. The situation may not be as horrific as it is in other countries. However, before it becomes a full framed issue, serious interventions have to be implemented. For example, Deth (2013) ^[14] carried out a comparative study of Zambia and other sub-Saharan African countries. In their comparative, it was revealed that, if measured in terms of violent incidents or fatalities related to electoral violence, Zambia does not stand out compared to other African countries. Fjelde and Höglund (2015) disclosed that, there are 22 countries in sub-Saharan Africa with high or comparable levels of fatal electoral violence. Compared to other countries on the continent such as Kenya, Nigeria, Cote D'Ivoire or Zimbabwe, elections in Zambia have certainly been significantly more peaceful than the former. However, political party cadres are known to propel electoral violence in most of African countries. Zambia's case is not an exceptional.

Party cadres join political parties as a gateway to political connections and rent-seeking career. Cadres in the government party have been known to develop significant economic interests in preserving political power benefits. The economic incentives of cadres do not solely derive from one-time payments but cadres have also benefitted greatly from patronage politics in relation to government contracts and the ability to extract rents from urban populations without prosecution. For example, Skage (2016) and Wahman, (2023) ^[36] had similar findings. Paolo (2017) ^[30] urged that electoral violence is caused by seemly political and economic gains by political players. Skage also mentioned that, Political parties had been known to organise violence through their political campaigns and to have built repressive capacity within their organisations by the recruitment of party cadres.

2.4 The Elections

Most countries have adopted democratic governance that calls for periodic, competitive inclusive and decisive characteristics of elections in good governance. However, besides elections benefits are dysfunctional of elections. For instance, Straus and Taylor (2012) explained that, elections have become an integral element of many United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions over the past decade and are today a major focus of UN operations in post violence regions such as Afghanistan and Iraq. In many post violence societies, elections represent a key step in a broader process of building political institutions and legitimate government. A common mistake is to hold elections soon after violence and before national political stability has been attained. In such a situation, elections may become a focus for violence, as the groups previously engaged in violence may turn to indulgence in electoral violence.

Although some generalizations are possible based on experience, what and how long it takes to organize credible, free and fair elections would depend greatly on what is there to contemplate on and resolve issues in the immediate post violence environment. A recent estimate of election violence across sub-Saharan Africa shows that majority of electoral campaigns featured some degree of violence (Straus and Taylor, 2012).

2.6 Politics and Electoral Violence Relationship

There is no simple definition to the term politics. Throughout the history of the discipline, political theorists and

practitioners have offered contradictory and overlapping definitions of the term politics. It is therefore difficult to provide a single definition of politics that everyone can agree with. The best we can do is to explore salient working definition of politics. In this study, we would like to run with the most acceptable definition.

Political scientist Andrew Heywood offers a broader definition of politics. He defines politics as 'the activity through which people make, preserve and amend the general rules under which they live' (Heywood, 2013). He goes on to characterise politics as a process of violence resolution as other earlier consulted authors put it, whereby an attempt is made to reconcile rival interests. Although, in the end, the violence may not be resolved, politics is characterised by a search for such resolution. With its focus on violence resolution, this definition shares some commonalities with Clarke's, yet there are also some differences. Clarke (2005) defines politics as a particular way of resolving violence, the proportional sharing of power by different interests and narrows its scope by noting that it takes place 'within a given state.

Even if politics by definition is the solution to conflicts, it has contributed to electoral violence, a pernicious vice that continues to afflict most countries. It is a truism that the two are mother and the baby. Political violence may be characterised as an umbrella under which electoral violence shields itself. The motivation behind categories of violence is eminently political. It is an unfair way of acquiring political advantage by an individual or a group over others (Baya, 2017) ^[6]. The International community has set up a legal framework to guide and control electoral processes.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

The nature of conflict is not static. Conflicts mutate according to the interest of individuals and groups. Galtung defines conflict as a dynamic process in which contradictions, attitudes, and behaviours continuously change and affect each other (Galtung, 2007) ^[17]. According to him, to understand the basic logic of conflict, it is necessary to start from the idea that individuals and groups have interests. When two goals are incompatible with each other, there is a contradiction, in which case a conflict arises (Kotite, 2012). The parties feel tension because of the goals they cannot realize, and this tension turns into hate and creates an attitude. This attitude manifests itself as aggression, hatred, or verbal and physical violence. Ultimately, violence and hatred that arise to protect, achieve, or destroy goals turn into conflict.

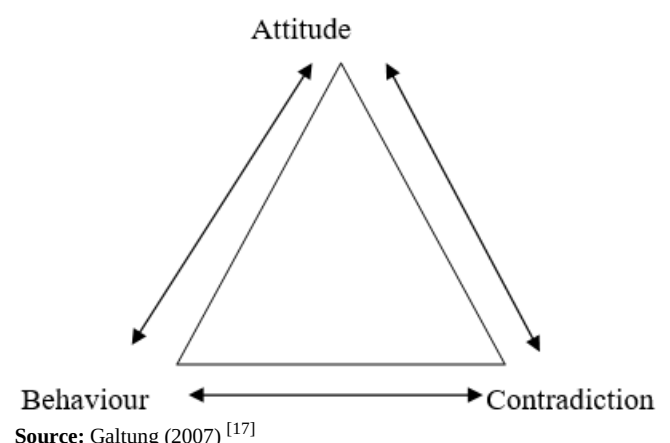


Fig 1: The Conflict Triangle

In this model developed by Galtung and also known as the ABC triangle, the attitude refers to the psychological conditions and feelings of stakeholders such as religious and ethnic hatred, fear of losing power, and unfavourable prejudices. Behaviour includes actions that are positive or negative. The contradiction refers to the general situation in political, economic, and social terms, such as allocating scarce resources, land disputes, or unequal political representation. Behaviour is observable and experienced, while attitude and contradiction are veiled, and only inference can be made (Galtung, 2014). On this basis, Galtung deepened his analysis of the nature of the conflict with concepts such as actor, purpose, conflict, and pursuit. The Life Cycle of Conflict, according to Galtung, consists of various stages, including interrelated pre-violence, a period of violence, and post-violence processes, and show different characteristics in these processes. Understanding the conflict cycle is essential to prevent and manage conflict and determine how, where, and when to implement strategies and measures. According to Galtung, what was needed to turn the conflict into peace could be putting forward the suggested stages (Galtung, 2007) ^[17].

Even if there was no violence, there could be conflict formulation before violence. In the first stage, there was culture of violence that legitimizes violence, actors who sought to gain power with a structure that oppressed and exploited people (Barber, 2013) ^[4]. Therefore, violence was likely to occur. Steps should be taken to resolve the conflict with empathy, creativity, and nonviolence (Fischer, 2002). Failing at this first stage causes the conflict to turn into a violent form. The second stage is the violence stage. The first thing to do here is to stop the violence. No violence lasts forever. Although it could not be right to expect violence to end spontaneously, the best move to eliminate violence could be to use peaceful means. Violence should be prevented with the peace missions to be established within the framework of the United Nations Charter or the structures where women would dominate (Barton *et al*, 2008). After the violence ends, the third stage is started. However, what needs to be done at this stage is more complicated than others. Because post-violence traumas or a sense of revenge; could make culture, structure, and actor more prone to violence (Botes, 2003) ^[8]. Therefore, the first thing that needs to be done is to reconstruct the material losses, reach a consensus on the subject of the conflict, and resolve the central issue underlying the conflict in structural and cultural dimensions. Unless these are done, the first stage is passed again (Galtung, 2007) ^[17]. Galtung's life cycle is considered the basis of the approach of resolving conflicts by the transformation.

Conflict transformation aims to change the differences of individuals and communities through peaceful means. It consists of structural adjustment and long term peace studies. Conflict is a lifelong process because its nature and manifestations change (Galtung, 2007) ^[17]. Therefore, conflict transformation is carried out at multiple levels to develop the understanding and skills that empower all those who coexist peacefully. Conflict resolution aims at transformation of relationships and mindset of people created when conflicts occur (Deth, 2013) ^[14]. To attain the culture of peace, positive peace has to be attained in order to overcome fear and insecurity, removing misperceptions, and learning to communicate effectively. These are essential elements to redefine relationships between parties in conflict and contribute to establishing justice and equality. The conflict

transformation approach introduced by Galtung in 1998 is expressed as the transcend method and has become popular since the early 2000s. Galtung developed this method inspired by the Diagnosis, Prognosis, and Treatment (DPT) process of a disease. In this context, the method determines the source of the conflict, revealing possible scenarios regarding its course, and making the necessary interventions to reduce the violence (Galtung, 2000, p. 5). For some, this approach represents the deepest level of resolution. For others, it is an important step beyond the resolution of the conflict because it reflects a deeper understanding of the nature of the conflict than any other approach and works towards a long-term sustainable positive peace. However Galtung's work did not go without criticisms.

It could be seen that Galtung, who is known as the founder of peace studies, deal with the concepts of violence, peace, and conflict with the concern of establishing lasting peace from the very beginning and with a different reading. Boulding (2000) explains that, he focuses on the typology of violence, negative-positive peace distinction, conflict cycle, and conflict transformation and that he intertwine his studies with other fields in social sciences and is a source of inspiration for other researchers proves this situation. Also; it is possible to say that the theoretical views on the definition of peace, what can be evaluated under the concept of conflict, and how to resolve conflicts permeate all these studies on practical issues. However, he sometimes only includes theoretical discussions in his works, it can be said that his main concern is the effort to bring theory and practice together and transfer them to the reader.

Nevertheless, it is impossible to find a general flow of topics, as Galtung's works are spread over a broad period. Harris (2004) explains that, Galtung can reconsider a subject and concept that he previously dealt with, later in his work in a different field. Because his approaches to concepts or events matured over time, he revealed the concepts and facts he dealt with in the early years in new forms in his recent studies. This also stems from the fact that "coming to terms with peace building necessitates a wholesome transformation in methodological and practical realms together with examining its evolution throughout the history of political thought" (Ercoşkun and Konuralp, 2020, p. 188). This sometimes makes it challenging to consider the views he has put forward in his work in integrity. On the other hand, it should not be interpreted as there is an inconsistency in these studies, but rather as trying to include the concepts and the views he put forward consistently in different platforms and case studies. As a result, there is a gap in Galtung's point of view such as his views are useful in discussing the concept of peace as a theory and not practical.

3. Methodology

This study was aimed at getting in-depth insight into participants in Chadiza district, Eastern province of Zambia. This was a thematic analysis riding on subjective reality. The authors used qualitative method and positioning as etc. This is consistent with Merriam (1997) who argues that the key philosophical assumption of a qualitative research is that individuals interacting with their social world construct reality. This provided a profound understanding of a research problem where research questions were formulated to answer the "how" or "why" questions. The authors selected participants that were knowledgeable about the project. The target population was voters presented by Chadiza district

elections register at the local civic centre. The study had a sample of 35 participants 17 males and 18 females. It was guided by the saturation point and the desire to obtain in-depth insights. Twenty participants were engaged in semi structured interviews while fifteen participated in Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Both secondary and primary data collections were utilised. For primary data, the study used snowball purposive sampling to select participants. The authors identified four lead participants who then recommended others who were contacted and requested to participate in the study. The authors triangulated data to allow improvement in the construct validity of the study and develop overlapping evidence. The authors used Reflexive thematic data analysis to analyse qualitative data collected from interviews and Focus Group Discussion to come up with

themes.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Location of the Study

The study was carried out in Chadiza district within Zambia. During period of study the district had a population estimation of about 44,779 registered voters (census, 2022). Chadiza district is a rural district in Eastern province, located 72km south-west of Chipata and it stretches along the border with Mozambique. Chadiza is one of the eight districts in the Eastern Province of Zambia. It is situated to the extreme south – eastern corner of Zambia. It lies between latitudes 13.75° and 14.30° South and longitudes 32° and 33° east. Hence, this research site was purposively selected to explore the voters' perspectives in rural area.



Fig 2: Map of Eastern Province

4.1 Demography Information of participants

The table below gives the demographic characteristics of the sample, from which variables are presented and some bi-variety relationships examined. This information was collected through information and consent forms that every participant completed prior to their interview. The categories

that were collected were as follows: gender, age, ward of residence in Chadiza constituency, level of qualifications attained, and years spent in Chadiza constituency; the career was extracted from questions asked during the course of the interviews.

Table 1: Demography Information of participants

Gender	Age			Member of Political party		Education			Years in Chadiza			No. Of participation in elections		
	>25	>35	<60	not	Yes	Crtfc	Dip	Deg	>5	>10	>15	1	2	3
Male n= 17	3	8	6	5	12	5	7	5	2	9	6	2	11	4
Female n= 18	5	9	4	7	11	1	14	2	6	10	2	12	4	2

From Table 1, there are several cross-cutting issues that can be noted around age, period of living in Chadiza, political affiliation, educational back ground, gender, and number of times participated in elections conducted by Electoral Commission of Zambia. For example, the gender distribution was proportionally equal. Although some male civil servants were reluctant and delayed showing an interest in participating in the study, they actively participated. The majority of the female recruited for this study were not political party members but keen followers of political scenario, whereas fifteen men recruited were from political arena and were active seasoned politicians. The age of participant was not much a reason of recruitment. However,

77% concentrations of participants were between 35 to 60 years old. Members of various political parties were more knowledgeable than non-partisan participants.

The data shows more political party members than non-political party members. The data shows twelve non-political party members and twenty-three political party members. Participants with political affiliation may be more likely to gather data during party primary elections, nominations of candidates, campaigning and voting unlike non-political party members that may only actively participate during elections. Table 1: shows number of participations in elections as a gendered aspect of the demographics that shows voter apathy among women. Electoral violence may

be one of the causes.

The data collected revealed existing and formulated electoral violence prevention measures. When analysing data collected the authors objectively followed research questions to achieve research objective by starting a dialogue based on broad representations of electoral violence prevention in Chadiza constituency. In the section below, participants' opinions pointed to a number of preventions.

Table 2: Electoral Violence Prevention Measure

Prevention of electoral violence Measures as presented by ECZ	Male n= 17	Female n= 18	Total n= 35
Allocation of different dates of campaigning during campaign period	11	6	17
Allocating different nomination days to various political parties	3	2	5
Forbidding of using political party regalia during poll day	2	0	2
Traditional Rulers and civil servants are not allowed to participate in politics	2	1	3
Setting of campaign period	1	1	2
Registration and deregistration of political parties	2	2	4
Common meetings prior to elections	1	1	2

Approximately 17 participants representing 49% stated allocation of different campaign dates to political parties as a control measure by ECZ, whereas 5 participants' representing 14% mentioned allocating different nomination day for candidates and 4 participants mentioned, registration and deregistration of political parties as a control measure of electoral violence. Thus, releasing of campaign time table as a control measure dominated. Other control measures included: 3 participants indicating 9% mentioned restriction of traditional rulers and civil servants to participate in politics, no use of political regalia on the poll day, constitutional pre-determined campaign period and elections day as well as common meetings organised by ECZ to meet all candidates prior to election day. However, despite all these electoral violence control measure still political and electoral violence activities are recorded. For example the narration below happened during district totalling stage.

There was confusion, Patriotic Front (PF) had a named candidate and United Party for National Development (UPND) had also a named candidate. During votes counting confusion arose because all the political parties knew that UPND candidate won elections. Somebody who was operating computers at the secondary school used a certain system to drop down UPND candidate. PF candidate who was coming from Copperbelt province knew that he lost. He went upto Nyimba district after knowing that he lost. But then there was a programme that PF candidate had won elections. Computers at the secondary school were shifted and taken to a point where they twisted figures.... (MP1).

Participants suggested that more strategies had to be put in place to reduce suspiciousness at the district level. It was also reported that security officers did a great job by rescuing people that were badly attracted by a mob of people who were not satisfied with the announced election results. For example, it was reported that the community is largely disintegrated on political affiliation lines. Responses in relation to divisions on political grounds were common. The majority of participants suggested that politicians ought to be encouraged to re-unite after elections. Nevertheless, participants advocated for live transmission of district and provincial votes totalling process to increase people witnessing and hence promote transparency.

4.2 Established existing Electoral violence Prevention Measures:

The participants attended to objective one by stating existing electoral violence prevention measures as presented by electoral commission of Zambia to mitigate electoral violence, yet they could be consolidated into the seven main categories outlined in the table below:

4.3 Current Electoral Violence Situation in Chadiza Constituency from 2011 to 2021

This section speaks to objective two. Chadiza Constituency on a normal day is a peaceful place and the constituency rarely records political violence what is common is electoral violence. Table.4 reveals presence of electoral violence in Chadiza.

Table 3: Electoral Violence in Chadiza

Questions asked to participants	Male n = 17	Female n = 18	Total n = 35
Have you participated in elections?	17	18	35
Participated more than twice	13	10	23
Experienced violence in your ward	4	3	7
Heard about violence from other wards within Chadiza	9	11	20
Attended to electoral violence case at the police	2	1	3
Attended to electoral violence case at the health facility	1	3	4
Experienced Electoral violence personally	8	2	10

What we see in Table 4 is that participants who responded to questions establishing electoral violence in Chadiza were 20 representing 57%, they heard about violence in some parts of the constituency; whereas 7 indicated having experienced electoral violence in their local wards representing 20% which shows that electoral violence had registered its presence in some few wards. It is apparent from this table that few specialised participants pointed at attending to clients or patients because of low representation of health workers and police officers. The study also revealed that the majority of participants had participated more than twice in elections organised by Electoral Commission of Zambia. The study now turns to what motivates people seeking cooperation in Chadiza constituency to have a common voice to fight for development over other Challenges faced by people in Chadiza constituency. MP2 confirmed how electoral violence has negatively affected development of Chadiza district.

.... yeah on the social perspective it has to some extent brought differences between people who may be friends or supposed to be friends. These differences are at the

expense of development, (MP2).

Furthermore, some responses indicated that during adoption of candidate in various political parties, political parties provided a suitable environment for electoral violence. The artificial groupings formed by candidates inspiring to represent their political parties mostly take it personal and get physical. Similarly, some participants echoed the sentiment that women and children are the most affected in the revelation of electoral violence that range from short to long term. MP4 gives his views on electoral violence effects on Chadiza.

The electoral violence had the impact on our community by instilling fear in our electorates. So, this is what caused people not to go and vote most of the times, more especially on the side of our women they do not like violence. So, wherever there is violence you will not find women. When women hear that, people were fighting or insulting each other that may cause voter apathy or low voter turnout. So electoral violence may be one of the causes of people avoid participating in elections..... (MP4).

4.4 Electoral Violence Prevention

Having established the presence of electoral violence in Chadiza constituency from the collected data, participants observed that electoral violence were detrimental to the constituency development. They proceeded to suggest provision of electoral violence prevention measures. The table below indicates the prevention measures suggested by participants. The 35 participants were asked to mention atleast one electoral violence prevention strategy summarised into eight categories. Table 5 shows their responses.

Table 4: Suggested Electoral Violence Prevention Measures

Suggested Prevention Measure	Male n=17	Female n=18	Total n=35
Deterrence	1	0	1
Forming Networks and Coalition	1	3	4
Improving literacy levels	4	3	7
Information Intervention	2	1	3
Intergroup and social contact	1	2	3
Norms and behaviour transformation	1	1	2
Political party mitigation	5	6	11
Presence of International observers	2	2	4

It was encouraging to note in transcripts that 11 participants representing 31% suggested political parties taking a leading role in electoral violence prevention as well as improving literacy levels was mentioned by 7 participants representing 20%. Besides the mentioned measures, a male individual mentioned what was not common among participants; he defined deterrence from the application of both positive and negative incentives to alter the choices of relevant actors. In the context of electoral violence, deterrence is a practice of disincentives application or restraining political parties from undertaking unwanted actions or transgressions such as ballot fraud, voter intimidation, or displaying violence evidence. This represented 3% (1) of the participants' choices of electoral violence prevention measures.

It was surprising from the data to observe that seven participants indicated that very few farmers around the area

are able to read and write despite the increase in the number of schools in the district. However, some adults expressed interest to enrol in a literacy class given an opportunity. For example, MP1 confirms that, improving literacy levels may be one of the tools that could be used to prevent electoral violence. This is so because most people have not read and understand the electoral code of conduct.

The remarks above demonstrate the lack of right and adequate information about civic issues and governance. Also, it shows the absence of individual analytical and informed based decisions. FP2 is a secondary school teacher, served as a presiding officer twice and narrated to the researchers how intergroup and social contacts would help to prevent electoral violence.

Fostering interpersonal contact is one of the most effective ways to reduce prejudice among groups may keep evil intentions toward one another. These intergroup traditions include partisan political divisions. By being in contact and communicating with one another, the groups enjoy the opportunity to appreciate their differences. This enhanced understanding of each other to curb stereotyping, discrimination, and prejudice between groups. Evidence in general, moderated dialogues may build cooperation among peer political party leaders that could open lines of communication and contribute to electoral violence mitigation, (FP2).

Most people in Chadiza lack access to information. Despite reports of improvements in information dissemination facilities, several accounts were given concerning limitations to information access. Participants were asked whether it was easy or difficult to communicate to people in Chadiza constituency. The table below shows the responses collected from the 35 participants:

Table 5: Access to Information

Participants responses	Male n= 17	Female n=18	Total n= 35
Easy	5	7	12
Difficulty	12	11	23

The data shows that 23 participants representing 65% denied having easy access to information and 12 participants representing 35% mentioned that it was easy. Both male and female mentioned that, majority of people had no access to direct information and that some politicians expressed difficulties they were facing to reach out to people.

The majority of the participants suggested that, there is need for informational interventions such as provision of information relevant to voters about electoral process and the benefits of electoral code of conduct adherence.

4.5 Constructed framework to document and interpretation of Data

This section is an extension of the findings and discussion chapters and responds to the last research objective focused on developing a framework for documenting and interpreting voters' experience in Chadiza constituency. The emergent framework is Chad Electoral Violence Prevention Framework (CEVP), a result of eleven months of deep reflection on the participants reveal in Chadiza Constituency. The multidimensional framework consists of three segments

namely: (i) documentation, (ii) Analysis, and (iii) interpretation. In addition, the framework is situated within existential philosophy and highlights the role of *Words and Language* in uncovering the hidden essence in '*Being and Time*' as advanced by Heidegger and other proponents such as Ricoeur, Gadamer and Merleau-Ponty.

The first part answers the '*why*' Chad Electoral Violence Prevention framework, followed by '*what*' and '*how*' the framework was constructed.

4.5.1 Why Chad Electoral Violent Prevention (CEVP) Framework

According to Finkelstein (2001), a good framework enables someone to see something which one do not understand as it can be seen from different viewpoints. Thus, 'this multi-dimensional replica of reality can trigger insights that one might not otherwise develop' (Finkelstein, 2001). It is in words and language that things first come into being. It is in this vein that the conceptualisation of the CEVP framework is based on essential words as given by participants in their search for electoral violence prevention. The words depict their lived experiences while interacting with their environment. To this extent, the CEVP framework provided a framework for documenting patterns based on the essences generated through the participants' lived experiences.

Heidegger portrays his entire philosophy as "phenomenology of the invisible" (Heidegger, 1986: 399). To this extent, CEVP framework kneel on the tenets of Hermeneutic Phenomenological approach as it uncovers or discloses the hidden 'essences' in the lived experiences of participants. In addition, the CEVP framework conforms to the inductive reasoning (Godfrey & Hudson, 2010). For example, Bernard (2011) observes that in inductive approach, 'at the end of research as a result of observations, theories are constructed.' The inductive approach embraces generation of patterns based on the observations and developing a theory for those patterns (Zalaghi & Khazaei, 2016:25). The framework offers a 'valuable format to communicate knowledge' on the voters' experience as perceived by the participants (Schadewitz & Jachna 2007:1).

Furthermore, the framework would be used to determine electoral violent prone areas, by mapping numbered participants in columns against areas under study in rows. Qualitative researchers requires in depth insight study of the phenomena to fully understand the research problem. Qualitative data is descriptive, expressed in terms of language rather than numerical values. Therefore, the framework could be useful in qualitative research dealing with the challenges related to determining most affected area of the population. In the process the relevant sample would be purposively selected. The effort, time and resource would be saved.

4.5.2 What the CEVP framework is about

The first part of the CEVP framework (documentation) is made-up of columns and rows in Microsoft word or

Microsoft excel as it were. While each numbered participant heads a column, the rows should have named parts of the study locality. For instance, if the locality under study is constituency parts would be names of wards in that constituency. Key participants views are isolated using key descriptors. The descriptors are colour dots located by an area mentioned by a numbered key participant. The dot is placed where the column of the numbered participant is and a row of the named prone area cross. A row with complete linear dots is the most violence prone area.

4.5.3 CEVP framework architecture described

The Chad Electoral Violence Prevention framework is a product of 10 stages through the research process as depicted in table 6.

Table 6: CEVP Framework Architecture Procedure

Stages	Narration
1.	Recruited participants using the inclusion/exclusion criteria.
2.	Identified the lead participant with richest experience on the phenomenon.
3.	Shadowed the lead participant using a voice recorder to capture evidence.
4.	Conducted open interviews for all participants.
5.	Conducted a focus group discussion at the end of the data generation process for selected participants to authenticate research findings.
6.	Listened to the recorded voices of participants over time until researcher was fully immersed into the text.
7.	Transcribed the whole interviews for holistic representation of findings.
8.	Designed a Row by Column framework with areas named rows and participant numbered columns.
9.	Extracted and documented areas prone to electoral violent
10.	Analysed and interpreted data collected from electoral violence prone areas identified by CEVP framework in conformity with research objectives.

Source: Own illustration based on current study

4.5.4 CEVP Framework- Row by Column

Once data was collected through dual research tools and recorded on the portable electronic device, voices of participants were listened to over and over by the researcher to fully familiarise with text to be transcribed by extraction recorded 'essences' which describes voters' experience in Chadiza Constituency, using themes. The process of generating valid and reliable data was enhanced through a designed Chad Electoral Violence Prevention framework. It enabled the research to engage right participants based on informativeness using purposive sampling. Each of the five key participants was asked to mention wards where they had knowledge of having experienced Electoral violence in the Snowball thematic sampling.

Table 6: Key Participants CEVP framework Table

	Participant 1 (Smart)	Participant 2 (Richard)	Participant 3 (Regina)	Participant 4 (Misozi)	Participant 5 (Jacob)
Ambidzi Ward	-	-	-	-	-
Bwanukha Ward	-	-	-	-	-
Chadiza Ward	0	-	0	0	0
Chamandala Ward	-	-	-	-	-

Chanjowe Ward	-	-	-	-	-
Chilenga Ward	-	-	-	-	-
Kabvumo Ward	-	-	-	-	-
Kaluma Ward	0	0	0	-	0
Kampini Ward	-	-	-	-	-
Kandabwako Ward	-	-	-	-	-
Kapachi Ward	-	-	-	-	-
Khumba Ward	-	-	-	-	-
Mangwe Ward	-	-	-	0	0
Manje Ward	-	-	-	-	0
Mwangazi Ward	0	0	0	0	0
Naviluli Ward	-	-	-	-	-
Ngala Ward	-	-	-	-	-
Nsadz Ward	-	-	-	-	-
Taferasoni Ward	-	-	-	-	-
Tikondane Ward	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Own illustration based on current study

Key: 0 – elections characterised by violence

- - elections conducted without violence

Description: rows representing twenty (20) Chadiza Constituency wards arranged alphabetically. In turn, each cell had a symbol of response by the key research participants interpreted by the key above. Out-rightly results were clear wards prone to electoral violence are Chadiza ward, Kaluma ward and Mwangazi ward.

4.5.5 CEVP framework for interpreting Voters experience of Chadiza Constituency

Table 6: could be used as a point of reference to dive into interpreting the voters experience in Chadiza constituency. From the symbols used 0 is used to represent ‘presence of violence’ in a ward and dash (–) is used to represent ‘non violence’ elections in a ward. Chadiza constituency has twenty (20) wards; of these our key participants’ sited five (5) wards to have experienced serious electoral violence translated to about 25%. The CEVP framework assisted in an on set determining of the degree of electoral violence in Chadiza Constituency and guided the researcher on the wards to target, as well as collecting data first.

4.5.6 How CEVP Frame work would be used in future research

Further studies are recommended to illuminate the findings on the voters’ experiences in Chadiza constituency from 2011 to 2021 using the phenomenology approaches. In view of the limited forum where voters may express themselves, it could be argued here that a lot more remain ‘hidden’ to the public and policy implementers. To this effect, if voters are to be emancipated from social persecution, more research should be conducted to uncover their hidden experiences.

4.5.7 Summary on CEVP frame work

In a nut-shell, the proposed CEVP framework offered a window through which this researcher viewed reality of voters experience in Chadiza constituency. In addition, the framework empowered the novice researcher to determine sample and an on spot check of reality on the ground before engaging in a fully framed study based on the similarity of prominent words from the participants and then documented emergent themes accordingly.

5. Conclusion

This study explored participants reflections on prevention of Electoral violence in Chadiza constituency and constructed

CEVP framework guided by hermeneutics research design, riding on subjective reality that epistemologically holds that reality is constructed in the mind of the observer. The participants were free to express their reflection on elections, where different participants shared similar events experienced in 2021 general elections. The study suggested elements and strategies that could be employed to mitigate electoral violence.

5.1 Recommendations

Conclusion based on literature review, limited number of studies on electoral violence prevention in rural areas, it can be argued here that a lot more remain ‘hidden’ to a critical eye. To this effect, if Voters’ Perceptions of election in rural Zambia are to be emancipated from societal bondage, more research should be conducted to uncover their hidden experiences. Further research works could be conducted in the following areas: Politicians Perception on solution to electoral violence, more women must be encouraged to contest for various political positions in elections, create more jobs for youths by both public and private firms and Introduction of live transmission of vote counting from District and provincial totalling centres in Zambia to enhance transparency.

5.3 Consent and Ethical Approval

Consent was obtained from participants before engaging them. They were again assured that all the data shared would remain confidential and be used solely for this study and that anonymity would be observed. Ethical Approval was sought from The University of Zambia, Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies Ref No. HSSREC-2024-APR-006 and HSSREC IRB No. 00006464

Disclaimer (Artificial intelligence)

Authors hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc.) and text-to-image generators have been used during the writing or editing of this manuscript.

References

1. Adolfo EV, Kovacs MS, Nyström D, Utas M. Electoral violence in Africa. The Nordic Africa Institute Policy Notes. 2012;Issue 3:1-4.
2. Akpan DA. Appraisal of the role of political violence:

- The development of youths in Nigeria in the 21st century. *African Research Review*. 2015;9(3):147-156.
3. Bailey A, Brien OD. Hume: Enquiry concerning human understanding. London: Continuum International Publishing Group; c2006.
 4. Barber BK. Political conflict and youth. *The Psychologist*. 2013;26(5):336.
 5. Barton F, *et al*. Early warning? A review of conflict prediction models and systems. PCR Project Special Briefing, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC; c2008.
 6. Baya C. Political and electoral violence in East Africa. Nairobi: Fredrich Ebert Stiftung; c2017.
 7. Bekoe D. Trends in electoral violence in sub-Saharan Africa. *USIP PeaceBrief*. 2010;13:1-5.
 8. Botes J. Conflict transformation: A debate over semantics or a crucial shift in the theory and practice of peace and conflict studies? *International Journal of Peace Studies*. 2003;8(2):1-27.
 9. Burchard SM. Electoral violence in sub-Saharan Africa: Causes and consequences. Boulder, CO: First Forum Press; c2015.
 10. Chali R. Only 15% voted in Lusaka mayoral elections. *Lusaka Times*. 2018 Jul 30;1-3.
 11. Chulu T, Mpolomoka DL, Sikwibele A. Constituency development fund (CDF) disbursement, access, and utilization in the education sector, Chadiza District, Eastern Province, Zambia. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa*. 2021;5(9):21-35.
 12. Clarke JN. Early warning analysis for humanitarian preparedness and conflict prevention. *Civil Wars*. 2005;7(1):71-97.
 13. Creswell J, Creswell D, John W. Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches. 6th ed; c2022.
 14. Deth J. Citizenship and the voter realities of everyday life. In: Murray, Print, Dirk, Lange, editors. *Voter education and competences for engaging citizens in democracies*. Sense Publishers; c2013.
 15. Electoral Commission of Zambia. Electoral Commission of Zambia Act 2016. Lusaka: Electoral Commission of Zambia; c2016.
 16. Farrell DM. Electoral systems: A comparative introduction. Amazon: Red Global Press; c2011.
 17. Galtung J, Webel C. *Handbook of Peace and Conflict Studies*. New York: Routledge; c2007.
 18. Heidegger M. *Being and time: A translation of Sein und Zeit* (J. Stambaugh, Trans.). Albany, New York: State University of New York Press; c1996.
 19. Heindel AJ. A phenomenological study of the experiences of higher education students with disabilities. PhD thesis. Available from: <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd/5037>; 2014.
 20. Holliday A. *Doing and writing qualitative research*. SAGE Publications; c2007.
 21. Johnson G. Third party is going to be the Libertarian Party. *Fox Business*. 2016 Apr 27.
 22. Kawila LE, Mulubale S, Muleya G. Unearthing elements associated with electoral violence in Kanyama constituency of Lusaka District, Zambia. *European Journal of Law and Political Science*. 2023;2(1).
 23. Koko S. The tension between power sharing, justice and human rights in Africa's post-violence societies: Rwanda, Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Pretoria: Pretoria University Law Press; c2013.
 24. Kotite P. Education for conflict prevention and peace-building: Meeting the global challenges of the 21st century. Paris: International Institute for Educational Planning; c2012.
 25. Lust E, *et al*. Drivers of political participation: The role of partisanship, identity, and incentives in mobilizing Zambian citizens. *SAGE Journal*. 2021;57(9).
 26. Mason J. *Qualitative researching*. SAGE Publications; c2002.
 27. Muleya G. The teaching of voter education in Zambia: An examination of trends in the teaching of voter education in schools. PhD dissertation: University of South Africa; c2015.
 28. Mulubale S. Rethinking the effects of identity politics in a multi-ethnic society: A comparative case analysis of Zambia and Kenya. *Politicon*. 2017;44(1):49-71. London: Routledge.
 29. Mushipi J. Zambia Daily Nations. Zambia Daily Nations. c2022 Oct 5; Lusaka: Daily Nations.
 30. Paolo SA. Political party youth wings and political violence in sub-Saharan Africa: A case of Ghana. *International Journal of Peace and Development Studies*. 2017;8(1):1-14.
 31. Patton MQ. *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. SAGE Publications; c2002.
 32. Shenton AK. *Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects*. London: Sage; c2004.
 33. Simui F, Kasonde-Ngandu S, Cheyeka AM, Simwinga J, Ndhlovu D. Enablers and disablers to academic success of students with visual impairment: A 10-year literature disclosure, 2007–2017. *British Journal of Visual Impairment*. 2018;36(2):163-74. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0264619617739932>.
 34. Stacy AE. Towards a new democratic Africa: The African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance. *Emory International Law Review*. 2019;27:41-117.
 35. Van Manen M. Phenomenology of practice. *Phenomenology & Practice*. 2007;1(1):11.
 36. Wahman M. Controlling territory, controlling voters: The electoral geography of Africa campaign violence. Oxford: Oxford Academic; 2023.
 37. Whitehead D, Lopez V. Sampling data and data collection in qualitative research. In: *Nursing & Midwifery Research: Methods and Appraisal for Evidence-Based Practice*. 4th ed. Elsevier Mosby; c2013. p. 123-140.