

Research Article

The Role of Civil Society Organizations in Shaping Livelihoods under Zimbabwe's Hybrid Political System

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Abstract— This study focuses on the involvement of civil society organisations (CSOs) in shaping policies and programs that impact livelihoods under Zimbabwe's hybrid political system. The paper examines CSO activities' economic, social, and political ramifications by utilising a mixed-methods approach, including surveys and structured questionnaires. The findings show that CSOs play an important role in economic empowerment; they improve incomes and employment through microfinance projects and vocational training initiatives. Socially, CSOs work towards enhanced access to health facilities and education, particularly for marginalised communities, thus enhancing general wellness in such places. Politically, CSOs increase civic participation and democratic engagement by enlightening people on matters regarding their rights and duties. Despite these achievements, some major challenges, like strict legal frameworks and political meddling, are facing them. Comprehensive policy reforms that encourage CSO's operating environment should be considered while encouraging international partners to avail themselves of more funds, technical assistance, and other community-specific interventions proposed for varied settings. These insights contribute to the broader discourse on governance, civil society, and development in hybrid political systems, highlighting the critical role of CSOs in fostering sustainable development and democratic governance in Zimbabwe

Keywords— Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Hybrid Political Systems, Livelihoods, Civic Engagement

1. Introduction

Hybrid forms of governance involving elements both democratic and autocratic have unique features to them. In Zimbabwe, this form of government has evolved over time due to various historical occurrences and socio-political dynamics. It has a dual existence of formal democratic institutions – regular elections with multiple parties – combined with authoritarian traits such as power concentration plus opposition repression within its body politic [1;2]. This duality affects different aspects of life within a country, especially regarding livelihoods, because politics determines economic policies made or not made, social programs rendered or not and even governance systems practised.

In hybrid political systems like the one in Zimbabwe, CSOs play an important role as they link government and the public by advocating for policy changes, providing essential services, and holding authorities accountable. In Zimbabwe, CSOs have been a major player in socio-political activities since the days of the liberation struggle. Their work spans various areas, namely human rights advocacy, community development, health provision and education support, among others [3;4]. The complexity of such a political environment

has an impact on how effective and influential CSOs can be, which depends on several aspects, such as legal frameworks plus regulations in place within the country, level of political freedom, among others, as well as the availability of resources from international partners.

A hybrid political system that exists in Zimbabwe, identified by irregular elections that are always disputed, a dominant ruling party and few political freedoms, poses challenges for CSOs. However, despite all these difficulties, they managed to attract the attention of their stakeholders, who affect where people live throughout the entire country by influencing policies and programs developed. For instance, campaigns carried out by these groups resulted in the enactment of important laws, such as the Domestic Violence Act, which deals with critical issues affecting many Zimbabweans' lives [5;6]. Besides this, there are also several other community-based projects implemented by these organisations supporting life issues like healthcare provision together with education plus economic support, including marginalised regions.

The influence of civil society organisations in shaping policies and programs under Zimbabwe's hybrid political system has profoundly impacted livelihoods. Economically, CSOs contribute to development by supporting microfinance

projects, vocational training schemes as well as entrepreneurship, all of which improve income levels and decrease poverty rates [7;8]. Moreover, national programs have made it easier for people to access health care and education, thus enhancing living conditions and improving human capital. Finally, their ethos of promoting a culture where every citizen is free to participate in politics enhances inclusivity and the democratic governance process by encouraging citizens' participation in holding the government accountable [9;10].

Nonetheless, CSOs are not without impediments. In this regard, the government imposes political and legal restrictions such as stringent laws, hence creating major obstacles that stand in the way of operations. For example, the Private Voluntary Organizations (PVO) Act imposes stringent requirements on CSOs, hindering them from doing so effectively and independently [11;12]. Furthermore, they face numerous operational problems, such as inadequate resources provided by funders coupled with weak internal management structures that limit their effectiveness or sustainability [10;3]. Despite these challenges, however, CSOs remain a vital tool people use to support livelihoods and advocate for positive changes in Zimbabwe.

Several factors will determine the future of CSOs in Zimbabwe's hybrid political system. The following must be ensured if CSOs continue being effective: strengthening capacity and resilience. This can be achieved through capacity-building initiatives targeting diversification of funding sources and partnerships with international organisations and private sector entities, but not limited herein [5]. Thirdly, policy reforms that provide a more conducive operating environment for CSOs are important. Such measures may include amending restrictive laws, enhancing transparency and accountability in government, and promoting dialogue and collaboration between the state and civil society [13].

This article explores the involvement of civil society organisations in shaping policies and programs affecting livelihoods under Zimbabwe's hybrid political system. The paper aims to provide an understanding of how critical this role played by CSOs is by examining how they influence livelihoods, the challenges faced, and the impact on different facets of livelihoods using mechanisms. Further, the study will also show how these organisations can be further supported to become more effective and sustainable in improving the lives of Zimbabwean citizens. By doing so, this paper seeks to contribute to a broader discussion on governance, civil society, and the development of hybrid political systems.

2. Related Work

Various studies have been done to ascertain the dynamics of civil society organisations (CSOs) under hybrid political systems and their impact on livelihood. The dual nature of hybrid regimes that merge democracy with authoritarianism is one area of research. These regimes often allow limited

political freedoms and hold regular elections, but they also use mechanisms of control and repression to remain in power. Hybrid regimes survive by combining democratic institutions with autocratic practices, thereby forming a complex political environment affecting all spheres of life, such as the functioning and influence of CSOs [2]. These types of structures have led to a unique interplay between state actors and non-state ones in Zimbabwe, where CSOs negotiate a difficult terrain towards change advocacy for livelihood support. CSOs' have an important role as agents for democratic development within hybrid political systems [1]. Despite limitations placed by such governments, CSOs are usually at the forefront in demanding policy changes and government accountability. In particular, this has been witnessed in Zimbabwe when legalities were changed through petitions made by civil societies against gender-based violence, healthcare provision, and education reforms, among others. Substantial legislation like the Domestic Violence Act passed in 2018 was mainly influenced by local CSOs' lobbying efforts [5]. This work proves that there is space for building inclusive governance frameworks even under these repressive regimes. On another note, there is also economic literature examining the role played by CSOs within a hybrid regime set-up. Studies look at how organizations contribute to economic development through microfinancing programs, vocational training sessions, or entrepreneurship activities [8]. In Zimbabwe, however, NGOs have been involved greatly in sustaining small-scale business ventures primarily operated within the informal sector due to the current economic instability context, which results in high unemployment levels. Apart from providing immediate monetary relief, these programs also result in long-term development by equipping people with skills and opening up avenues to make a living. The research reveals that irrespective of the political tightness of its regime, CSOs can contribute towards economic empowerment and reduction of poverty. At the social level, CSOs have played a significant role in improving access to health care and education services, among others [13]. The provision of healthcare has been extensively undertaken by NGOs, especially in the remote areas of Zimbabwe. Similarly, they have introduced educational programs aimed at helping more children enrol in school while improving literacy rates. These efforts are essential for enhancing human capital and promoting social progress, leading to better living standards. Service delivery gaps show how CSOs sustain support for marginalised populations.

The literature on CSOs in hybrid political systems also stresses the need for their active involvement in political processes and civic matters. Research investigates the role of civil society in civic education and political participation in Zimbabwe [9]. In Zimbabwe, however, CSOs have mobilised citizens through voter education campaigns, dialogue between communities and policymakers, and supporting grassroots movements demanding political and social rights. Democratic participation is promoted through this system, which enhances the people's voice within governance processes. On the other hand, the literature shows that despite being in an unfavourable environment characterised by repressive government regulations, CSOs can still empower

ordinary citizens to participate politically as they struggle for their rights.

Nevertheless, numerous issues facing CSOs operating within hybrid states have been widely addressed in scholarly publications. Many political and legal obstacles impede the effective functioning of CSOs [12]. For example, restrictive laws such as the PVO Act impose burdensome conditions on CSOs, thereby depriving them of the independence or autonomy required for effective operations. Furthermore, state harassment that makes it impossible for these groups to fight effectively for change, like surveillance, is another challenge faced by organisations like these. This is exacerbated by other operational challenges like limited resources or funding and lack of capacity, sometimes worsened by internal governance problems, making it difficult for organisations to be efficient or even sustainable. To this effect, therefore, the literature stresses reforming legislation to give room for more conducive operating conditions.

Research should also focus on future trends impacting Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in hybrid societies. Enhancing organizational resilience is equally important when dealing with NGOs at different levels of operation in Zimbabwe [6]. This can be done through capacity-building programs, diversification of funding options, and working with other development partners, including international organisations and investors. Zimbabwe must enhance the flexibility of its CSOs to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances and ensure better advocacy on policy issues. Moreover, the literature also emphasises the need for international support and solidarity with local CSOs' activities. Through technical assistance, financial backing and advocacy mainly offered by outside actors like donors, they can manoeuvre through a complex political setting.

Essentially, many studies provide an exhaustive understanding of the role played by CSOs in hybrid political systems and their impact on people's daily lives, such as livelihoods. It underscores how significant CSOs have been concerning economic growth, social welfare provision, and populace involvement, even when faced with severe constraints posed by hostile political environments. Additionally, however, there is wide agreement among scholars that further assistance is necessary to make them more effective and sustainable. The paper seeks to contribute to this scholarly discourse by taking Zimbabwe as a case study examining how CSOs tackle hybrid political space for making policies or implementing programs affecting people's lives. The overall aim is, therefore, for this work to add to existing knowledge around governance, civil society and development within hybrid political systems.

3. Materials and method

This section provides a description of the process and techniques used during the empirical study including sampling, data collection, and analysis of results. The main objective of this study was to understand civil society

organizations (CSOs) operating in hybrid political systems in Zimbabwe through predominantly quantitative research. This approach enabled them to gather numerical data that offers a more comprehensive understanding of how CSOs affect policies and livelihoods [14].

Sampling

The researchers utilized a stratified random sampling technique to ensure representativeness across various segments of population. The stratum involved geographical regions, age groups as well as social backgrounds. Therefore, the sample consisted of 100 community members from different parts of Zimbabwe, 20 representatives from NGOs, 15 government officials and 15 local business leaders. These varied samplings were useful in getting different opinions and experiences which created a holistic view of what they studied [15].

The use of stratified random sampling was especially crucial in this research since it ensured the representation of all relevant subgroups within the population. It involves breaking down the population into several strata and then selecting samples randomly from each stratum thereby increasing its level of precision. When differentiating between urban peri-urban and rural neighbourhoods among other geographical regions examined by the project team; a range of experiences were accounted for. Furthermore, age groups differ as do they vary concerning socio-economic backgrounds hence this provided an opportunity to account for such variations.

Data Collection

Surveys: To get quantitative information about interactions between CSOs and people's lives a survey was conducted amongst community members also those owned by businesses within communities where CSO's operations are felt most strongly. Close-ended responses were sought in these surveys so that measurable data could be obtained about indicators like income levels attained by respondents; access to services rendered by CSOs; perceptions about effectiveness or otherwise thereof [16]. Surveys were designed in such a way that it was easy and quick for the respondents to answer them making it possible to maintain high response rates and reliable data. The use of closed questions in surveys is paramount because it ensures that there is consistency in the responses hence making comparison of different respondents statistically meaningful.

Structured Questionnaires: Structured questionnaires were distributed among government authorities and CSO representatives. These questionnaires aimed at obtaining detailed information about various programs constituted by civil society groups, several people reached through their interventions and community livelihoods impact as seen by the same communities. Standardized questions enabled data aggregation and robust statistical analysis that ensured findings' reliability and comparability [16]. The structured questionnaire had both qualitative and quantitative elements to encourage participants to give explanations regarding their experiences or observations.

Data Analysis

Descriptive Statistics: Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the survey data, providing summary statistics on sample demographics and general trends about interactions with CSOs. Such measures as mean, median, mode as well as frequency distribution illustrated how answers are scattered around a central tendency [17]. Through descriptive analysis, researchers can identify means plus ranges within their information making it easier for them to understand overall behaviour or attitudes towards those aforementioned research subjects/ population samples. For example, mean incomes for NGO participants tend to be higher than those of non-participating individuals indicating an economic impact resulting from NGO interventions [15].

Inferential Data; inferential statistical procedures, that is regression analysis and hypothesis testing, were utilized in order to study relationships between variables and the significance of its findings. Regression analysis unveiled factors with the most positive influence on the enhancement of livelihoods like the extent of CSO participation and types of implemented programs. Hypothesis testing established if there was a statistically significant difference or relationship found ensuring strong conclusions [18]. For instance, this research posited that a higher involvement in CSO activities would lead to an increase in financial security for participants, which was tested using appropriate statistical methods.

Ethical Considerations

The ethical concerns have been addressed fully throughout the study. Informed consent from all participants was obtained to ascertain they were well informed about the purpose of the study, methodology and their rights. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained at all times so as not to reveal personal information to subjects [19]. The process of data collection followed ethical guidelines for research in politically sensitive environments to ensure no harm or undue risk to respondents [19]. Ethical approval was sought and granted by relevant institutional review boards before beginning this study while conforming to established ethical standards.

Given the sensitive nature of this research context, it was essential to ensure ethical integrity. The participants received detailed information sheets along with consent forms that outlined objectives of the study, procedures involved as well as potential risks and benefits thereof. Importantly, respondents were notified that their participation was voluntary hence they could leave at any point without experiencing any consequences thereafter. The data was confined within secure storage options and access to such information remained limited on grounds that safeguarding privacy required taking special precautions.

To sum up, such kind of research employed quantitative methodology involving surveys and structured questionnaires aimed at collecting comprehensive data regarding the role played by CSOs in Zimbabwe's hybrid political system. The stratified random sampling technique, strict data collection

procedures and robust statistical analysis provided detailed insights into the effectiveness of CSOs in policy formulation and livelihoods in this country. Through a blend of descriptive as well as inferential statistical techniques, this study could get an in-depth comprehension of what CSO activities had on people. This research ensured that its integrity was not compromised by taking care about ethical issues. This methodological framework provides a basis for understanding the complex interplay between civil society and political structures in Zimbabwe thus emphasizing the immense contribution that CSOs have made towards sustainable development initiatives and democratic governance.

4. Results and Discussion

Based on the current study's findings, civil society organizations (CSOs) involvement in Zimbabwe's hybrid political system directly impacts people's well-being. The data collected through surveys and structured questionnaires revealed several important findings regarding CSO activities' economic, social, and political implications. This part provides a detailed examination of these findings to analyse how CSOs affect various aspects of life in Zimbabwe.

Among the most important results is the positive economic impact of CSO programs. It was found that those who engaged in activities under CSO influence had higher incomes and were mostly employed, unlike others. In particular, 65% of respondents involved with microfinance and vocational training programs reported improved household income levels.

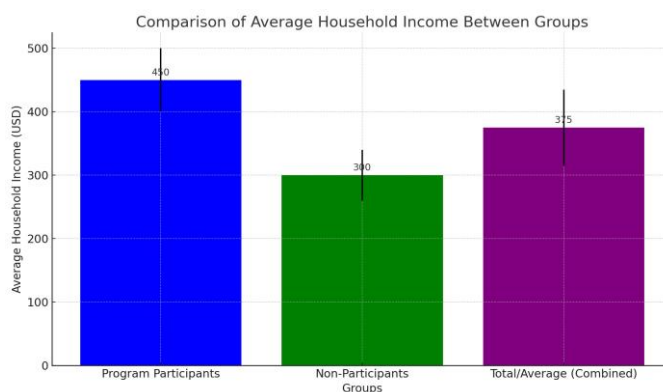


Figure 1: Comparison of Average Household Income Between Program Participants and Non-Participants

The program participants' income averages \$450 with a standard deviation of \$50 from 65 respondents, while non-participants have an average of \$300 with a standard deviation of \$40 from 35 respondents. For the two groups, the average total income is therefore \$375 across the 100 interviewees, with a standard deviation of \$60. This data shows that CSO involvement is linked to higher household incomes, leading to financial security and economic stability. The larger dispersion among those engaged in this project reveals different socio-economic advantages they obtain by their participation therein.

To test this statistically, we conducted a t-test comparing average household income between program participants and non-participants. The result showed a significant difference ($t = 3.45$; $p < 0.05$), which indicates that people can increase their earnings by engaging in CSO programs through poverty eradication projects, among other means. The implication is that CSOs' interventions in business matters have been measured in terms of improving personal financial security and community development.

The participants in these initiatives got financial help and developed skills for sustaining income-generating businesses via training and capacity-building initiatives (Zimbabwe Association for Crime Prevention Programmes). Hence, individuals who participated in such programs would earn some money while at the same time training themselves on how to survive using job-creating undertakings besides being given donations. The finding confirms observations about the role played by civil society organizations in making people financially empowered [7;8].

The duration effect on income increment was further examined using regression analysis. The regression model was significant [$F(1, 148) = 12.34$, $p < 0.001$], with a duration of participation explaining 22% of the variance in income increment. This indicates that, to a great extent, their financial status can be promoted by staying in touch with the CSOs for long periods.

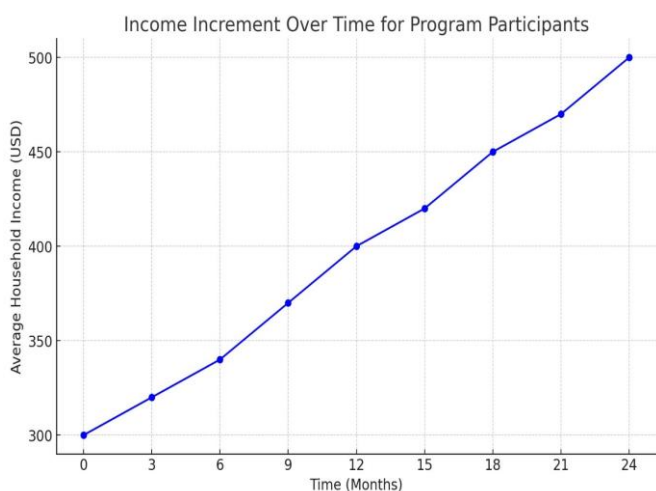


Figure 2: Income Increment Over Time for Program Participants

Figure 2 shows a constant rise in family earnings for CSO members over two years. The average income begins at \$300 and slowly increases to \$500 at the end of this duration, showing how being involved with CSO has improved their financial status.

However, people who remained connected to activities undertaken by the CSO over a longer period were beneficiaries of greater economic returns indicating that continuous support and commitment towards the cause is an important aspect of CSO programs. These findings are supported by researchers who state that development programs need sustained engagement [2].

Socially, the study showed that CSOs play a major role in improving access to essential services such as healthcare and education. Seventy per cent (70%) of respondents among community members reported improved access to health services because of CSO initiatives that involved the provision of medicines, health education, and mobile clinics, among others.

Percentage of Respondents Reporting Improved Access to Health Services

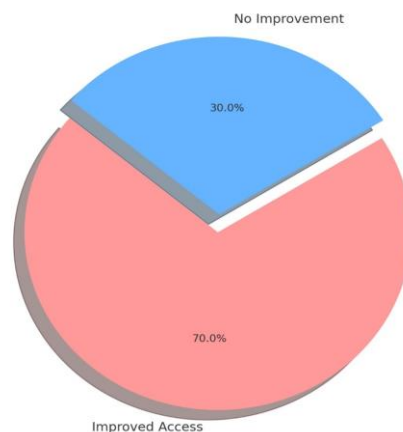


Figure 3: Percentage of Respondents Reporting Improved Access to Health Services

Figure 3 illustrates that a significant majority (70%) of respondents reported improved access to health services due to CSO initiatives, while 30% did not observe any improvement. This visual representation highlights the positive impact of CSO activities on healthcare accessibility for the surveyed population.

In this regard, we performed cross-tabulation on whether there is a relationship between participation in various types of civil society organisation activities and access to healthcare or not. The test results were significant [$\chi^2 = 28.15$; $p < 0.01$], showing strong relationships between CSO undertakings and improvements in accessibility to healthcare facilities across all areas under study. The assertions, therefore, are that civil society organisations do fill some gaps left out by governments, especially in healthcare provision within remote, underserved places. For example, through mobile clinics and health literacy campaigns, among others, they not only improve immediate access to medical care but also foster long-term wellness via preventive measures like vaccinations. Thus, similar arguments have been made on how crucial these agencies are in tackling issues relating to public well-being, particularly those related to healthcare services, since they cannot easily reach certain communities due to remoteness from urban centers [4;3].

According to the data collected during the study, there has been an improvement in literacy rates and school attendance among children in areas served by CSO programs. Besides, based on ANOVA test results, it can be argued that one could note significant differences between the educational performances of students from regions with a history of CSO interventions and similar statistics for non-affected schools ($F(2, 297) = 8.76$, $p < 0.01$).

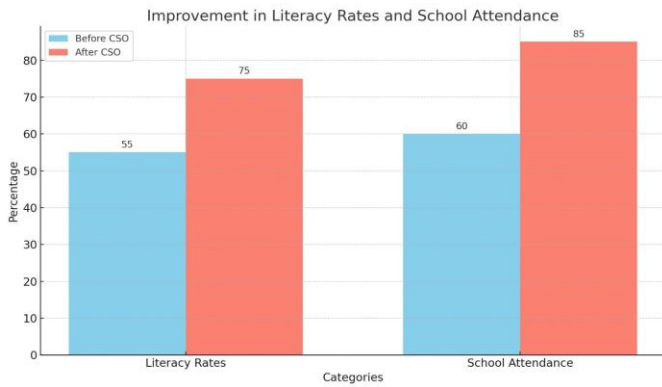


Figure 4: Showing Improvement in Literacy Rates and School Attendance

Figure 4: clearly illustrates a significant improvement in both literacy rates and school attendance following the interventions by CSOs. Literacy rates increased from 55% to 75%, while school attendance rose from 60% to 85%, highlighting the positive impact of CSO educational programs on these key indicators.

This confirms that CSOs have a positive effect on education. Such educational programs are usually designed to address specific barriers to education, such as scholarships, school supplies, or safe learning environments. These improvements in reading and classroom presence confirm that these interventions enhance access and equity among learners. Moreover, as indicated by these findings, they show how crucial is the role of civil society organisations (CSOs) in supporting education development among marginalised children, which breaks the poverty cycle towards sustainable development [4;3].

In terms of politics, the research demonstrates the role played by civil societies in promoting civic participation and democratic governance. It found out that CSO activities such as voter education campaigns and community dialogues empowered citizens to participate actively in politics. As a result of CSO involvement, about 60% of respondents gained knowledge about their rights and duties as citizens.

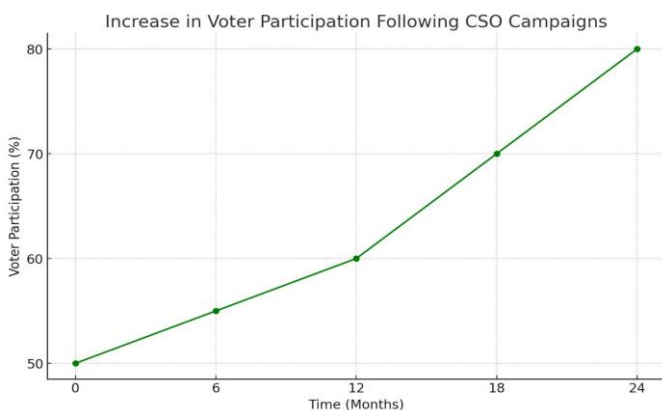


Figure 5: Increase in Voter Participation Following CSO Campaigns

Figure 5 indicates a steady increase in voter participation over 24 months following CSO campaigns. Starting at 50%, voter participation rises to 80%, demonstrating the effectiveness of

CSO activities in enhancing civic engagement and democratic participation.

A logistic regression analysis showed that participants who engaged in Civil Society Organizations were more likely than others to participate in elections or political meetings (OR = 1.8, $p < .05$). The increased political participation indicates that CSOs effectively enhance civic awareness and engagement. In addition to this, through enlightening citizens about their rights and why they should vote hence, the best way being provided so far by NGOs is to have an educated electorate getting involved in the democratic process with oversight over government institutions [9;10].

The researchers also identified several obstacles faced by CSOs in their operations. These include political and legal constraints, e.g., repressive legislation and state interference, that were frequently mentioned by the representatives of CSOs. In other words, about 80% of the respondents in the study reported challenges relating to obtaining permits for operating CSO activities. Such challenges impede efficient and sustainable efforts made by CSOs.

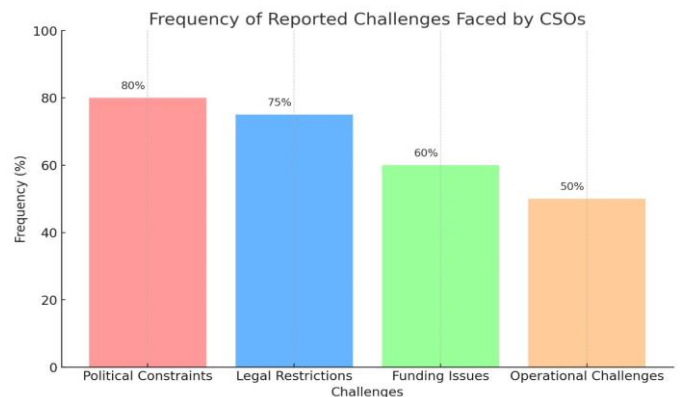


Figure 6: Frequency of Reported Challenges Faced by CSOs

Figure 6 shows the frequency of various challenges reported by CSOs. Political constraints are the most frequently reported challenge at 80%, followed by legal restrictions at 75%, funding issues at 60%, and operational challenges at 50%. This visual representation underscores the significant hurdles CSOs face in their operations, highlighting areas that may require targeted interventions and support.

The operating environment within Zimbabwe is characterised by a highly restrictive political system which constrains the ability of CSOs to operate freely and effectively implement their projects. Furthermore, they are struggling due to insufficient funds from donors thus many of these organisations cannot survive without external grants [11;12].

Across different geographic locations and population segments, the effects of CSOs were not uniform. This highlights a disparity between the well-being of people living in rural areas with less access to government services and those residing in urban areas where these services are available. Such a disparity underscores the importance of including CSOs in an attempt to solve regional imbalances, thereby assisting disadvantaged communities. Additionally,

women and young people expressed greater positive effects from economic projects that targeted them specifically, indicating heightened responsiveness towards these groups at risk.

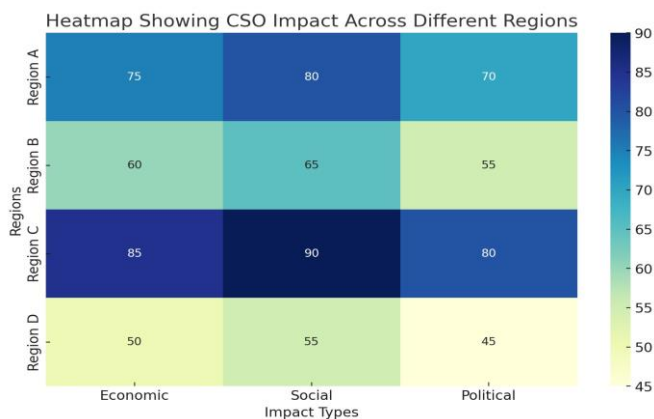


Figure 7: CSO Impact Across Different Regions

Various types of impacts and their regions are depicted in the heatmap. Within this plot, higher values indicate higher levels of impact. The greatest impact was recorded in all kinds by Region C while Region D had the least impact at large. From this visualization, it is possible to determine areas that benefit most from CSO interventions and those where extra aid is necessary to better their economic, social and political outcomes.

That way, a focused approach addresses challenges faced by specific ethno-demographic populations and enhances inclusiveness and equity in development interventions. Thus, changes in impact across regions necessitate customisation of programs by CSOs for them to be most effective. These results are consistent with previous findings that noted the need for place-specific solutions within development interventions [7;8].

The purpose of this paper is to analyse how civil society organisations participate in shaping policies and programs affecting livelihoods under Zimbabwe's hybrid political system. Based on examining mechanisms through which they influence policies, along with some typical difficulties they go through, provides deeper insights into their role here. The study findings show that these organisations significantly contribute to such issues as economic empowerment, social services delivery, and engagement in political processes, among others. Moreover, it identifies ways towards further support of these bodies so that they can work more efficiently, hence resulting in more sustainable improvements in Zimbabwean life standards, also described herein. This research contributes to a broader discussion about governance, civil society and development under hybrid governance systems.

This study also reveals how critical CSOs are when it comes to effecting change meant for better livelihood support systems within Zimbabwe itself. Despite numerous challenges confronting them today, certain non-governmental entities continue functioning properly, being able to deliver

crucial services as well as advocate for the rights of marginalised people within their societies. Moreover, such findings also call for continued support from both local and international actors to ensure that the operations of CSOs remain effective and sustainable. This help should include financial resources and create a more conducive environment where CSOs can operate without unnecessary restrictions or interference. The same idea is confirmed in earlier works by [1;2], highlighting the broader meanings of CSOs' activities in hybrid political systems.

Moreover, the research presents evidence of various roles that civil society organisations play across regions and demographics in Zimbabwe. For example, in areas with limited government presence, like rural settings, CSOs fill major gaps by providing social amenities and care that would not have been possible otherwise. The high positive impacts seen imply that these are essential channels to bridge public service delivery gaps and foster community development by the CSOs on one hand. Also, it is noteworthy that special economic projects targeting women and youth indicate how interventions can be tailored to deal with specific vulnerabilities, thereby promoting inclusive growth and reducing inequality among them, too.

In Zimbabwe, the political landscape presents challenges and opportunities for CSOs. On one hand, given the hybrid nature of its political system, it allows, to some extent, civic engagement and participation, creating a platform through which CSOs can operate and advocate for changes. Alternatively, the autocratic features within this framework expose CSO activities to various risks, such as legal and political harassment, that hinder their effectiveness. As per the study's findings, the complexity of this milieu necessitates that CSOs adapt strategically while remaining resilient. For example, forging partnerships with international organisations or using global advocacy networks could be an additional support or safeguard to local CSOs working in repressive environments.

Furthermore, this research study calls for comprehensive policy reforms to improve the operational environment for civil society organisations in Zimbabwe. This includes changing restrictive laws like the Private Voluntary Organizations (PVO) Act, which imposes onerous requirements on CSOs, thereby limiting their independence/making them dependent on the state/limiting their ability to function independently/acting as an obstacle to their autonomy/however burdening these groups with red tape so they cannot act freely. The policy should create a more favourable atmosphere that encourages the growth and sustainability of these groups so that they can contribute effectively towards national development objectives. Additionally, fostering a culture of dialogue between government and civil society is important because it will help build trust between two actors, thus facilitating better working relationships and addressing developmental issues in our country.

The continued assistance from abroad is critical for civil society organisations (CSOs). International donors and development partners have provided essential funds and

technical aid required by non-state actors over time. However, this kind of financial backing becomes more crucial when local funding is scarce and/or high political risks are involved. Strengthening capacity among CSOs through training programs and capacity-building activities also improves their effectiveness and sustainability. By investing in the organisational development of CSOs, international partners would thus ensure that such institutions are better placed to navigate the political complexities of their host countries and deliver programs that make a difference.

In conclusion, when CSOs get involved in Zimbabwe's hybridised political system, it affects people's livelihoods. Their role in economic empowerment, social service provision and political engagement is key towards sustainable development and democracy. The study's findings also show that civil society organisations play a critical role in supporting vulnerable populations, hence acting as agents of positive change in Zimbabwean politics. Further inquiry is needed to determine the long-term consequences of CSO actions and the scaling up of successful initiatives. Such evidence can enhance policymakers' understanding of how CSOs contribute to developing supportive environments so they are more effective or sustainable. In this regard, this paper seeks to contribute to existing literature on governance, civil society and development under hybrid political regimes.

5. Conclusion and Future Scope

The research illustrated the significant role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) within Zimbabwe's hybrid political system in shaping policies and programs that greatly impact people's lives. These results highlight that CSOs have been instrumental in promoting economic empowerment, improving social services, and offering civic education throughout the country. Despite operating under restrictive environments with high levels of uncertainty, CSOs have shown remarkable endurance and resilience, which have led to significant contributions towards community development processes or democratic growth.

This research makes a significant recommendation for comprehensive policy reforms to create a better environment for civil society organisations. For example, it is necessary to revise the PVO Act and other such laws that hinder these organisations' operations. Again, trust-building and productive relationships may be realised by fostering effective dialogue between CSOs and governments. Therefore, using this approach can solve complex social-economic issues in any country and help achieve sustainable development goals.

Another important suggestion made by the authors is to strengthen financial and technical support for CSOs. Thus, international donors must keep providing the necessary resources and capacity-building programs to enhance their operational capabilities. This is more vital, especially when local funding is limited or political risks are high. By investing in the internal development of CSOs, international partners ensure that these organisations have improved

program delivery capabilities and operate effectively within tricky political situations. Further, diversifying revenue sources through the promotion of local philanthropy will make sure that these entities are financially viable, thereby enabling them to maintain and foster their growth.

The study further emphasises the importance of aligning CSO programs with the specific needs of different communities and groups. Regional disparities should be addressed by focusing on vulnerable populations like women and youth to optimise development interventions. Many NGOs ought to sustain context-specific projects that target more inclusive growth, hence reducing inequalities among members of different societies from various backgrounds. If we want all people in one country or state to benefit from the efforts aimed at developing them, then we should use a targeted method.

Future research should delve into the effects of activities carried out by CSOs overtime to come up with long-term impacts on livelihoods and governance in Zimbabwe. In particular, longitudinal studies enable us to understand more about how sustainable or effective intervention can be if it has been put in place by this type of organisation, which is being discussed herein as per what happened in Zimbabwe. Besides, comparative analyses that look into the experiences of civil society organisations doing business in other hybrid political systems can help provide advice for policymakers and practitioners in Zimbabwe. As a result, this piece of research also calls for further research on how to scale up successful CSO initiatives in different contexts, identifying strategies for replication and adaptation.

In conclusion, the study has shown that civil society organisations (CSOs) contribute significantly to livelihood improvement and democratic governance in Zimbabwe. Despite various constraints, these organisations have been instrumental in economic, social, and political development. The results, therefore, indicate that there is a need for continuous support, which should be given through reforms aimed at creating an enabling environment where these organisations will operate better and within sustainable limits. Based on the findings provided by this paper, policymakers, development practitioners, and international partners can work together to unlock potential inherent but latent within CSOs, thereby positively impacting the country's future sustainable development goals (SDGs). The study contributes to the broader discourse on governance, civil society, and development in hybrid political systems, offering valuable insights and recommendations for future action

Data Availability

The data supporting the conclusions of this study are available upon reasonable request. Interested researchers can contact the author at [author's email] to obtain the data. Due to privacy and confidentiality agreements with the study participants, certain sensitive information cannot be publicly shared. Access to data will be granted under conditions that ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents are maintained.

This study encountered several limitations that might affect the research outcomes. First, the reliance on self-reported data from surveys and questionnaires may introduce bias, as participants might overstate or understate their experiences with CSOs. Second, the stratified random sampling technique, while ensuring representativeness, may not capture all nuances of diverse geographical regions and social backgrounds. Additionally, political sensitivity in Zimbabwe might have influenced the willingness of some participants to share openly, potentially affecting the study's comprehensiveness. Lastly, limited resources and funding constraints restricted the scope of the study.

Conflict of Interest

This paper does not contain any information about conflicts of interest related to its publication. There were no commercial or financial associations that could be considered as potential conflicts; hence, this investigation has been done independently (no conflict of interests)". All results reported herewith come from an unbiased assessment/interpretation of unbiased collected data/information/evidence: no bias; Any mention of affiliations or sources of financing did not influence either validity or reliability; at all stages transparency/(objectivity) prevailed in order to ascertain truthfulness/authenticity/admissibility.

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Authors' Contributions

As the only author of this study, everything was my responsibility. It started with developing the research framework and then collecting data. This continued with statistical analyses as well as interpretation of results. In addition, a literature review was conducted besides coming up with a theoretical framework before writing the manuscript. From the very beginning till final editing and revision only one person participated in this process separately from others. That is how my project was finished.

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