

**CENTERING VOICES FROM THE POLITICAL MARGINS:  
EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS' CIVIC  
EDUCATION APPROACHES IN PROMOTING YOUTH POLITICAL PARTICIPATION  
IN KENYA**

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### List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
AYC	Africa Youth Charter
EACSO	East Africa Civil Society Forum
EMB	Electoral Management Body
CoK	Constitution of Kenya
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CP	Critical Pedagogy
SCP	Social Contract Pedagogy
UN	United Nations
KYDP	Kenya Youth Development Policy
WPAY	World Programme of Action for Youth

## **Abstract**

Suppose educators are to revitalize the language of civic education as part of a broader discourse of political agency and critical Citizenship in a global world. In that case, they will have to consider grounding such a pedagogy in defense of militant Utopian thinking in which any viable notion of the political takes up the primacy of pedagogy as part of a broader attempt to revitalize the conditions for the individual and social agency while simultaneously addressing the most fundamental problems facing the prospects for social justice and global democracy.

Henry Giroux (Winter 2004, p.36)

The overall aim of this research is to identify and evaluate the civic education approaches used by civil society organizations to promote the participation of youth in political processes in Kenya, as well as propose the adoption of critical pedagogy as the most effective in empowering youth to be transformative agents of their society. The study used a qualitative approach and employed semi-structured interviews as the data collection method. The study draws from the perceptions and experiences of eight civil society organizations and finds a direct correlation between the values and ontological positions the civil society brings to the field and the civic education approach, which in turn affects the civic knowledge acquisition of the youths. The study also found that most of the approaches used by civil society in Kenya are rooted in a deliberative pedagogy that often has little focus on power inequalities that are at the core of the political system. Consequently, the study draws from Freirean pedagogical principles to propose adopting a critical pedagogical approach in the youth civic education programs. This research adds to the body of knowledge on youth civic engagement by suggesting a pedagogical approach that is most suited when empowering disillusioned and apathetic youth, as is the case with the Kenyan Youth.

Keywords: Civil Society Organizations, Civic Education, Pedagogy, Political Participation.

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **1.0 Overview**

Promoting critical Citizenship and political participation involves equipping citizens with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to effectively participate in political and decision-making processes. Political participation research (Giroux, 2009; Freire, 1970; Finkel, 2011) has established that civic education approaches are essential in raising citizens' critical awareness for effective participation in the political and decision-making processes. However, there is relatively underdeveloped literature regarding how best to conduct civic education to increase youth political participation, given their unique needs and challenges. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the Civil Society Organizations' youth civic education approaches aimed at promoting the involvement of youth in political processes in Kenya. The study further proposes the adoption of critical pedagogy as the most effective approach to promoting a discourse of political agency and critical Citizenship in Kenya.

This chapter will introduce the study by first discussing the context and background of the research. It will also highlight the research problem, aims, the significance of the study, and finally reflect on the limitations.

### **1.2 Background and context**

Civic education has played a vital role in promoting the participation of citizens in political processes. Civic education provides information and learning experiences to equip citizens with civic knowledge, skills, and attitudes to participate in democratic processes (Rietbergen-McCracken, 2012). The instruction can take different forms, including informal training, classroom-based learning, digital and media campaigns, and experiential training, to name a few. Moreover, civic education can target youth, adults, or children at local, national, and international levels (Rietbergen-McCracken, 2012). As such, civic education uses various approaches to support civic engagement and

promote participatory governance. The main goal of civic education is to create an engaged and informed public who demands good governance from their leaders.

The Constitution of Kenya (2010) underscores public participation as an essential principle in the governance and decision-making processes. As a result, government institutions, especially the county governments and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), have been at the forefront of providing civic education programs to empower citizens for public participation (Mbithi, Damian and Juma, 2018). Though the Constitution of Kenya (2010) calls for public participation in all public policies, it could be argued that the intent and purposes of civic education programs conducted by governments are mainly to ensure the citizens "rubber stamp" the policy decisions of the governments and no meaningful engagement are sought (King et al., 2020; Mbithi, Damian and Juma, 2018)). The deliberate commitment to ensure that the citizens continuously and meaningfully participate in the democracy and decision-making processes should come from the citizens themselves. The civil society organizations in Kenya have taken up this role. Civil society organizations are independent of the government and are non-profit making institutions making them ideal for offering civic education programs that aim to promote the collective struggle for social and political transformation. The civil society in Kenya has been credited for empowering citizens to hold government institutions accountable and increasing citizens' awareness of the power they hold in promoting a just and equal society (EACSO, n.d).

Over the years, the need to promote youth political participation has gained prominence as a crucial component for the consolidation of democracy across the world. The youth make up the world's largest population cohort, particularly in Africa. According to the 2019 census, the youth make up 75% percent of the total population in Kenya (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2020). The concern of youth involvement in politics emerged out of research that has indicated a high level of youth disengagement in political processes (Quintellier, 2007; Awiti & Scott, 2016)). A majority of global research on youth participation in politics suggests that in every election, it is the youth who are



least likely to turn out and vote, and their rate of participation is on a steady decline (Kimberlee, 2002; Pammett and Leduc, 2003; Dalton, 2007; Zukin et al. 2006).

Further, the studies observe that the current generation is more disengaged in politics compared to previous generations of the same age bracket and that the current young generation will "never" reach the political participation levels shown by the current elderly generation (Martikainen et al., 2005); Quintellier (2007) further argues that the current young generation will likely retain their passivity in politics as they age and will be replaced by a more inactive generation in political participation. This global trend is in tandem with research on the status of youth political participation in Kenya. For example, Awiti & Scott (2016) assert that Kenyan Youth remains politically disengaged despite their numerical strength and that those who participate hold beliefs that make them vulnerable to political manipulation, posing a threat to democracy and good governance.

### **1.3 Research Problem**

To promote youth participation in political processes, government institutions and civil society organizations have developed elaborate civic education programs targeting the Youth (King, 2020; Martikainen et al., 2005). However, despite the government and civil society efforts, youth remain politically disengaged (Ojok and Achol, 2017). This youth behavior is a consequence of their political socialization, which often fails to raise their critical awareness and equip them with the skills required to have collective agency and resist oppressive structures (Giroux, 2009). Numerous studies have traditionally focused on the importance and challenges of youth participation in the electoral process. However, there is little focus on the most suitable pedagogies to equip the out-of-school youth with skills to effectively participate in political processes, given their unique challenges and needs in Kenya. However, the Kenya Youth Development Policy (2019) proposes dialogue as a practical approach for youth engagement. Noteworthy, the policy did not provide an elaborate dialogical framework that should underpin youth dialogue engagement. Consequently, dialogues are used as a means for the relevant institutions to tick the box of the constitutional requirement of public participation ((King et al., 2020)).

#### 1.4. Research Aims, Objectives, and Research questions

Given the relatively underdeveloped research on the most suitable civic education pedagogies for out-of-school youth in Kenya, this study will aim to identify and evaluate the civic education approaches used by civil society organizations (CSOs) to promote youth participation in political processes in Kenya. The research will also advocate for adopting Freirean critical pedagogy (also called dialogical pedagogy) as the most effective in promoting social transformation.

The following research objectives will guide the research:

1. To Identify common civic education approaches used by CSOs in promoting youth political participation in Kenya
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of the CSOs' civic education approaches in promoting a democracy of critical youths
3. To assess how educators' values and ontological positions influence their choice of youth civic education approaches.
4. To compare the current CSOs' civic education approaches with the proposed Freirean critical pedagogy approach.

The aims and objectives of this study will be achieved through the analysis of five research questions which are highlighted hereunder;

- I. What values and ontological positions do CSOs bring to the civic education field?
- II. What programs are civil society organizations running to promote citizenship education amongst the youth?
- III. What are approaches/ Strategies being used by CSOs in the youth civic education programs?
- IV. What challenges are CSOs facing in the implementation of the approaches?
- V. How effective are the approaches in creating an impact? What needs improvement?

This research agrees with Torres (2021), who argues that education (in this case, civic education) serves two bipolar societal roles. Firstly, education empowers citizens by offering counter-hegemonic praxis for the marginalized to overcome oppression. Secondly, education can sustain models of domination through reproducing social structures that validate the authority of the capitalists. Central to the achievement of

these roles is the approach the educators adopt in their classrooms. As such, the thesis investigates the CSO approaches to identify the extent to which they offer counter-hegemonic praxis for the youth to overcome their oppression. Cognizant that CSOs in Kenya operate in an environment characterized by disengaged youth, the thesis advocates for adopting a critical pedagogy approach as the most suitable in raising the critical mass of consciousness among the youth to transform their social and political lives. The thesis argues that the current pedagogical approaches can be improved by adopting two Freirean principles: Conscientization and philosophy of hope as vital elements in raising the emancipatory interests of young people and inspiring hope and action against oppressive structures.

### **1.5. The Significance of the Research**

This study will contribute to the body of knowledge on youth civic education and civic engagement by evaluating the civic education approaches used by CSOs to promote youth political participation. In addition, the Kenya Youth Development Policy (2019) advocated for dialogue to promote youth political participation. However, the policy did not provide a comprehensive framework for an effective dialogical approach for the youth. Therefore, the research will propose the adoption of critical pedagogy as the most effective pathway for promoting the democracy of critical youths in Kenya. This will help address the current shortage in this area by making a case for adopting Freirean dialogical pedagogical principles that are instrumental in equipping youths with attitudes and skills to overcome challenges in their quest for collective agency and resistance.

### **1.6 Limitations of the Research**

This study only interviewed the educators and did not incorporate the views of the youth, who are the consumers of the approaches to get a balanced view of the effectiveness of the CSO approaches. The study could be improved by considering the perspectives of both the demand and supply sides of the civic education approaches. In addition, the study was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic. Consequently, there were no physical meetings, and data collection was done solely through online interviews. The lack of presence may have affected the intensity and depth of the discussions.

## **1.7 Thesis Outline**

This study has six chapters. Chapter one introduces the background and context of the study. The study objectives, aims and research questions are also highlighted. In addition, the significance of the study and the research limitations are discussed.

Chapter two discusses the existing literature regarding the promotion of youth in political and democratic processes and the current civic education pedagogies used. Chapter three is the methodology chapter, and it presents the theoretical framework that guided the study and the broader research design. Adopting a qualitative approach and semi-structured interviews as a data collection technique is justified. The ethical considerations employed in this study and the coding and data analysis processes are also brought to the fore.

In chapter four, the study's findings are presented based on a thematic data analysis method. Chapter five discusses the findings of the study in relation to the existing literature reviewed. The final chapter is the conclusion, and it provides a summary of the five discussed chapters. Limitations of the study are reiterated and potential opportunities for further research.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter examines the literature on CSOs' civic education approaches to promote youth participation in political processes. The literature reviewed is strategically selected to provide context and insight into the background of youth participation in political processes and the models currently being used to increase youth political engagement. The chapter is organized into different sections: Context, working definitions of youth and political participation, participation of Youth in Africa and Kenya, policy framework, critical Citizenship, a case for pedagogy in civic education, and models of citizenship education pedagogies.

The chapter begins by establishing a context on the status of youth participation in political processes. It notes that youth are generally disengaged in political processes despite the efforts from governments and CSOs to increase their participation through elaborate civic education programs. In addition, the concept of youth is discussed and the thesis adopts the definition of youth given by the Constitution of Kenya (2010), which defines youth as people who have attained the age of 18 years but have not attained the age of 35years. Further, the role the African Youth has played in shaping the political landscape in Africa and by extension Kenya is brought to the fore. Furthermore, the chapter also highlights some of the challenges the youth are facing that are leading to the general decline in youth political participation. This chapter further discusses the importance of civic education pedagogies in increasing youth participation in political processes. Pedagogy is the study of the specific approaches and models of learning that lead to knowledge transfer. Consequently, civic education pedagogies are the cornerstone that shapes political attitudes, knowledge, dispositions, and motivations for transforming our society.

The chapter then concludes by examining the different pedagogical models currently being used and makes a case for the use of critical pedagogy as the most effective for promoting youth in political processes.

## **2.1 Context**

The need for youth participation in political spheres is among the most discussed concerns by governments and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the 21st century (King, 2020; Quintelier, 2007; Martikainen *et al.*, 2005). Several policy documents have been drafted with great rhetoric to explain why and how youth should participate in democracy and programs designed to increase youth participation in the political process. Despite the government and CSOs' efforts, the literature indicates that youth are disengaged in democracy. Quintelier (2007) captures this state of youth disillusionment in politics aptly when he argues that "young people are less concerned with politics, less politically knowledgeable...are more apathetic and have low levels of political interests" (p.165). In their article on the generational differences in political participation between the current (young) generation and the elderly generation, Martikainen *et al.* (2005) argue that compared to previous generations, the current youth is disengaged with politics (p.167). Quintellier agrees, stating that the current young generation will retain their passivity in politics as they age and will be replaced by an inactive generation in political participation. The Afrobarometer (2016) affirms this state of youth disengagement and documents that "African youth (aged 18-35) report lower rates of political engagement than their elders across a variety of indicators including voting in national elections" and that youth engagement levels have "declined over time despite the introduction of regional and national youth empowerment policies" (p.2)

In contrast to Quinteliers' observations that youth lack interest in politics, this thesis argues that youth are concerned with politics despite the perceived lack of disengagement (CMD-Kenya, 2015; Weiss, 2020). While acknowledging that youth participation in political processes is a contested debate and that many factors lead to youth disengagement in political processes, this thesis seeks to advance the notion that

the youth are not sufficiently equipped to participate in political processes, which results in their perceived lack of interest. There is evidence in the literature (Quintelier, 2007 and King et al., 2020) that points to some of the reasons youth disengage from politics which include, among others, the failure of youth to see how involvement in politics impacts their lives and that youth feel the politicians are uninterested in their lives. In addition, the youth do not see any viable alternatives and therefore think their destiny is predetermined (King et al., 2020).

The above challenges notwithstanding, the Youth in Kenya have been participating in democracy in various ways that are " both formal and informal, voluntary and coerced" ( King et al., 2020. P. 814). Further, King et al. (2020) lament that the Kenyan Youth actively participate in politics through "low cost" activities, including volunteering, and few youths participate in more demanding activities, like running for office. In my view, the "low cost" form of participation is critical as it allows the youth to get the necessary experience, networks, and resources they may need to run for office and influence decisions from within. In addition, the low-cost form of participation also allows youth who remain outside the democratic system to influence democracy through the bottom-up approach as envisioned by the Constitution of Kenya 2010. It is therefore imperative to promote any form of youth democratic participation as change can occur in multiple spaces.

The available literature is extensive on the importance and challenges of youth participation in the electoral process. However, there is little focus on the most suitable pedagogies to equip the out-of-school youth with skills to effectively participate in political processes, given their unique challenges and needs. Moreover, most studies on civic education tend to focus on children and youth within the formal education system. As a result, different organizations have adopted different pedagogies in their youth civic education programs. However, literature (Leighninger, 2012; London, 2010; Gibson, 2020) suggests that organizations generally prefer deliberative pedagogy as the most effective way to promote democratic participation. Deliberative pedagogy is a teaching philosophy focused on developing individuals with the skill sets necessary to

address competing tensions and values in a democratic engagement (Carcasson & Sprain, 2016).

Further, Rittel & Webber (1974) observe that most complex social and public policies have no technical solutions and require a continuous communicative engagement process. The engagements help communities to develop mutual understanding through negotiating the competing values. As such, organizations' preference for deliberative pedagogies in their civic education programs is understandable given the fact that our societies are characterized by "deep disagreements, enormous complexities and social problems" (Bohman, 1998). Deliberative pedagogies seek to promote a "reasoned discourse" among the members of the society so that citizens can tolerate divergent ideas in a democratic society. Unfortunately, these pedagogies have been criticized for failing to address social and political inequalities and, therefore, maintaining the status quo (Gibson, 2020).

While this thesis will by no means suggest a one-size-fits-all approach to youth civic education, it seeks to explore the pedagogies used by civil society organizations in Kenya to promote youth participation in the political process. The thesis then suggests critical pedagogical principles that are instrumental in raising the critical consciousness amongst the youth to "see" the connection between their daily lives and politics and realize their potential in transforming their society. The thesis will mainly draw arguments from critical scholars such as Karuti Kanyinga, King Elizabeth, Freire Paul, Giroux Henry, and Jack Mezirow.

## **2.2 Definitions of CSOs, Youth, and Political Participation**

It is imperative to give a working definition of the term CSOs, Youth, and the concept of political participation used in this study. According to the United Nations, CSOs are non profit making organizations formed by individuals in the society independent of the state and market (UNGP, n.d). The World Bank adds to this definition and notes that civil society includes;



*The wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations that have a presence in public life express the interests and values of their members and others based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious, or philanthropic considerations. (World Bank. n.d, par. 1).*

The above definitions imply that for an organization to be categorized as a civil society, it must not be operating for profit. Further, the organization's governing structure must be independent of the state. In addition, the organization must be registered under the legal provisions of the recipient's country (World Bank, n.d).

Youth is a rational concept and has been defined differently depending on the context. The United Nations defines youth as individuals between the ages of 15 and 24 years (UN, n.d), while the African Union recognizes youth as individuals between the ages of 15 and 34 years (Africa Youth Charter, 2006, p.3). In Kenya, the 2010 Constitution defines youth as persons who "have attained the age of 18 but have not attained the age of 35 ( CoK, 2010, article 55). Despite the lack of consistency in the various definitions, there is a consensus that youth is a fluid concept and a transition period from childhood commonly associated with dependence to adulthood, synonymous with independence and the assumption of social commitments (UNESCO, 2010). Negotiating this complex interplay of personal and economic changes is challenging, and therefore, political participation as a responsibility ceases to become the youth's priority as it is competing against personal issues that are more pressing ( Muthee and African Public Policy Scholar, 2010)

According to Weiss (2020), the concept of political participation has developed over time to incorporate new forms of participation. For example, Verba and Nie (1972) define political participation as "*those activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of government personnel and the actions they take*"(p.2). This definition suggests that for an activity to be considered political participation, it must be carried out by a private citizen and directed toward government personnel or institutions. However, this view was considered limited. Pattie et al. (2004) presented a similar definition but added that political participation could target other

institutions and does not have to be limited to the government. In addition, Weiss (2020) argues that, for an activity to be considered political participation, the "actions must be taken by private citizens, and not politicians. These actions must be voluntary, and the actions need to be targeted to governments, institutions or NGOs" (p. 3). These three core characteristics form the basis for defining political participation in the contemporary society. The activities, therefore, can be actions taken towards participating in politics, such as voting, petitions, campaigns, and protests, as well as those actions not targeted towards elections.

### **2.3 Youth Political Participation in Africa and Kenya**

Youth have played critical roles in shaping the political landscape in Africa. From the struggle to liberate Africa from the colonial powers to the violent electoral encounters that threaten the sustainability of democratic processes, the contribution of the African Youth has been both positive and negative (Ojok and Achol, 2017). Noteworthy, Africa is the most "youthful" continent, with statistics indicating that two-thirds of the African population is below 35 years (Ojok and Achol, 2017). However, the high numerical advantage of the youth has increasingly been discussed as a crisis. King et al. (2020) and Giroux (2009) portend that the youth are increasingly being seen as a societal problem instead of a future resource that should be invested. Ojok and Achol (2017) argue that the "youth find themselves embroiled in this undemocratic mess because of the hopeless and disadvantaged status they occupy within the current African political landscape" (p.95).

Consequently, policies have been passed to ensure the youth are contained and punished (Giroux, 2009). The policies have contributed to the exclusion of youth from discourses that can give them a chance to contribute to a better democratic future. Studies (Ojok and Achol, 2017, Lia, 2005) suggest that the exclusion of the youth and their numerical strength have led to two possible scenarios; firstly, the youth have been exploited by the dominant political elites to champion their interests with no regard to the youth issues, and secondly, the youth have resorted to violence as a pathway to creating their spaces of engagement in the political processes.

The trend of demographic dominance of the African Youth holds in Kenya. Statistics indicate that 75% of Kenya's population is below 35 years ( Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2020). Studies (CMD-Kenya, 2015, Awiti & Scott, 2016) further indicate that the Kenyan Youth remain politically disengaged despite their numerical advantage, and those who participate hold beliefs that make them vulnerable to political manipulation ( Awiti & Scott, 2016). According to research conducted by the Centre for Multi-Party Democracy in Kenya (CMD-Kenya), youth participation in post-2013 general elections has not been encouraging (CMD-Kenya, 2015). Statistics from the Afrobarometer Kenya survey 2013 showed that only 26% of youth are interested in politics, 28% somewhat interested, and 45% are not interested in politics (Afrobarometer, 2013 cited in CMD-Kenya, 2015). It is worth noting that young people's active participation in politics is crucial as politics is the governing element with decision-making powers to influence and shape the world.

The power of youth in influencing the outcome of elections has been dominating the political discussions in Kenya in recent years. Noteworthy, this narrative was one of the agendas in the lead-up to the 2017 general elections when it became apparent that the youth would comprise more than half of the voters in the voters' register (King et al., 2020). Though the number of youth voters has the potential to swing the outcome of Kenya's elections, It can be argued that this will not happen soon, given the characteristics of youth and the voting patterns in Kenya (Kanyinga and Njoka, 2002). The stiff competition of the elections often degenerates into ethnic and tribal politics, and the youth vote along those lines, thus losing their consolidated power. Though the youth feel excluded and marginalized in society and do not capitalize on their strength in numbers, this thesis argues that this behavior is a consequence of their political socialization, which often fails to raise their critical awareness of what is required to challenge the power structures that oppress them. As a result, this study underscores the importance of implementing a civic education pedagogy that meets this need.

## 2.4 Policy Framework

Despite the challenges that the youth face, the 2007 world report documented that young people, on average, are better educated and more connected to the world than the previous generations (UN, 2007). As a result, young people are more tenacious in finding viable options that will enable them to use the limited opportunities at their disposal to achieve what they imagine is possible in the global field (UN, 2007). Moreover, young people are creative, energetic, and innovative and can contribute positively to society. Muthee and African Public Policy Scholar (2010) argues that what young people need most is a conducive environment to use their talents and improve their well-being. Upon the realization of the potential of the youth in addressing political, social, and economic issues, global, regional, and national interventions have been developed to support youth in reaching their potential. The interventions were mainly in robust policy frameworks and programs that aim to make the youth meaningfully engaged in the socioeconomic and political spheres. In particular, United Nations has been instrumental in shaping the youth discourse by developing global policies and strategies that have guided non-state and state actors on youth-related programs (UN, 2010). For example, the adoption of the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) 2000 policy framework outlined practical strategies that guide international communities and states to support the Youth (UN, 2010).

The African continent also recognizes the importance of the youth dividend. The African Union has developed the 2006 African Youth Charter (AYC) that sets forth strategies for addressing youth issues and supporting them to participate in shaping African society. In its preamble, the AYC (2006) outlines the role of young African citizens by first acknowledging the youth as "partners, assets and a prerequisite for sustainable development and the peace and prosperity of Africa " (p.2). Further, Article 11 of the charter mandates the government institutions to " provide access to information such that young people become aware of their rights, responsibilities and of opportunities to participate in decision-making and civic life" (p.6). In addition, the charter gives the youth a duty to " fully partake in citizenship duties including voting, decision making, and governance" ( African Youth Charter, 2006. p.19).

These global and continental initiatives have enabled African states to formulate national policies and strategies to address youth needs. In addition, the initiatives recognize youth as active agents with the capacity to transform and shape their lives and societies.

In Kenya, the 2019 Kenya Youth Development policy, which replaced the 2006 National youth policy, provides a comprehensive framework for youth engagement in cultural, social, economic, and political spheres. The policy draws from international policy documents and other national policies, including Kenya vision 2030 and the Constitution of Kenya (2010). Regarding political participation, the Kenya Youth Development Policy (2019) proposes holding annual dialogues and forums at the national, county, and ward levels as a strategy to "listen to the voices of the youth" and strengthen their participation in governance and leadership (p.55)

## **2.5 Critical Citizenship**

There are different models of Citizenship, but this thesis will consider the model advanced by McLaughlin (1992) as it speaks to the kind of Citizenship that this thesis is promoting. McLaughlin (1992) distinguished between two types of Citizenship, the "minimal" and the "maximal" Citizenship. McLaughlin (1992) states that the "minimal" citizen abides by the laws and orders without "rational deliberation and self-determination ." As a result, minimal citizens are generally obedient to their government without critically reflecting on issues. "Maximal" Citizenship, on the other hand, is when one has achieved a "distanced critical perspective on all important matters" (McLaughlin, 1992, p.236). Therefore, the maximal citizen is always actively reflecting and questioning the government to promote justice and equality. Essentially, as most CSOs in Kenya carry out their programs, they envisage, among others, a "good" citizen - one who is autonomous and critical of their government as espoused by the maximal citizenship model (EACSOF, n.d). This paper argues that CSOs' adoption of a critical pedagogy inspired by Freirean ideas is an essential missing piece in empowering the youth to be "maximal" citizens.

## **2.6 A case for pedagogy in civic education**

There is no compelling evidence on the impacts of civic education programs. Browne (2013) suggests that the impacts vary " across individual knowledge increase to making difference to which candidates are elected" (p.2). Browne further argues that the impact of youth civic education is harder to measure as they target the generational attitude change, which may take time to emerge. However, studies indicate that, generally, civic education programs have positive effects in increasing the democratic attitudes and behaviors among citizens (UNU -WIDER, 2014). In particular, Finkel's work (2011, 2012) suggests that the efficacy of civic education programs is strongly related to the pedagogies employed.

Pedagogy is a commonly used term in education writing, and in most cases, its meaning is viewed as self-evident (Murphy & Gipps, 1996). However, understanding the implicit assumptions of the term in civic education is vital in unearthing how civic education processes are perceived. According to Knowles (1980), Pedagogy refers to the specific approaches and models to learning that leads to a transfer of information. Pedagogy, therefore, is concerned with the how and why of teaching and influences the educator's view of the teaching act itself and the purpose of teaching and learning( Kemmis and Smith, 2008). Hegarty and Holdsworth (2015) also share this view and argue that pedagogy is the educator's beliefs and philosophy about their practice. It is the educator's lens regarding teaching and learning and thus affects the purposes and processes of education. According to Kapur (2019), pedagogy "encompasses what educators do to influence the learning of others" (p.2). He argues that educators should use teaching materials, methods, and instructional strategies to promote meaningful student learning.

## **2.7 Influence of Educator values on the approaches adopted by CSOs**

Based on the above conceptualization of pedagogy, the importance of educator characteristics and their influence on civic education practices cannot be over-emphasized. Studies have indicated that educators' personal beliefs, such as their enthusiasm, goal orientation, and teaching conceptions, do have a bearing on the

educators' teaching and learning styles (Mason and Bromme, 2010; Olafson and Schraw, 2006). Bandura (1986) defines beliefs as individual values espoused through personal behavior and acquisition of knowledge . Therefore, personal beliefs affect educator's behavior in a classroom (Olafson & Schraw, 2006). As a consequence, divergent beliefs are believed to result in equally divergent pedagogical aspects.

Understanding the connection between the educators' espoused beliefs and the teaching and learning styles is fundamental as “it implicitly or explicitly influences learners beliefs about knowledge acquisition and curriculum development” (Soleimani, 2020. p.3). Olafson and Schraw (2006) shared this view when they suggested that educators' beliefs are critical predictors of pedagogical outcomes. Against this background, it can be argued that educators' values affect how youth acquire civic knowledge and practice.

## **2.8 Models of citizenship education pedagogies**

The differences in the educators' worldviews bring to the fore the tension between top-down and bottom-up approaches to civic education. Top-down models are concerned with knowledge acquisition through an educator's lens (educator centered), whereas the bottom-up approach is learner centered and focuses on praxis (Sandri, 2022). Furthermore, the two approaches to civic education are shaped by the purposes of civic education, where the top-down approach sees the purpose of civic education as increasing knowledge of political processes and institutions. Bottom up, on the other hand, sees the purpose of civic education as being to develop skills, motivation, and agency on civic issues through actions and experiences (Sandri, 2022).

This thesis will consider some of the pedagogies commonly used by CSOs to address human rights and democracy issues. The fundamental principles will be analyzed to identify some of the aspects of the pedagogies that feature in the approaches that CSOs use in the findings chapter.

### **2.8.1 Deliberative Pedagogies**

Deliberative pedagogies focus on rational consensus and adopt strategies that aim at discursive processes where involved parties negotiate and agree on issues for the good of all (Fung, 2005). In this approach, citizens are asked to embrace democratic ideals such as tolerance, mutual respect, objectivity, and a sense of justice. Parker (2011) argues that deliberative pedagogies should equip citizens with skills and dispositions to navigate common issues and reach consensual decisions. Further, citizens are asked to come together and adopt mutually beneficial solutions despite their social difference (Gutmann and Thompson, 2004).

Critiques of deliberative pedagogies take issue with the over-emphasis of consensus and dismissive nature of the pedagogy on the importance of disagreements within politics. Ruitenberg (2010) notes that democratic education would have failed if "young people learned to avoid conflict or regarded it as a breakdown to democracy" (p. 49). Sanders (1997) observes that deliberative approaches have a tendency not to engage on social issues and that they "do little than to maintain the unequal status quo" (p.436). Gibson (2020) also affirmed this argument and stated that deliberative approaches are used both inside and outside the classroom to maintain existing power structures. Such strategies emphasize the power-agonistic processes and have little regard for addressing issues of power differentials at the core of the political systems. A characteristic of a deliberative approach is that it is founded on the principles of equality and seeks to promote respect for all voices during deliberation. However, the literature suggests that, in reality, political structure determines the voices that should be heard and limit other voices in the political discourse ( Malcolm x, 1964). Consequently, it can be argued that deliberative strategies are out of touch with political reality and tend to ignore the need to resist inequality.

### **2.8.2 Social Contract pedagogies (SCP)**

As advanced by Desjardins *et al.* (2020), social contract pedagogies aim at equipping citizens with skills, knowledge, and dispositions to "coordinate the shared problems effectively through negotiating shared reference points and meanings" (p.2). In this



sense, social contract pedagogies advocate for the cohesive existence of diverse groups to promote liberal democracy. SCP is based on the principles of cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements. The cognitive element focuses on enabling the citizens to grasp the complexities of their world better so that they can coexist with others peacefully (affective element). The strategies should also activate citizens to act in addressing the shared problems. (p.10). Desjardins et al. argue that SCP "fosters communication, conflict resolution, and coordination among diverse groups in ways that balance the interests of diverse groups in society and promotes compassion, tolerance and respect for others" (p.11)

It could be argued that just like the deliberative pedagogies discussed above, SCP's reliance on peaceful coordination among diverse groups ignores the power relations that exist in society and may offer little in raising critical consciousness among the citizens to identify the power relations and oppressive structures in the society. Moreover, this thesis argues that advocating for individuals and groups to make choices that promote social cohesion with little regard for skills to question the historicity of the current divisiveness ignores the fundamental human drive necessary to addressing social inequalities. Consequently, such strategies find it challenging to achieve peaceful coexistence in a society where dominant groups "others" some sections of the society.

### **2.8.3 Critical pedagogy (CP)**

Critical Pedagogy is a philosophy of learning and teaching rooted in the need for people to learn how to examine and identify the oppression targeted at them through the discourse of the dominant groups in society (McKerrow, 1989). CP is founded on the idea of a just society and aims to empower citizens to transform the oppressive relations of power in society. The preeminent critical pedagogy scholar is Paulo Freire through his work of "pedagogy of the oppressed ."Freire was born in 1921 in Brazil to a middle-class family, and the economic depression of 1930 had a significant impact on his later life as a teacher. One of the critical observations Freire made during his times was the role the education system plays as an ideological tool to promote hegemony and maintain the status quo. He argued that the education system was promoting a

culture of silence, and the citizens were not empowered to evaluate their society critically but to passively interact with it (Freire, 1970).

Through his work "pedagogy of the oppressed," Freire observes that education is never neutral but political. Giroux also shares this viewpoint when he states that "education is reduced to training if it does not extend to democracy" (Giroux, 2009, p.15 ). For Freire, an essential task of education is to make human beings more human by empowering them to "read the word to read the world" (Freire, 1970, p. 87). On his part, Giroux & Giroux (2005) adds that critical pedagogy subjects practices, knowledge, and power structures to scrutiny in terms of how they may strengthen or shrink democracies (p.1). Against this background, CP holds power structures accountable and promotes resistance to the oppressive dominant discourses through identification and critical reading of texts and practices (Giroux, 2005. p.2). CP allows for praxis- an informed and committed action that enables the citizens to integrate with their social reality to transform it. It is not enough to understand our realities; we need to transform them into a more equal and just society. Freire places the burden of transforming the oppressive society on the shoulders of the oppressed. He argues that true emancipation must come from the oppressed and that asking the existing power structures to take charge of citizens' liberation is to condemn people to more captivity (Freire, 1970, p 41). Freire further underscores the central role educators play in actively shaping and leading the transformation of our society at both individual and collective levels.

This research advocates for a pedagogy rooted in two of Freire's central principles of critical pedagogy: Conscientization and Philosophy of hope. The thesis argues that given the apathetic nature of the youth, a civic education that adopts a critical pedagogy informed by the two principles is vital in playing a midwifery role in social transformation through raising the emancipatory interests of young people and inspiring hope and action against oppressive structures.

### **Conscientiousness Raising**

Freire promoted critical pedagogy through a principle he called conscientization - a process of reflection and action through which individuals develop a critical awareness

of their social reality (Freire, 1970). Freire observed that conscientization is best realized through dialogue, a platform where individuals get an opportunity to question what they know and create new knowledge. He defines dialogue as an "encounter between men, mediated by the world, to name the world" (Freire, 1970, p.88). This spirit is also captured in the Kenya Youth Development Policy (2019), which advocates for holding annual dialogues to promote youth political participation. According to Freire, authentic dialogue is an instrument that has both reflection and action dimensions. For dialogue to be effective, trust, love, humility, critical thinking, and hope must be met. Otherwise, it becomes an interaction between people to explore the world (Freire, 1970). Freire cautioned against reducing dialogue to "an act of one person depositing ideas on another or just a simple exchange of ideas among the discussants" (Freire, 1970, p.121). Dialogue is thus crucial to the cognitive process of unearthing reality. To this end, transformative dialogue should be relational and communicative as human beings are always in relation with others and the world.

In genuine dialogue, the relationship between the educator and the youth should be horizontal. As such, both the youth and the educator learn from each other and with each other and form a new "middle" ground (Freire, 1970). The educators play a vital role in creating a mutual environment in a liberating forum. Democracy of expression should be encouraged, and educators should be genuinely enthusiastic about the youths' interests. In addition, educators should organize their content around themes in tandem with the reality of the youth. This approach is crucial as the youth are demotivated and do not feel meaningfully engaged in the democratic process, even though different stakeholders hold dialogue forums to discuss the youth agenda and political participation (Thuynsma, 2020).

Freire distinguished between two forms of education approaches; the banking concept and the problem posing approaches. The banking concept treats the educator as the "owner" of knowledge who has to "deposit" the knowledge to the participants who know nothing. In this approach, the youth are treated as objects and "empty slates" who should "store" the civic knowledge deposited in them by the educators. Such a process does not raise the critical consciousness of the youth. In its place, Freire proposed the

"problem-posing" approach, which seeks to present a situation as a problem and recognizes the power of individuals in solving the problems. The problems posed are based on themes that speak to the context and aspirations of the youth. Dewey (1938) argues that students who learn through problem-solving and practical application take a more active role in influencing their experiences and their societal position.

Societal transformation is an outcome of individual transformation. Transforming an individual's "inner" world is a prerequisite for one to take action and transform their "outer" world. Jack Mezirow expounded on individual transformation in his perspective transformation theory. According to Mezirow, individuals are transformed when they experience a cognitive process that changes their "frames of reference" (Mezirow, 1978). Mezirow views frames of reference as "the structures of assumptions through which we understand our experiences" (Mezirow, 1978, p.21 ). The frames of reference shape our perceptions, expectations, and feelings. He concluded that individuals change their behaviors and actions depending on the changed perspectives. Mezirow (1978) underscores the centrality of people's experiences, critical reflection, and rational discourse as key components facilitating transformational learning. These components are congruent with Freire's concepts of problem-posing and dialogical approach. Dialogue is a cooperative undertaking that builds social capital and enhances the community. Carrying out civic education in a Kenyan society where neoliberal culture dictates people's actions and behaviors requires the adoption of a pedagogy that will enable individuals to critically examine their own beliefs and assumptions and challenge the validity of their prior learning. Consequently, the civic education approach should allow individual and collective transformation.

The Freirean critical pedagogy approach has been criticized by scholars such as Smith (1997) and Taylor (1993). They observe that Freire's approach is still based on curricula and involves the transformation of non-formal encounters into a given form of pedagogical space ( Smith, 1997, 2002). Such a curricula-based approach can work against the dialogue concept as curricula entail predetermined activities and issues of concern. Taylor notes that Freire's critical pedagogy "*differs only in degree but not in kind, from the system he so eloquently criticizes*" (Taylor, 1993, p.136). CSOs should

negotiate such challenges by ensuring curriculum and materials are developed in extensive consultation with the youth and that such materials are only used as a guide during dialogues. Freire gives a valuable guide in the preparation of curriculum and materials when he observes;

The starting point for organizing the program content of education must be the present, existential, concrete situations reflecting the people's aspirations. We must pose this existential, concrete, current situation to the people as a problem which challenges them and requires a response -not just at the intellectual level, but also the level of action."

(Freire, 1970, Chapter 3. Par.20)

### **Philosophy of hope**

According to Freire's school of thought, civic education should aim at identifying the present social injustices and ideological power operations to enable citizens to act against them and transform their society. Freire uses expressions such as "ontological need," "untested feasibility," and "essential component" to refer to hope (Freire, 1997. p. 55).

The youth live in a society where the crises of unemployment, bad governance, and democracy appear overpowering. In such an environment, there is a mix of hope and despair among the youth, and it is possible to view such conditions as inescapable acts of fate. Freire's philosophy of hope challenges individuals to seize the challenges as opportunities to rethink politics and the possibilities of collective resistance. In this discussion, I will particularly learn from Tainan (2019), as his analysis and connection of hope to civic education is fruitful for my discussion. Tainan (2019) argues that hope is intertwined with critical consciousness in that both are necessary conditions for a permanent struggle for individual and social transformation. This view is also echoed by Freire when he states;

Without a minimum of hope, we cannot so much as start the struggle. But without the struggle, hope, as an ontological need, dissipates, loses its bearing, and turns into hopelessness.

(Freire, 1994, p.3 par.1).

However, it is imperative to note that though Freire expresses hope as an ontological need, it does not mean that hope is always available among individuals (Webb, 2010). Hope can easily be rooted in a manipulated objective. Consequently, it is crucial to anchor hope on pursuable and realistic goals. Taianen ( 2019) argues that "viewing hope as a democratic virtue brings about consistency to the somewhat conceptualization of hope that is characteristic of the tradition of critical pedagogy" (p.644). This view further makes hope a tangible disposition that can be nurtured through civic education.

Freire's conceptualization of hope indicates that hope is not merely wishful thinking in which individuals passively expect the desired changes to occur (Freire, 1997). Instead, hope is transformative, action-oriented, and fueled by objectives worth pursuing. Taianen ( 2019) adds that "hope is deeply intertwined with a continuous desire and vocation to transform society, its institutions and structures toward more just forms" (p.645). In an environment characterized by despair and disillusionment, hope entails providing alternatives to the contemporary societal organization. The dominant power structures have established ideological tools that aim to maintain the status quo. As such, citizens view the current situations as the only options through which a society can be organized. To achieve this objective, Freire presented the notion of history as a possibility of change ( Freire, 1997, 54-55). This notion deconstructs the traditional view of understanding history, presenting present circumstances as unchangeable. This argument corresponds with Taianen's (2019) view that there is always a possibility of alternatives even in situations that appear unchangeable.

This thesis adds to the voice of critics of deliberative pedagogy such as Giroux (2009), Gibson(2020), and McInerney (2008) and joins them in proposing critical pedagogy as the most powerful way to educate critical and enlightened democratic citizens. Gibson

(2020) further adds that adopting critical pedagogy for civic education "privileges voices from the margins, imagines the world as it could be, and talks back to dominant narratives about cultivating justice-oriented citizens (par.1). This view is also shared by Westheimer and Kahne ( 2004). They contend that if civic educators are concerned with nurturing justice-oriented citizens, then deliberative pedagogies are not enough as they can ignore the social inequality embedded in society.

In summary, the chapter has discussed the existing literature that looks at youth participation in political processes and discussed the current pedagogies that CSOs have employed to empower the youth with civic knowledge and skills. The chapter has argued that the Youth in Kenya are disillusioned and disengaged from political processes despite the government and CSOs' efforts to increase youth participation in governance and decision-making processes. In addition, the chapter observed that this state of youth disengagement is a consequence of the civic education approaches adopted. Therefore, the chapter highlighted the centrality of civic education pedagogies deployed in influencing the youth's political socialization and knowledge acquisition. Further, the chapter noted that CSOs conduct civic education in an environment characterized by apathetic and disillusioned youth. Consequently, adopting a critical pedagogical approach founded on Freire's principles of conscientization and philosophy of hope is advocated as the most effective in raising the emancipatory interests of the youth.

## **Chapter Three: Methodology**

### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter examines the research method adopted in this study and the philosophical assumptions that informed it. Firstly, the ontological and epistemological positions that guided the study are addressed. This research is grounded in a critical paradigm and is informed by Freire's concept of critical consciousness and his notion of praxis. The research adopted qualitative methods and deployed semi-structured interviews as a data collection technique. In addition, the chapter discusses my reflexivity journey in the research process and its implications. The ethical considerations taken to protect the integrity of the data and the safety of the participants and the researcher are also explored. The chapter then highlights the coding and data analysis process used in the study.

### **3.1 Philosophical Assumptions Underpinning My Research Process**

All research, whether quantitative or qualitative, is based on philosophical groundings toward the nature of reality (ontology) and the nature of knowledge (Epistemology). The two assumptions govern the choice of the methodology adopted, which in turn dictates the research methods to be deployed. Crotty (1998) defines ontology as the study of 'being' and is concerned with the nature of reality. Ontology, therefore, is the assumptions we make about the nature of reality (Ricards, 2003). According to Ormston et al. (2014), Ontology is concerned with "whether or not there is a social reality that exists independent of human conceptions and interpretations" (p.32). This definition implies that an individual's worldview - their perceptions and interpretations of society, is socially constructed. Epistemology, on the other hand, is the study of knowledge, simply put by Crotty (1998), as the way we look at the world and make sense of it. Epistemology is concerned with what should be considered legitimate knowledge in a given field (Bryman, 2008)

In this section, I hope to explain my ontological and epistemological positions and how those positions affected my research methods and ethics. Beck (1979) argues that



"the purpose for social science is to understand the social reality as different people see it and demonstrate how their views shape the action which they take within that reality" (quoted in Anderson et al., 2003, p.153). To this end, investigating my ontological and epistemological positions is essential as it will allow me to reflect on how my perceptions have impacted my research topic and methodological considerations therein.

### **My Ontological Stance**

In many respects, my ontological position is grounded in a critical paradigm and is primarily shaped by my life growing up and professional experiences. Horkheimer (1982), who is a member of the Frankfurt school that founded critical theory, observes that "critical theory seeks to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them" (p.244). This definition implies that critical theorists must identify and explore the problem with the current social reality and provide strategies and actions to transform it (Asghar,2013). As a researcher, I hold that my social reality as I experience it today is historically constituted and has been maintained through reproduction. While I am cognizant of the power of individuals to consciously act and transform their world, I also acknowledge that doing so requires one to rise above the restrictive social, political, and cultural conditions that seek to maintain the status quo (Horkheimer, 2002). Noteworthy, I grew up in a family of 8 siblings (five sisters and three brothers), and as a last born, I saw my sisters challenge and disrupt the patriarchal system that gendered house chores. Ultimately, each family member would contribute equally to the family goals regardless of gender and age. This experience imbued in me the capability of individuals to rise above the oppressive structures in society and the ability of people to create their reality and truth. This perception was further reinforced through my experiences at the workplace. I witnessed individuals challenge what was considered "truth" at the workplace. Through innovation, new knowledge would often emerge during the interaction, and truth claims were a fluid concept. The new knowledge would be institutionalized as the new "truth" until innovations emerged to challenge it. These experiences shaped my worldview, and I hold that human beings should challenge the status quo and strive for a more equal and just society.

My choice of this research topic was greatly influenced by the six years I spent working on community education programs that promoted the participation of youth, women, and persons with disabilities in democracy and empowering them to be productive members of their society. I argue that education approaches, like other social phenomena, are produced and reproduced by people until they become taken for granted approaches that educators use when carrying out their civic education programs. This research seeks to investigate and bring to light civic education approaches that, in my view, have the potential of being emancipatory and those that are likely to promote domination.

### **My epistemological stance**

The epistemological position I mostly carry in this research is rooted in Freire's concept of critical consciousness. Freire defines critical consciousness as the "ability to intervene in reality to change it" (Freire, 2005, p.4). Closely linked to this definition is Thomas et al.'s view of critical consciousness as the "ability to critically evaluate situations and then take action against societal inequities"( Thomas et al., 2014, p.2). Drawing from the above definitions, construction of critical consciousness can be understood in three ways; critical reflection, critical motivation, and critical action (Diemer et al., 2016). Critical reflection is the ability to be aware of power relationships and learn to question the existing oppressive social structures. Awareness of the dehumanizing social conditions is necessary but not the only condition for humans to develop the agency to change their society. Hope as a possibility of change then becomes an instrumental catalyst for Critical Motivation - the ability to perceive the capacity of individuals and commitment to resisting oppression. Finally, individuals must understand the power of human agency and strive to address the oppressive elements of their reality, a condition that calls for critical action. Critical action involves engaging individually or collectively in deconstructing the perceived oppressive structures.

Central to this research is Freire's conceptualization of human interaction with others and the world and his notion of praxis. According to Freire, humans are beings of relationships; they are not only "in the world" but "with the world" (Freire,1993, p.46).

Furthermore, this relationship with the world is not passive; men integrate with reality to "name the world" (Freire, 2005, p. 50). In this sense, knowledge is not static as men are not limited to their history and constantly engage with others and the world to make their societies more just and equal. This critical consciousness is achieved through a form of education. Torres (2021), borrowing from the Hegelian model, argues that the role of education can be understood in two bipolar epistemological notions; Firstly, the role of education in offering counter hegemonic praxis for the marginalized to overcome their oppression, and secondly, the role of education in sustaining models of domination through reproducing social structures that validate the authority of the capitalists. This research adopts the former view of the role of education.

Though formal education has the potential to foster critical consciousness, this research investigates civic education in a non-formal setting as I deem it as one of the most suitable for stimulating the critical perception individuals require to intervene in their reality. This view is also affirmed in the conversation between Freire and Shor when they argue that Adult Education is more effective in social movements and communities than in formal education (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 39). However, it is instructive to note that Freire and Shor acknowledged that education in both classrooms and social movements is vital in fostering critical consciousness.

Further, Freire's view that humans' ability to be critical is what separates them from other animals has hugely influenced my epistemological stance. Unlike other animals, humans can apprehend their reality through reflection and liberate themselves from the challenges they face. Therefore, men are temporal beings in a continuous process of being fully human (Freire, 2005, p. 36). To this end, the world is seen as an objective reality capable of being known and can be changed by human beings when they exercise their critical and creative dimension. Though Freire argues that objective truth exists, he posits that the understanding and the knowledge of that world are subjective.

Consciousness and the world cannot be understood separately, in a dichotomized fashion, but must be seen in their contradictory relations.

Consciousness is neither an arbitrary producer of the world or objectivity nor a pure reflection of the world.

(Freire, 2005, p.19)

This implies that objective reality and human beings should not be understood as separate but as being in a relationship, where men understand their world through their subjective lenses. Since we are in constant interaction with the objective world and because we have the ability to critically reflect and act on the world, we can transform it by "creating a reality which conditions our manner of acting" (Freire, 2005, p.102). This process of reflection and action is what Freire conceived as "praxis" and is the epistemological bedrock upon which this research will be rooted.

In addition, Freire emphasized the importance of individuals' lived experiences as a source of legitimate knowledge in the dialogue discourse (Freire, 1974). Since people have different social locations, knowledge should be understood in the context in which it was said and the perception of the person who said it. As such, this research takes the view that reality is a social construct and will explore the complexities of the nuanced multiple realities of the participants interviewed. This epistemological position is in sync with social constructionism, which views knowledge and truth as socially constructed. Social constructionism holds that there is no single truth and that reality is constructed through understanding the subjective meanings of our daily experiences. Charmaz's (2006) concept of social constructivism emphasizes "placing priority on the phenomena of study and seeing both data and analysis as created from shared experiences and relationships with participants and other sources" (p.330). Consequently, there are multiple meanings of reality, and as a researcher, my focus will be to explore the complex forms of knowledge instead of narrowing meanings.

### 3.2. My research Journey as a reflexive being

As a researcher, I was aware that my social and cultural realms have greatly influenced my understanding and interpretation of knowledge. In this sense, the assumptions and choices I have made have had a bearing on the research process.

Therefore, to approach the research process with an open mind and avoid imposing my interpretations on the research participants, I was obliged to trace the effects of my position in the research. According to Fook (1999), reflexivity is the "ability to recognize our own influence and the influence of our cultural and social contexts in research" (p.195). This view is also shared by Creswell (2003), who argues that during research, the " personal self becomes inseparable from the research self" (p. 182). This argument implies that all researchers should be self-aware and need to recognize the role their history plays in their current thinking. I embedded the reflexive process in all the stages of the research process, intending to continuously challenge my unexamined assumptions integral to my thinking and allow the possibility to learn from others. In keeping with Fook's concept of reflexivity, I kept a research diary as my reflexive tool in the research process. In the research diary, I captured my feelings, impressions, and experiences during the interview process. By the end of each interview day, I would write detailed interview notes explaining the activities undertaken, lessons learned during the day, and the key areas that required further exploration. This process enabled me to construct my social realities constantly during my research participants' interactions. Perhaps, one of the key impacts this reflexive process has had on me was the realization of the complexity of power and the process of achieving social change. I believed that with effective empowerment programs, social change could "easily" be achieved. However, I have since learned that achieving social change is a complex process, and sometimes it can be slow and happen in invisible ways.

### **3.3 Qualitative Interviews: Traveling along with my participants**

This study sought to investigate the perceptions of CSOs on the approaches used in youth civic education programs. Perceptions are non-measurable phenomena, so the research adopted a qualitative method. The data collection techniques within the qualitative method vary depending on the objectives and specific needs of the study. The method deemed the most suitable in this research was the semi-structured interviews. The main characteristic of interviews is that they use questions to gain insights into a person's subjective experiences, opinions, and motivations '(Busetto et al., 2020, p. 21). Semi-structured interviews were preferred as the questions designed

were open-ended to allow maximum flexibility and exploration of issues under investigation. This approach ensured depth in the discussions. In addition, the predetermined research questions served as a guide and allowed me to travel along with my participants as I learned to understand the world with them.

### **3.4 Ethical Considerations**

I considered ethics to be a crucial component when conducting this research. According to Hammersley and Traianou (2012), all research has the potential to cause personal or professional problems. To this end, I assessed the ethical implications my research could have throughout the research process. The study sought to investigate civic education issues in Kenya. However, the persistence of Covid-19 meant I had to conduct the interviews online. Consequently, ethical issues such as voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, and data security and protection were considered.

The participants' informed consent and voluntary participation were obtained before the interview sessions. In addition, I was cognizant of and respected a participant's wish to withdraw their consent during the research process. Further, I shared an information sheet online (in both email and Whatsapp) that thoroughly explained all aspects of the research process, including the limits to confidentiality and a consent form. The information sheet ensured that the participants were sufficiently informed about the research before participating. Further, I treated the participant's identity as confidential throughout the research process, and no person or organization's names were revealed. In addition, the data collected was anonymized. Participants were only identified by their pseudonym names during the verbatim quotes. This process was done while ensuring the protection of participants' identities and maintaining the data's integrity and value.

Since the interviews were online, the participants were asked to be in a private and quiet environment to avoid interruption. However, some participants opted to participate in the interviews in a public environment. I reminded the participants of their right to privacy, and we proceeded with the interview once I got assurance that they were

comfortable in such an environment. The data minimization principle was observed through carefully designing interview questions that required participants to provide only the minimum amount of personal data relevant to the study. However, during the introduction sessions, some participants did share personal data. I informed the participants of their freedom to exercise their right to erasure by asking for the deletion of any additional information that is not relevant to the research and rectifying any incorrect data they may share during the research process. Information that could lead to traceability of the participants was omitted.

The data collection was electronic, and interviews were conducted through the Maynooth University Microsoft Teams. The data was stored in the university server in the Maynooth University OneDrive (Office 365). The university platform is secure and is fitted with the appropriate firewalls. The recordings were further secured using passwords and encryption. In addition, the recordings were labeled and organized to allow for easy verification and retrieval.

### 3.5 Data Coding Process

The data collection process gave me informative data. Unfortunately, I could not use all of it due to the limited requirements of this thesis. Consequently, I had to make deliberate decisions to reduce the data by selecting the most relevant information that speaks to my research question and aims. The information that was outside the scope of my research was omitted. I did this through a process called coding. Kerlinger (1970) describes data coding as the process of assigning responses of the respondents to given categories for purposes of analysis. I conducted a line-by-line coding and analyzed the codes to generate themes based on the research questions. The coding processes developed four themes; 1. CSO's motivation and perception of the issue. 2. Positioning the Youth demographic within civic education. 3. Civic Education Approaches used. 4. Challenges.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has highlighted key issues that guided my research methodology. The chapter started by examining my ontological and epistemological positions. My worldview and source of legitimate knowledge were rooted in need to critically examine

power structures and the need for human beings to activate their agency in transforming society. My philosophical assumptions influenced my research design, and I adopted a critical paradigm in the research study. Consequently, I used semi-structured interviews to collect my data, an approach that falls under the qualitative data collection method. I further explored my reflexive journey throughout the research process and its impact on the research and myself. In addition, the chapter examined the ethical considerations I took to protect the integrity of the data and the safety of the participants and myself. The chapter then highlighted the process I took to code and analyzed the data collected.



## **Chapter Four: Findings**

### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter will describe the key findings from the data generated through coding and thematic analysis. It is important to note that I set out to investigate the approaches used by CSOs in their civic education programs to promote youth participation in political processes in Kenya. The need for young people's participation in political processes has attracted the attention of both government and civil societies in recent years, and programs have been developed targeting the youth to promote their participation in political processes. However, as pointed out in the literature review, youth participation is relatively low and is a concern for achieving democratic societies. Given the centrality of pedagogy in imparting the requisite civic knowledge, skills, and attitudes among individuals for democratic participation, my research question aimed to understand the current civic education pedagogies used by CSOs in their civic education programs by evaluating the approaches and strategies they use in their youth civic engagement.

This chapter will adopt a theme-based structure where I will discuss the themes generated during coding and thematic analysis. The analysis identified four main broad themes; 1. CSOs' motivation and perception of the issue. 2. Positioning the Youth demographic within civic education. 3. Civic Education Approaches used. 4. Challenges. In each thematic section, I will explain what the theme entails and what it excludes. The claims made in the description will be supported by at least one interview extract. Finally, at the end of each section, I will draw the discussion's linkage or contrast with the other themes.

### **4.1 Civil Society Organizations' motivation and perception of the issue**

One of the questions I asked my participants was how they ended up working in the civic education field. This question aimed to understand the participants' background and the values they perceive as critical regarding youth participation in the political

process. Different views emerged in the discussions, and this section will discuss the motivations and CSO values.

#### **4.1.1 Career-related motivations**

The participants were involved in the youth civic education programs based on various motivations. Some respondents observed that they were in the civic space for career reasons. They had worked with different organizations on projects that focused on inclusion and diversity. In addition, some participants had ended up in the field as they had studied courses that leaned towards the empowerment of people around civic and political rights. The experiences propelled them to the current organizations they are working for. One of the respondents opined;

Well, It's more of my background. It's what I've done for a long time. I have been in the youth space working on leadership and governance and ways to get young people more involved in social accountability but also participation in leadership.

#### **4.1.2 Passion emerged from civic and community engagement experiences.**

Some of the engaged participants reported developing their passion for youth and political participation due to their early experiences in community work. Some gained the experiences during high school, while others got involved in community work after completing their high school education. The community involvement ranged from human rights discourses to community volunteering. One of the respondents reported, "In high school, I was also involved in human rights discourse and civic empowerment activities that gave me the interest to delve deeper into governance issues ."Some of those who volunteered in community work opined that they did so as it was a culture amongst the youth in the community to team up and form voluntary groups that addressed various challenges facing their community. One respondent reported that;

I grew up in a low-income community, a slum as it is described in some places. Of course, in such situations, there are poverty-related problems, and so you will

find that in places like that, in spaces like that, youth tries to come up with initiatives to address some of the challenges experienced in the area...And so, just like every other youth there, we formed youth groups to address different issues.

#### **4.1.3 Demand from the youth**

Some of the participants observed that they developed programs to promote youth participation in electoral processes out of the feedback they received while running other youth programs addressing different youth issues such as peace. One respondent reported that;

During that time, we were running a program called Zero radicalization. However, when we were doing this campaign, young people were saying the problem they were facing as young people was the election of bad leaders. So, in our programming, we started sensitizing young people on the importance of having good leaders in power.

In Summary, this section has described some of the main motivations and perceptions of the civil society organizations regarding youth, political participation, and decision-making. While some CSOs ventured into civic education for career reasons, others ended up in the field due to their passion and need to address the youth challenges their communities were facing. These values may have been developed when volunteering in civic and community projects at an early age or while running other projects that targeted the youth.

Understanding the CSOs' motivation and perceptions of youth and political participation is critical as it lays the foundation for the other generated themes. The values the CSOs hold on young people and political participation are the guiding factor in how they position the youth within their civic education programs, the approaches they will use, and how they will address the challenges faced while running the youth civic education programs.

## **4.2 Positioning the Youth demographic within civic education**

This theme will describe issues of youth participation in the civic education programs regarding how the youth are recruited to participate in the civic education activities and the voice of the young people within the CSOs' civic education programs.

### **4.2.1 Encouraging youth participation in civic education activities**

The dominant methods of encouraging youth participation in civic education programs centered around using spaces where youth are most comfortable and capitalizing on existing structures and events where youth are already mobilized. Most CSOs reported that civic education was most effective when they engaged youth in their hangout spaces. The CSOs aimed to go where the young people were, whether in areas where the youth worked or at socializing events. One respondent observed, "we go to where the youth are, to engage with them at their preferred venue." In addition, the CSOs took advantage of social events such as drama and music festivals, sporting activities, and religious platforms to reach out to the youth. One respondent noted that "we use social events such as sporting activities to pass voter education messages. We liaise with the organizers of the social events to get slots and conduct voter education". This strategy represented a shift from the traditional method of CSOs youth engagement, where youth would be invited to a hotel for a civic education forum. However, that notwithstanding, the CSOs reported that the civic education meetings were still being used. Holding of meetings was implied by a respondent who stated that " If you call youth for the first and second meetings without giving out transport, I can assure you that the third meeting you will be alone regardless of what information you want to give out ."This statement further suggested that CSOs used incentives to encourage youth to attend civic education programs. The motivations were in the form of transport reimbursement and the provision of food and drinks. Though the CSOs lamented that giving incentives made the running of the civic education programs costly, they observed that the youth would not attend the CSOs' civic education without incentives. One respondent attested that;

Distributing and sharing knowledge of citizenship is expensive because apart from buying people a bottle of soda, participants would still claim they have wasted their time attending your forum, and you need to facilitate their transport.

However, one respondent reported that they operate voluntarily and ask the youth to volunteer in the CSO activities. Through volunteering, the young people get an opportunity to interact with the electoral process and, by doing so, get a first experience in the way elections are managed, thereby improving their confidence in electoral processes. The youth volunteers would be awarded certificates of recognition to give them an edge when applying for jobs in the electoral management body. One participant recounted that;

We give recommendation letters to the volunteers. Those who participated in the volunteering get paying opportunities in electoral processes. When the youth serve as volunteers in election observation, they get a chance to see the vote count, and this changes their attitude as most youths believe that the voters cast are not the ones that are counted.

#### **4. 2.2 The Voice of Youth in the civic education programs**

I sought to find out how the CSO involved young people in programming, particularly on the influence of youth on curriculum and material development and the choice of the approaches used by the CSOs. It was observed that the extent to which the youth influenced the CSO civic education program varied greatly.

Most CSOs reported incorporating youths' voices in every phase of material and curriculum development. For example, the CSOs organized workshops where young people would contribute to the materials developed. Young people were also engaged online, and their views were captured in the material development process. This view is according to a respondent who narrated that;

Yeah, we involve the youth in all the activities. We even involve the young people in aspects like the design of the project logos; we ask them to design and put it in a competition, and the logo that gets the most likes is selected.

However, some CSOs observed that curriculum development requires technical expertise, so they engage professional bodies to design and prepare the materials. For example, one respondent reported that " curriculum is content and is done professionally and so we engage Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) and other experts." Another respondent also shared this view and reported that the CSO uses a Curriculum and materials developed and approved by the election management body. " We get most of our materials on voter education from the electoral management body and I cannot recommend any document that is not approved by IEBC."

Most CSOs reported that the youth demographic influenced the approach the CSO adopted. To ensure the CSOs adopted effective strategies for the target youth group, the organizations partnered with local CSOs in the different counties interacting directly with youth in local areas. The young people in the various counties identified the suitable approaches and issues of concern that the CSOs should prioritize in the programming. One respondent reported,

We also have a program development specialist who supports us through a conversation with the national focal points, who are representatives from the 47 counties, so that we understand the operational needs of young people and how to approach each youth demographic because one approach does not work for all.

Another respondent cautioned that adopting an approach without involving the youths may lead to poor engagement. While giving an example of cultural factors where an engagement may fail to be fruitful when you combine males and females in the same meeting, the respondent opined:

...so, if you had involved them from the beginning when you were planning, they would have told you this early enough that it is not going to work the way you are saying. Then, they would give suggestions that would yield to a better engagement.

In conclusion, positioning youths' voices within civic education have highlighted how the young people, who are beneficiaries of the civic education programs, are encouraged to participate in the civic education activities and their influence in determining the priority issues and the approaches. The CSOs involve youth at varying degrees from the conceptualization level, such as planning and material development, to the consumption level on the choice of the approaches to be used. In most instances, the youth are incentivized to participate in civic education activities. However, some young people participate voluntarily. Therefore, understanding how CSOs positioned young people's voices in civic education is essential in putting into perspective the approaches adopted.

### **4.3 CSO Approaches to youth Civic Education**

This theme describes the approaches that CSOs use to promote youth participation in governance and decision-making processes. The literature reviewed defined civic education as the process of providing learning experiences and information to empower citizens to participate meaningfully in democratic processes. To this end, CSOs used approaches to equipping the citizens with the requisite skills, attitudes, and dispositions for meaningful participation. Approaches are the teaching and learning styles of the CSOs in their youth civic education programs. Most participants reported that they used targeted youth approaches to ensure effective engagement and empowerment of the youth. One of the respondents said that.

Most certainly, youth are diverse. We constantly vary these approaches depending on the context, depending on the location, depending on the demographic, depending on the literacy level, depending on gender, male or female, depending on the faith.

Some of the approaches that the CSOs most commonly use are described below.

#### **4.3.1 Technology-based approaches**

The respondents reported that they found technology-based approaches practical to the youth from urban areas. The youth in urban areas are tech-savvy, have access to the Internet, and have gadgets that support online engagement. One respondent opined,

"The digital approaches work for youth in urban areas and those who have access to the internet and gadgets that can allow them to have digital conversations." In technology-based learning approaches, CSOs reported using strategies such as twit chats, Facebook lives, circulating information on WhatsApp and emails, uploading relevant information on the CSO websites, and using zoom for online civic education engagements. This view is evidenced by one of the respondents who noted that;

Many more youths now have smartphones, emails, and access to the Internet, so we try and share information on WhatsApp, have zoom calls for training and learning, and post a lot of information on our website so that youth can access them.

#### **4.3.2 Use of mainstream media and art**

The CSOs noted that it was essential for young people to deconstruct information in palatable ways. To this end, CSOs co-opted civic education messages through art and media, which young people find attractive. The strategies used in this approach included edutainment, dissemination, and airing of catchy video clips and audio messages on civic issues and holding talk shows on community radios and TV stations. One respondent opined;

We usually have media campaigns. Our content is in the form of talk shows, but we try as much as possible to use edutainment for the youth. So they can be short plays with a lot of humor, and we run them on radio and TV stations.

The mainstream media was considered helpful in disseminating civic education messages to a broader population, especially youth from rural areas that are sparsely populated.

Some of the CSOs used art to convey civic education messages. For example, graffiti was commonly used where the CSOs would paint murals in strategic places with civic education messages. One of the respondents observed, "We also use graffiti. We support young people to paint and draw murals in strategic places in different areas with messages on good governance, citizen participation etc."



### **4.3.3 Use of sports, music, and drama festival**

CSOs took advantage of scheduled events within the community to disseminate civic education messages. For example, some CSOs sponsored youth tournaments to bring youth together and used the opportunity to offer civic education. In addition, drama and music festivals are annual school events organized by the ministry of education. The students compete in developing songs and short plays in various thematic areas at different levels. The CSOs sponsored themes on democracy, good governance, and civic engagement. "We influence the themes to be used in the dramas and songs for the schools," reported one respondent.

### **4.3.4 Capacity and skills development**

The CSOs opined that increasing youth participation in democracy and decision-making processes involves equipping them with leadership skills and the necessary support they require to run for elective positions. To this end, the CSOs train youth aspirants to increase their competitiveness during elections. One respondent claimed;

As we are approaching general elections on August 9th, 2022, we are focused on having leadership capacity training for youth and women aspirants, more so in how to package themselves, communication, personal etiquette, and even how to conduct campaigns.

The youths who are not seeking elective positions are capacity built around constitution and constitutionalism to increase their effective participation in the county and national governance. One of the respondents observed that "the most important thing for us is just to enhance their capacities and skills in drafting the memorandums. Doing a structured petition that the government can act on."

### **4.3.5 Holding forums and roundtable meetings**

The CSOs hold civic engagement forums with the youth, inviting speakers to address the young people on civic engagement. In some cases, the youth themselves become the speakers. In addition, roundtable discussions are organized where the CSOs

facilitate a meeting between the young people and duty bearers. One respondent observed that;

We hold forums with youth leaders, students from clubs, associations, classes, and faculties. We would sometimes bring speakers to those forums. At the same time, in other cases, the youth themselves would be the main speakers and sensitize their fellow young people on the importance of political participation.

This study found that there is a general acceptance among the CSOs that taking the meetings to the spaces where the youth are comfortable yields better engagement. One respondent opined,

The other thing about the information is going to the spaces where young people are most comfortable rather than calling them for a half-day meeting in a big hotel in the city. If we can find them in the spaces that they are most comfortable with, then we can have deep and meaningful conversations about how to participate.

#### **4.3.6 Roadshows**

CSOs organized road shows where they hire a van and entertainment. The entertainment can be in songs, theater, and puppetry. In between, the entertainment dissemination of voter education messages occurred. "We also use roadshows, where you hire a van with entertainment and in between the entertainment you pass the civic education messages to young people," observed one respondent.

#### **4.4 Challenges faced by the CSOs on youth civic education**

This theme focuses on the challenges the CSOs when running youth civic education programs. To this end, challenges that are faced by CSOs when undertaking other programs will be excluded.

Some of the challenges that CSOs face include the following:

#### **4.4.1 Financial challenges**

The CSOs bemoaned the dimming financial base of the sector. It was challenging to fundraise for sufficient and continuous funding for youth civic education programs, and the dependency on donors affected the sustainability of youth civic education. One respondent reported,

Financial challenges impact the duration of the process you are undertaking, and as you know, advocacy work is not a one-off engagement. Instead, advocacy work is a continuous engagement.

In addition, the cost of bankrolling youth civic education is high as the youth preferences keep changing very fast. Thus, keeping up with the most creative and innovative ways of engaging the youth becomes challenging. One respondent reported that;

It is not always easy to bankroll civic education in its creative ways. There are the ways of working that we are used to, so you know change is a process, so maybe it would not happen fast enough to keep up with young people.

#### **4.4.2 The demand for incentives from the youth**

Collins et al. (2008) define incentives as the intangible or tangible rewards used to motivate a group of people or a person to behave in a particular way. For example, the youth are not interested in political processes and therefore require incentives to participate in the CSOs' civic education activities. Collins *et al.* further argue that incentives can motivate individuals to continue their involvement in civic education activities. As discussed in the second theme under the encouraging youth participation section, the young people demand transport reimbursement and the provision of food and drinks whenever they attend CSOs' civic education forums. These incentives, compounded by the fact that most CSOs do not raise sufficient funding, make it difficult for the CSOs to run civic education efficiently. One of the respondents noted, "It is almost impossible for CSOs to conduct civic education activities without giving people incentives in form of transport."

#### **4.4.3 Youth perception and attitudes towards political participation**

The youth are disillusioned and do not see the need to participate in electoral processes. They do not feel that their participation in the political processes can improve the quality of their daily lives. In addition, maintaining the status quo where the same politicians who failed to deliver before seek to be elected on a different political party contributed to youth apathy. One respondent sums this up and opined that;

It is the same system and people, so they have not seen any change, which just disillusioned them. They do not see any improvement in their day-to-day life. So, it doesn't matter whether they participate or not. It has not gotten into their minds that if I participate, I have an opportunity to change that system.

In addition, the respondents suggested that the youth lack trust in the electoral management body (EMB) and perceive the EMB as biased and unable to deliver free and fair elections. To this end, the youth argue that their participation in the process does not count as the outcome will be manipulated. One respondent stated, "The youth think that politicians have a hand in appointing the chairpersons of the EMB and so they cannot be objective." Another respondent added, "So when young people feel that politicians had a hand in the appointments of EMB commissioners, the integrity of the election suffers."

The lack of visionary leaders and poor service delivery also contributed to the youth's negative attitude toward electoral participation. Contributing to the challenges faced by CSOs in their civic education programs, one respondent noted that "The lack of posterity mindset of the elected leaders is what is leading to apathy." Another respondent added, "Politicians are not visionary, and that is why they give handouts."

#### **4.4.4 Challenges in technology-based approaches**

Some challenges to technology-based learning approaches used by CSOs included a lack of accessibility to smartphones and the Internet to all the targeted youth. In addition, not all young people can access computers when conducting zoom meetings. Therefore, it is not easy to bring on board all the targeted youth using technology-based

approaches. One respondent reported, "...So therein lies the challenge in how we make sure that whenever we are using technology-based kinds of learning, we can have all of them (youth) on board."

## Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the main aims of the research and linked them to the themes generated during the data coding and thematic analysis. First, the study looked at the approaches used by CSOs in their civic education program. This move aimed to understand the pedagogies the CSOs use. In addition, the chapter described four themes. First, the theme of CSO motivation and perception of the issue highlighted the values that the CSOs hold concerning youth civic education programs. Further, the theme of positioning youth voices within civic education described the strategies used by CSOs to encourage youth participation and the extent to which the youth influence the CSOs' programming from conception to consumption.

The third theme presented the different methods the CSOs use in their youth civic education. Some approaches included technology-based learning approaches, media and art, sports, drama and music festivals, capacity and skills development, and holding forums and roundtable meetings. The chapter further described the challenges of the CSOs when implementing youth civic education programs. Some challenges included financial incentives, technology-based challenges, and the youth perception and attitudes towards political participation.

## **Chapter Five: Discussion of Findings**

### **5.1 Overview**

The research aim of this study is to evaluate the approaches used by Civil Society Organizations in Kenya to promote the participation of youth in political processes. The study also seeks to propose the adoption of critical pedagogy by CSOs to promote the democracy of critical citizens.

The data suggested that the approaches used by CSOs can be categorized as practitioner-centered or youth-centered, depending on the level of youth engagement. Practitioner-centered techniques showed low levels of youth participation, while the youth-centered approaches had a greater degree of youth participation. In general, this chapter finds that the approaches deployed lean towards deliberative and social contract pedagogies as they are founded on the white normative ideals of the discursive democracy. However, some of the methods had elements of critical pedagogy. The chapter argues that more can be done from an education viewpoint to elicit the motivations and equip the youth with the knowledge to be active transformative agents in society. The chapter makes a case for a Freirean critical pedagogy that is rooted in the idea that all human beings can transform their society to make it more equal and just. The chapter underscores the centrality of the ontological positions of the educators in shaping how the youth learn.

### **5.2 Discussion of Findings**

Eight staff drawn from civil society organizations running youth civic education programs in Kenya agreed to be virtually interviewed and participated in this study. The staff shared their experiences, perceptions, and attitudes regarding approaches their CSOs deploy in the youth civic education programs. The discussion adopts a theme-based structure and will be organized into four themes: 1. practitioner values and ontological position, 2. modes of youth engagement, 3. challenges and barriers, and 4 towards a critical pedagogy. The chapter will draw from the findings described in chapter four.

### **5.2.1. Practitioner Values and Ontological positions**

It is well established in the literature review that the values and ontological positions practitioners bring into the youth civic education field are vital in determining how the youth shapes their knowledge (Messa, Celis & Sande, 2014; Han, Yin, & Wang, 2016; Kim & Schallert, 2014). The values are also crucial in influencing civil society organizations' approaches in their civic education program. This study found that educators are engaging the youth in a meaningful way. The educator's view of the youth is one of positivity, one that acknowledges the importance of engaging this large population cohort for the future democracy of Kenya. The results of this study suggested that CSOs whose worldviews were shaped by the belief that the youth is a resource developed approaches informed by the understanding that the youth have the knowledge and are already implementing some solutions in their own right. To this end, the pedagogical aspects adopted by the CSOs to engage the youth aimed at listening to them rather than telling them what they need to do. As a result, the CSOs designed youth civic education programs that fostered the need for the youth to use local solutions to solve local challenges.

On the other hand, the CSOs in the field, for career reasons, tended to adopt the educator-centered approaches to youth civic engagement. They preferred approaches with low youth engagement levels and focused on disseminating civic education messages. However, this research found that in both cases, the CSOs seemed to agree on the importance of factoring in the youth needs when implementing civic education programs.

Further, evidence suggests that the CSOs care about what they are doing. They are passionate about social justice and equality. It will be recalled that one of the participants observed that the CSOs focused on equipping the youth with skills for meaningful engagement in leadership and political processes to reduce youth marginalization. This finding corresponds with the motivations that underpin critical approaches to civic education. As discussed in the literature reviewed, critical pedagogy aims at identifying social injustices in society and lays hope in the ability of

human beings to transform their society through praxis(Freire, 1970). The findings suggested that CSOs' aim at capacity building the youth in leadership was meant to increase the youth in leadership positions so that they can influence the decisions being made that affect their lives. In addition, CSOs supported the youth with skills and capacities to help them identify and solve societal problems. This was achieved by encouraging the youth to develop interventions to solve local challenges. The findings demonstrated that CSOs worked with community-based youth groups in different counties and supported them in petitioning the county government structures to take action and solve the county youth challenges.

Olafson &Schraw (2006) advanced the idea that educators' personal beliefs influence what they do and their behavior in the classroom. These findings could not sufficiently link the behavior of educators in a forum and meeting with the pedagogical outcomes of the engagement. However, there was a direct link between the educator's beliefs and how that impacted the knowledge acquisition and perceptions of the youth. It will be recalled from the findings chapter that the CSOs who were operating as volunteers influenced the youth to volunteer on civic issues. On the contrary, the CSOs who gave youth incentives to encourage participation believed that youth would not attend civic education activities if they did not facilitate them with transport reimbursement.

### **5.2.2 Modes of engagement**

Following on from the discussion above, where this thesis has demonstrated how the practitioners' values influence youth civic education, the paper will now look at how these values and ontological positions manifest themselves in the different modes of engagement.

Based on the literature reviewed, it is widely acknowledged that the youth face unique challenges that hinder their participation in political processes(Quintelier, 2007, King, 2020). Furthermore, even within the youth constituent, different youth demographics have their own unique needs. The results of this study support the above claim and suggest that the diversity and non-homogeneity of youth should be factored in when designing civic education programs. In addition, the different youth needs and



challenges should influence the approaches to youth civic education for better youth engagement. This view is in line with Highton and Wolfinger (2001), who argue that negotiating the interplay between personal and economic changes is challenging in the youth phase. From the findings, youth factors such as culture, religion, age, sex, location, literacy levels, the youth demographic, and context are vital considerations when adopting a civic education approach. To this end, there was evidence of multiple-pronged approaches that CSOs adopted in their civic engagement programs.

The results suggested two modes of engagement. Some CSOs leaned towards youth-centered approaches, while there was evidence of other CSOs who implemented practitioner-centered approaches. In addition, the data suggested that most CSOs varied their approaches depending on the characteristics of the targeted youth group. However, in both modes of engagement, there were commonalities across the CSOs' approaches.

### **Commonalities in the CSOs' modes of engagement**

Drawing from the findings, there is a commonality of a belief and the importance of attempting to reach sections of society that are hard to reach. In the haste to innovate and conduct youth civic education across the country, there are risks that some areas of youth are left behind. Hard-to-reach youth groups are challenging to engage in public discussion, and thus their needs are not considered (McCulloch, 2020). As a result, these groups of young people are often "forgotten" by mainstream civic education. It will be recalled that one of the participants observed the CSO targeted youth in institutions of higher learning since CSOs had ignored this demographic for a long time. Opening up civic engagement with these groups is crucial in strengthening the democracy of a nation. Democratic outcomes are improved when citizens feel connected and engaged and have a buy-in to the processes (McCulloch, 2020). The findings suggested that CSOs employed targeted approaches to the hard-to-reach youth groups and adapted the language to ensure meaningful engagement. Based on the findings, CSOs used peer-to-peer education strategies and invited local speakers who connected with the targeted youth to increase the effectiveness of civic education.

Further, this study finds that there is also a concerted effort to reach the youth at their level, in the youth terms, and in spaces that will yield better engagement. As argued in the literature review, the youth face unique needs and do not see political participation as a priority. In addition, the literature suggests that youth are apathetic to traditional approaches to civic engagement (Ward, 2010). This argument corresponds with the claims from the findings suggesting that the youth are disillusioned and do not see the need to participate in electoral processes. To this end, CSOs have been innovative in finding ways to engage the youth in spaces that are most comfortable to them and in a language that they find interesting. Engaging the youth on their terms allowed the CSOs to capture the interests of youth on civic issues. This interest was then transferred to other civic or political participation (Ward, 2010). From the findings, there is a deliberate effort of the CSOs to engage the youth in their workplaces, institutions of higher learning, community youth groups and social gatherings. The CSOs view these spaces as avenues where youth are not intimidated and can meaningfully have their voices heard.

### **Youth-Centered Approaches to civic engagement**

This study found that the CSOs' approaches to civic education showed elements of participatory engagement with the youth. As discussed in the literature reviewed, the youth-centered approach sees youth as active agents. The youth bring their own past experiences, knowledge, skills, and ideas into the civic engagement, and this affects how the youth bring on board new civic information (Vavrus, F., Thomas, M. and Bartlett, L., 2011). Youth-centered approaches put the needs of the youth at the center of the learning experiences. Consequently, content is designed from the youth's perspective rather than the educator's. Employing collaborative learning techniques is vital to ensuring the youth build a connection between each youth and the civic education information presented (Lawless, 2019).

As discussed in the literature, Flom (2013) suggests three critical characteristics of learner-centered approaches.

1. Learner-centered approaches encourage student reflection

The youth can reflect on what they are learning and how they are learning it. In addition, the approaches challenge the youths' assumption of political participation and encourage them to take responsibility for their decisions.

## 2. Motivates the Youth by giving them control over learning processes

Youth-centered approaches do not treat the youth as "blank slates" but see them as active participants in the learning process. The youth share power with the educators during civic education and are allowed to develop content and determine the best strategies for effective civic education.

## 3. Problem-posing

As argued in the literature, adults learn best when they feel like they are solving real problems and learning skills they can apply in the real world. Educators should pose political participation problems and ask the youth to develop innovative solutions.

One of the participants stated that the CSOs involve the youth in all activities, including making logos. In addition, the findings suggested that some CSOs go to the youth to listen to them and not to tell them what they need to do. According to the findings, the approaches that seemed to have a greater level of youth participation included role playing, peer-to-peer engagement, and the use of art. Despite the attempt by the CSOs to implement youth-centered approaches, this study finds that there is a need to improve the level of youth engagement to critically evaluate their societal challenges to transform them. Though the youth were involved in most of the activities of the program, from conceptualization to the implementation, the studies could not strongly link the engagement of the youth to the creative reflection and problem posing aspects of youth-centered approaches. As discussed in the fourth theme (5.2.4), these two tenets are vital components in transforming society.

## **Practitioner-Centered Approaches.**

The findings gave a varied picture of the approaches used by CSOs. While some approaches showed participatory aspects, most youth civic education approaches had

banking concept elements. The approaches implemented by the CSOs aimed at increasing the knowledge among the youth on political processes. It will be recalled from the literature that practitioner-centered approaches are designed from the educator's perspective (Flom, 2013). The youth are treated as passive participants who receive civic information, and the learning experiences are not engaging. In this approach, there is little collaboration among learners, and the learners have little room to build more connections to enhance knowledge transfer. This study argues that, at best, practitioner-centered approaches produce "minimal" citizens (McLaughlin (1992). The findings suggested that using roadshows, sporting activities, mainstream media, drama and music festivals, and some aspects of the technology-based approaches and holding of forums leaned towards the banking concept of civic education. This phenomenon is demonstrated by one participant who observed that during road shows, they use entertainment, and in between entertainment, voter education messages are disseminated.

### **5.2.3 Challenges and Barriers**

Civil Society Organizations face a myriad of challenges and barriers in their operations. The study revealed two categories of challenges, internal challenges and external challenges.

#### **Internal Challenges**

Internal challenges mainly were linked to the dependence on donor funding. Musser (n.d) argues that the continuous dependency on donor funding by most African CSOs affects the sustainability of their programs. Consequently, CSOs are forced to go after short-term strategies of chasing funds that distract their missions. As pointed out in the findings, most CSOs lamented the decline of donor funding leading to unsustainable youth civic education programs. Finkel (2011) argues that repetition, interactive teaching methods, and training provided by respected sources are three essential conditions for effective civic education. This view is also shared by Browne (2013), who argues that citizens who attended civic education sessions at least three times exhibited more gains in their democratic disposition (p.3). The above argument corresponds with

the observations from one of the participants, who noted that advocacy work should be a continuous process. To this end, sufficient funding is critical in establishing sustainable civic education programs.

Tied to financial challenges is the issue of incentivizing youth civic engagement. From the findings, it can be deduced that the CSOs view it as more of a transactional relationship with the youth. Collins et al. (2008) define incentives as the various methods used to motivate and reward youth for participating in a program (p.1). As discussed above, Youths gain more democratic orientation by repetitively attending civic education sessions. However, with many competing interests of youth as they transition to adulthood coupled with their disillusionment in political processes, it becomes difficult to recruit young people to attend civic education programs. Most literature that reviews the use of incentives to promote participation suggests that incentives are effective in promoting youth attendance in a program (National Academy of Sciences, 2004; Russell, Mielke, & Reisner, 2008; Center for Civic Education, 2009). According to Collins (2008), some of the effective incentives across all age groups include food, financial incentives, and prizes (p.2). It is worth noting that the value of incentives can vary depending on the youth characteristics such as age and family background. The findings of this study showed that CSOs have been using incentives to motivate the youth to attend civic education programs. While incentives effectively promote attendance, CSOs should use them sparingly. Research indicates that with continuous use of incentives in a program, the participants begin relying on the incentives as the only source of motivation. To this end, it can be argued that incentives should be used primarily to pique the youths' interests in civic education programs. The CSOs should then diminish the incentives by raising and retaining the participant's intrinsic motivations for the civic education programs through strategies such as using activities that capture youth's interests, employment, leadership opportunities, and skill building.

### **External Challenges**

It is well established in the literature reviewed that the youth have a negative perception of participation in political processes. This negative attitude has been a contributing

factor to the increased youth disengagement in democratic processes. This study finds that the negative attitude has a knock-on effect on the approaches the CSOs use in their youth engagement. As one of the respondents pointed out, "Youth have lost hope and do not believe that their contribution matters in effecting change in the electoral processes ."As such, the approaches used by the CSOs should be those that inspire confidence in the ability of the youth to transform the political processes. This study argues that for the efficiency of the civic education programs, the approaches should predominantly focus on the local level issues and open up opportunities for the youth to engage with local leaders and drift away from general information-led youth civic education.

Further, CSOs observed that the diversity of youth meant that the approaches used were not reaching all the targeted youth audience. Each approach left out a significant youth population that the CSOs would have wanted to engage. One of the respondents noted that using technology-based approaches meant that the CSOs left out youth who had no gadgets that supported online engagement and youth who did not have access to the Internet. The use of a multi-pronged approach in the CSOs civic education program is therefore central to promoting youth participation in political processes. This study finds that no approach is more effective than the other and that the effectiveness of the civic education approach largely depends on the educator's ontological position, the youth characteristics, and the available resources.

#### **5.2.4: Towards a democratic model for critical citizenship**

It has been argued in the literature section that a rationale for civic education among the youth is based on the need to tackle the disengagement and marginalization of the youth in political processes. This view corresponds with the findings of this study which suggested that CSOs carried out youth civic education to promote their participation in governance and decision-making processes. Such an undertaking calls for a novel pedagogy that enables the youth to identify the existing societal injustices that perpetuate their marginalization and gain the solidarity and autonomy to take action against the oppressive structures. To this end, the pedagogical approach should be

rooted in the idea that citizens, in their ways, have the agency to transform their societies to be a better place. Therefore, the youth should be equipped with knowledge and dispositions that make them critical citizens who continuously give extraordinary scrutiny to their ordinary societal life with a view to discerning identities based on greed and self-interest and those founded on democratic principles (Giroux, 2009).

Given the above background, the next section will explore the effectiveness of the current approaches used by CSOs to equip the youth to be agents of social transformation.

### **Evaluating Current Practice from a Critical Perspective**

As noted in the discussion on theme 2; modes of engagement, the CSOs approaches can be categorized into two; educator-centered and youth-centered. To determine the extent to which these approaches promote a democracy of critical citizens, this study will use Freire's principles of critical pedagogy as the foundation against which the approaches will be evaluated. The Freirean critical pedagogical approach centers on the oppressed. It equips them with skills to be critical and consciously " unveil the world of oppression and through praxis commit themselves to transforming it" (Freire, 1970. p.10). The critical pedagogy views education as a political act and focuses on principles that critique power structures and promote marginalization and alienation. The pedagogy is also founded on the idea that emancipation must come from the marginalized and not the oppressor (Freire, 1970)

A fundamental principles of Freire's critical pedagogy is reflection and action (praxis). Real learning and radical changes occur when a society experiences dissatisfaction with given aspects of their current life. This condition is achieved when an educator provides situations where individuals can reflect critically on what they are doing, identify and analyze a problem, develop a plan of action to address the issue, implement it and evaluate it (Akom, A, 2009). In most cases, the first plan of action may solve part of the problem and not the root cause (Akom, A, 2009). To this end, by ensuring regular reflection and action in which the group celebrates their small wins and

critically analyzes their mistakes, the individuals will become more capable of transforming their society.

Another important principle in Freire's critical pedagogy is conscientization. As defined in the literature review, conscientization is a process of reflection and action through which individuals develop a critical awareness of their social reality (Freire, 1970). Through consciousness raising, individuals become engaged in democratic, humanistic, and transformative practices, and they do not passively interact with their reality. Instead, they become "knowing subjects who gain deepening awareness of both the social-political realities that shape their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality" (Llyod, 1992). According to Freire, for transformation to occur, individuals must first critically conceptualize how their reality comes into being. This conceptualization then allows individuals to create transforming actions aimed at creating new realities for a just society. This research argues that conscientization is the backbone through which the youth would gain the capacity to become aware of their ability to challenge the status quo and transform their lives.

Further, Freire emphasized genuine dialogue as a fundamental principle for critical pedagogy. It is highlighted in the literature review that individuals' perception of their reality is based on their social locations, and therefore there is richness in each individual's experiences. In this sense, civic education is a mutual process, and the educator and youth should act as teachers and learners in the dialogue process. The role of the educator is primarily to set up conditions upon which a genuine dialogue takes place where individuals learn from each other and with each other.

Though this research found some elements of critical pedagogy in the dialogue circles and forums held by the CSOs, this study argues that the conduct of the current approaches suggested that the CSOs came from the deliberative and social contract pedagogical perspectives. The review of previous studies highlighted that deliberative pedagogies emphasize democratic ideals such as tolerance, objectivity, and a sense of justice (Fung, 2005). Social Contract Pedagogies, on the other hand, advocate for the existence of diverse groups to promote liberal democracy (Desjardins et al., 2020). In



these pedagogies, the youth are equipped with skills and dispositions to navigate common issues and reach consensual decisions. There is little regard for meaningful discussions on power differentials at the core of the political systems. Critical aspects of reflection and consciousness raising were not prominent in the CSO approaches.

As a consequence, the participation of the youth primarily results in the maintenance of the status quo. I argue that deliberative and Social Contract Pedagogies are effective approaches to voter mobilization as they boost voter registration and turnout. However, they have little effect on the attitudes of the youth voters.

### **Towards a Critical Pedagogy**

This study argues that the above-discussed tenets of Freirean critical pedagogy speak to the underlying objectives of the CSOs' civic education programs to achieve "maximal" citizens. Consequently, CSOs should embrace the critical pedagogical approach when designing and implementing civic education programs. Further, this thesis argues that though Freire lived in different times, similarities can be drawn between the conditions of Brazil during his time and the current state youth in Kenya find themselves in. In both, oppressive structures exist that perpetuate alienation, and there is a condition of hopelessness among the marginalized. To this end, it is imperative to customize Freirean's critical pedagogical approach to fit the needs of Kenyan society.

This research argues that the CSOs approaches being implemented by the CSOs can be improved by incorporating the two Freirean critical pedagogy principles discussed in the literature review: Consciousness raising through dialogue and the philosophy of hope.

#### **A. Dialogue as a catalyst for praxis, reflection, and social transformation**

As discussed in the literature review, Freire argued that dialogue was the most appropriate pedagogical intervention that has the capabilities to equip citizens with skills and attitudes to achieve individual and social transformation. As pointed out in the literature review, this spirit is also underscored in the Kenya Youth Development Policy(2019). The dialogue should be premised on the assumption that civic learning is

not about processing the received knowledge but transforming it as part of the struggle to achieve a more equal and just society. Giroux (2004) portends that;

The fundamental challenge facing educators within the current age of neoliberalism is to provide the conditions for students to relate how knowledge is related to the power of both self-definition and social agency."

(p.34).

This study supports the view and argues that through dialogue, educators should provide the youth with knowledge and skills to recognize the oppressive forms of power and fight deep-seated societal injustices. The findings suggested that there were elements of Freirean critical pedagogy principles in the dialogue circles and forums held, such as the focus on local solutions to local problems. However, this study argues that more can be done to improve the dialogical method approach implemented by CSOs in their civic education programs. Dialogue should not be a mere approach to achieving cognitive results but a means through which educators raise awareness for the youth to transform social relations. It should be recalled from the literature that a genuine dialogue that promotes reflection and action should be founded on principles of love, humility, critical thinking, and hope. True dialogue is a mutual learning process where both the educator and the youth are recreating knowledge and learning. In this dialogue method, educators are viewed as problem posers. The educator and the youth are engaged in a collaborative learning process to illuminate and act on reality (Shor & Freire, 1987). As argued by Giroux (2004), the dialogue method should provide youth:

With competencies, they need to cultivate the capacity for critical judgment, thoughtfully connect politics to social responsibility, expand their sense of agency to curb the excess of dominant power, revitalize a sense of public commitment and expand democratic relations.

(p.23)

To this end, the dialogue process should analyze and give meaning to power relations and articulate them through the youth's context.

As highlighted in the findings, over recent years, the CSOs in Kenya have borrowed a leaf from formal education to standardize their civic education by developing curriculum and training materials. While this is a laudable strategy, this thesis suggests that such an approach, if not carefully implemented, can lead to what Freire referred to as the "banking concept" of education (Freire, 1970). As argued in the literature review, the banking concept does not raise the critical consciousness of the youth. To this end, the training materials and curriculum developed should be used as a guide to elicit discussions. Still, the primary source of knowledge should come from the youth's lived experiences. Consequently, educators need to study the youths' reality to design problem-posing content that is existential and captures the aspirations of the youth. A civic education approach that treats the youth as a source of knowledge and connects the political struggle with the utopian vision has the power to regain its transformative potential as it "points to tangible everyday resistance that strives to interrupt the adaptation to present conditions" (Tiainen et al., 2019).

## **B. The Democratic Virtue of Hope**

From the findings, the CSOs are conducting civic education in an environment characterized by apathy and hopelessness among the youth. You will recall that one of the participants observed that the youth are disillusioned and do not see the need to participate in elections. Freire developed the philosophy of hope as an ideological retaliation to the class-based society formulated by capitalists. As noted in the findings, the oppressive power structures in the society have created limit-situations that lead to hopelessness in the possibility of change among the youth. These limit situations are not a result of the forces of nature but are an outcome of destructive power relations among people. Consequently, power relations can be challenged and overcome. According to Freire, hope - the critical acceptance of incompleteness, is an instrumental human quality that can enable individuals to resist the destructive relations of power. As argued in the literature review, Freire argues that without hope, individuals cannot struggle to transform their society.

Furthermore, hope entails recognizing that as human beings, we are in a continuous struggle to become fully human, a process he called humanization (Freire, 1994). Noteworthy, hope is not a panacea to all the challenges faced by the youth in political participation but a clarion call to understand and mobilize the tools of critical analysis and resources of imagination to address the linkage between the destructive institutional and ideological forces and the crises the youth are facing today (Freire, 1994). Therefore, hope is a potent tool that CSOs can use in civic education to ignite the motivation among the Youth in Kenya on the possibilities of change.

As Freire observed, CSOs should adopt a civic education that connects the utopian vision with political, pursuable, and realistic alternatives (Freire, 1994). CSOs can use Freire's philosophy to advance the idea that, as human beings, the youth are not predetermined by their cultural or historic structures. Therefore, they hold an ethical responsibility to intervene with the world by creating their present historical moments. The idea of the possibility of making history has the gravitational force necessary to awaken the emancipatory interests of the youth and resist injustices. Since it is possible to make history, the youth can be empowered to recognize the possibility of viable alternatives even in circumstances that appear unchangeable (Freire, 1994). The youth have the power to organize their present society to function in ways that make for human flourishing and justice. It is worth noting that humans created the very existence of unequal societal structures, and therefore only humans can intervene and change them. Hope is vital to enable the youth to constantly adapt to the present situations by acknowledging that it is not the current obstacles to change that cause despair but their perceptions towards them at given moments in history.

## **Chapter Six: Conclusion**

### **6.1. Overview**

In this concluding chapter, I will summarize the key research findings in relation to the research questions and aims. I will also highlight the value and contribution of the research findings. The chapter will also reflect on the limitations of the study as well as propose opportunities for future research.

### **6.2. Findings Summary**

This study aimed to investigate the approaches used by the CSOs in Kenya to promote the participation of youth in political and decision-making processes. The study also proposes critical pedagogy as the most effective approach in promoting critical citizenship. The results indicate that CSOs approaches can be categorized into two depending on the level of youth engagement. Youth-centered approaches and educator-centered approaches. Youth-centered approaches showed a significant level of youth engagement while the educator centered, for the most part, treated the youth as "blank slates" who needed to store civic education knowledge shared by the educators.

Further findings showed that the educators' values and ontological positions are crucial in determining the approaches adopted by the CSOs and consequently shaping the youth's civic knowledge acquisition. While the study found that CSOs are passionate and concerned about increasing participation of youth in political processes, the CSOs who came from the perspective that youths are an asset tended to lean towards approaches that were youth centered, and those who were in the field for career and other reasons preferred educator centered approaches. The research further suggests that the approaches currently used by CSOs generally fall under the deliberative and social contract pedagogies, which aim at promoting discursive democracies where all voices are heard. The research argues that in reality, political systems determine which voices will be dominant and those that will be "othered," Therefore, the above pedagogies are out of touch with reality. Moreover, the pedagogies do little to address

the key youth challenges in the political process, marginalization, and social inequality. Consequently, the research proposes adopting Freirean critical pedagogy principles of conscientization and philosophy of hope to enable the youth to be transformative agents of their society.

### **6.3. Contribution of the study to theory and practice**

This research contributes to the body of knowledge on civic education in Kenya. By focusing on the CSOs' perceptions and experiences on youth civic education approaches, the study has placed the CSOs at the heart of the research. The understandings and recommendations made thereof are based on their insights. In evaluating the CSOs' youth civic education approaches, I have learned from Paulo Freire's work and, in particular, by applying his insights on critical pedagogy.

This research makes a case for the adoption of critical pedagogy by the CSOs as a pathway to the return of critical citizens. In particular, the study proposes raising the consciousness of the youth through genuine dialogue that fosters reflection and action. The dialogues should be founded on the philosophy of hope where the youth are given the opportunity to "see" their ability to transform their society.

### **6.4 Limitations to the study**

This study only interviewed the educators and did not incorporate the views of the youth, who are the consumers of the approaches to get a balanced view of the effectiveness of the CSO approaches. The study could be improved by considering the perspectives of both the demand and supply sides of the civic education approaches. In addition, the study used an online interview method as a form of data collection. The lack of presence may have affected the intensity and depth of the discussions.

### **6.5 Recommendations for the study**

More research needs to be conducted on the impact of the approaches used by CSOs on the Youth in Kenya. Further, the study recommends more research to be undertaken

on a framework that should underpin the youth dialogue engagement as envisioned in the Kenya Youth Development Policy (2019).

In Summary, this chapter has recapped the key research findings and highlighted the study's contributions to theory and practice. The chapter noted that CSOs should improve the youth civic education approaches by adopting two fundamental Freirean principles of critical pedagogy; Conscientization and democratic virtue of hope. Further, the chapter discussed the limitations and recommendations of the study.

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