

**FACTORS INFLUENCING INFORMAL VOTING IN
ZAMBIA: A CASE OF NAMWALA CONSTITUENCY**

BY

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DECLARATION

I **Mudenda Marystars** do hereby declare that this dissertation is a product of my own efforts and that it is the first one of its kind to be submitted to this university for the award of a Master's Degree in Civic Education.

Author's signature.....

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APPROVAL

This dissertation by Mudenda, Marystars is approved as a fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Master of education in Civic Education at the University of Zambia.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my father Mr Mudenda Sunny and my elder brother Mr Mudenda Kennedy, (both late) whose academic advice spurred me on into academic life even after their demise. I also dedicate the document to my mum, my two brothers Mudenda Joe and Simwami Mutinta, my only sister Maureen Mudenda, my husband, my nieces and nephews, my son Luyando and his sisters for their support and patience during the time of the study.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AEC-	Australian Electoral Commission
AEDB-	African Elections Data Base
AVAP-	Anti Voter Apathy
CNE-	National Elections Commission
CEA-	Commonwealth Electoral Act <i>1918</i>
ECZ-	Electoral Commission of Zambia
FODEP-	Forum for Democratic Process
IDEA-	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IPAC-	Inter Party Advisory Committee
UNESCO-	United Nations, Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation

ABSTRACT

This study aimed at establishing factors influencing informal voting in Namwala constituency, Southern Province of Zambia. Objectives of the study were to establish the types of informal voting taking place in voting events, establish mistakes voters make when marking ballot papers and determine measures that should be put in place to curb informal voting in Zambia. This was a qualitative study. A descriptive survey design using qualitative methods to collect and analyse data was used. Purposive sampling was used to identify respondents for the study.

The research established the following as key factors influencing informal voting in Namwala constituency: Poor economic performance by the sitting government, corruption records labelled against some candidates appearing on the ballot paper, public commentary on election results while voting continues in some polling stations, lack of confidence in the secrecy of the ballot paper, lack of preferences amongst those contesting an election and lack of basic reading and writing skills. Based on these study findings, the research concludes that on one hand, not all voters go to the polls to support any candidate appearing on the ballot paper and such voters tend to deliberately cast informal votes, on the other hand, some voters mistakenly vote informally due to illiteracy and lack of knowledge and skills about voting procedures. Regarding these findings, the research recommends that voter education providers should distribute brochures, magazines and other relevant forms of literature focusing on ballot marking procedures and the effect of informal voting. Further research to be conducted on the category of informal votes cast and individual mistakes made on each ballot paper immediately after an election in order to come up with a report reflecting informality rates with regards to intentional and non-intentional informal voting in various polling stations across the country.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

I.1 Overview

This chapter serves to introduce the study by bringing out its background, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives and research questions. The chapter also gives the significance of the study, operational definition of terms, organisation of the dissertation and ends with a summary.

1.2 Background Information

Some votes at every election are informal because they are not filled out in accordance with the provisions of the Electoral Act governing elections in a particular country. This being the case, such votes cannot be included in the counting leading to determining the winner or loser of an electoral contest. Current studies on informal voting have shown that voting informally is a global problem which seems to characterise almost all election results (IDEA, 2014). The level of informal voting in any given country can provide an indication of elector management and an understanding of the electoral process. It can also help advance appropriate strategies towards addressing the informal voting problem.

Since her inception, Zambia has continued to depend on the use of the ballot paper to determine the political leadership of the day. This is experienced through holding elections at an interval of five years (Phiri, 2008; AEDB, 2015). However, it has been observed that almost in every election held in Zambia, there has been some informal votes cast. This is the case when some voters do not mark their ballots in accordance with the provisions of the Electoral Act. According to ECZ (2006), the Zambian Electoral Act provides that a vote shall be informal if it has been marked in a manner that does not clearly reflect the voter's intentions or choice of candidate. The AEDB (2011) records that the history of informal voting in Zambia dates as far back as 1964. For instance, at the 1964 liberation elections, 4,178 informal votes were cast. The 1996 tripartite elections recorded 66,242 informal votes. In 2006 elections, there were 48,936 informal votes cast and the 2015 presidential by-election, 17,313 informal votes were cast. As for Namwala constituency, the informality rates have been as follows: in 2001 elections, 182 informal votes were cast, 2006 elections, 240 informal votes were cast while in 2011 elections, 300 informal votes were cast. Based on these informality rates, it can be argued that from 1964

to date, huge numbers of votes have been thrown out in these elections, a problem which left several voters mute on which candidates they felt should hold office.

Although this is the state of affairs in Zambia, FODEP (2007) and AVAP (2009) have shown that since the re-introduction of plural politics in Zambia way back in the 1990s, voters have been empowered with voting knowledge and skills so as to enable them participate effectively in voting events. This view is supported by arguments advanced by ECZ (2008) that a lot of people have been trained on how to conduct elections while electorates are provided with voter literacy to enable them acquire voting knowledge and skills. What is not clearly explained is why some voters still cast informal votes to date. This seems to suggest that the problem remains un investigated and unabated in spite of it being experienced for quite some time now. It was against this background that the researcher was prompted to do a research in order to establish the factors influencing informal voting based on an understanding that meaningful voter participation only occurs when the actual choices and wishes of the voters are successfully expressed through the ballot paper.

1.3 Problem Statement

While voting events accord each and every citizen an opportunity to have a say on public policy, the current records of election results have shown that some voters do not successfully make use of this opportunity as evidenced through informal votes cast in every election held in Namwala Constituency (AEDB, 2015). What seems not to be clearly explained is why this trend has continued despite massive voter education campaigns and election staff training seminars being conducted time and again across the country. Given this state of affairs, this study sought to investigate into the factors influencing informal voting in Namwala constituency.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to establish factors influencing informal voting in Zambia with reference to Namwala constituency.

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were to:

- investigate the types of informal voting taking place in voting events.
- establish the actual mistakes voters make when marking ballot papers.
- determine appropriate measures towards preventing informal voting in Zambia.

1.5 Research Questions

Main Research Question

The main research question of the study was: What are the factors influencing informal voting in Zambia?

Specific Research Questions

- What are the types of informal voting take place in voting events?
- What actual mistakes do voters make when marking ballot papers resulting in informal voting?
- What measures should be put in place to prevent informal voting in Zambia?

1.6 Significance of the Study

It was hoped that the research might help responsible authorities to come up with appropriate strategies to address informal voting, aid many voters cast votes that count and heighten the integrity of elections in Zambia. Additionally, the study would contribute to the existing body of knowledge on informal voting in Zambia and also move other scholars to enquire more on this subject matter.

1.7 Operational Definition of Terms

Voting: Voting refers to the process through which people make decisions on a subject that concerns them especially in deciding on public policy done by way of ushering in representatives in public office by putting a mark on the ballot paper.

Ballot paper: This is an official voting paper used in an election. It reflects pictures of candidates contesting an election, political party names, party symbols and a space where voters put marks to indicate their choice of candidate.

Informal vote: An informal vote refers to a vote that does not clearly reflect a voter's choice of candidate among those appearing on the ballot paper. Such a vote does not count towards any candidate contesting an election instead, it is put aside during vote counting process.

Informal voting: It is a kind of voting which flouts voting regulations resulting in votes being rejected during the counting and scrutiny process.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

This study was informed by two theories which are the Social Exclusion Theory by Emile Durkheim (1895) and the Protest Voting Theory by Myatt (2012).

Levitas (2000) notes that the Social Exclusion theory, whose pedigree is Emile Durkheim, has its roots in the eighteenth century enlightenment which emphasised solidarity and the idea of the state as the embodiment of the will of the nation. The theory also pressed demands for equality and participation of citizens in important activities of societies within which they live. Levitas (2000) holds that the Social Exclusion theory is a cross cutting concept whose main focus is on what fails people to participate effectively in key activities in their societies. This school of thought argues that people's participation in any important event is compromised if they are subjected to situations beyond their control.

Given this fact, I wish to observe that every society founded on democratic principles endorses political activities such as voting events as among other key activities of the society in which citizens are expected to participate effectively. Thus viewed from the political perspective, the Social Exclusion theory's main argument is that electorates are most likely going to fail to participate effectively if they are disadvantaged in one way or another. I wish to agree with this school of thought's views in that humans, as goal oriented beings, will always endeavour to get what they want but will only fail to do so for reasons beyond their control. In this regard, voters are perceived to be with full potential to cast votes which count unless they are socially excluded as in having poor participatory skills and lack of adequate information about electoral matters or voting events. Therefore, it can be argued that in any voting event, any well-meaning democrat is willing to add their voice on public policy and finds the use of the ballot paper worthwhile. Since voting gives an ordinary citizen an opportunity to have their voice heard on how they would wish the affairs of their society to be run, it is very possible that they will

always endeavour to avoid any slightest chance of having their votes wasted unless they are disadvantaged to a large extent. Therefore, this theory is most appropriate in this study whose aim is to establish an understanding of what leads to informal voting in Zambia. Having highlighted on the Social Exclusion theory, I now turn my attention to another theory which was used in this study, the Protest Voting theory by Myatt (2012).

The Protest Voting theory has its focus on what motivates voters to cast informal votes. It demonstrates that in plurality elections, informal voting is mainly as a result of voter dissatisfaction on the performance of either the government of the day or that of an individual representative at constituency or ward level. The theory also argues that in multiparty politics, informal voting is experienced in instances where an individual voter has a political preference for some party other than those taking part in the electoral contest.

Where voters vote informally in protest against non-performing representatives, Myatt (2012) argues that supporters of a particular candidate for a particular office may wish to restrict their power by sending their messages of protest reflecting their disillusionment. Given this fact, it can be argued that such voters know too well that their votes will not help a particular candidate succeed in an election and as such their aim is to cause a targeted candidate to lose an election by not supporting him or her as they did before.

This implies that there are times when voters and their representatives do have conflicting interests, each with their own motives and expectations and when voters perceive of their representatives as people who are self-centred in service delivery, they may abandon even their most preferred candidate and ensure that he or she loses an election even though such a candidate had a good chance of winning back the seat. Thus voters are perceived to be in a position to cast informal votes when they wish to harm the targeted candidate's performance in an election especially when they are angry with this particular candidate. This entails that there are certain conflicts in society which motivate voters to express their hostility and opposition against their representatives by way of casting informal votes.

One other argument advanced by the Protest Voting School of Thought is that some voters cast informal votes with a belief that messages delivered through protest votes may convince the targeted candidate to consider the protesters' demands in an event that he or she wins back an election. Thus some voters do not necessarily cast informal votes with a view to punishing a particular candidate but only do so in the hope of correcting such a candidate's ill behaviour

while in public office. However, I wish to observe that such a situation is only possible in an event that a targeted candidate wins the electoral contest.

Generally, this theory brings out three important arguments about informal voting behaviour amongst informal voters and these are:

- When voters are not satisfied with the performance of either the government of the day or that of an individual representative at national, constituency or ward level.
- When individual voters have some political preference for some party other than those taking part in the electoral contest.
- When voters wish to correct the behavior of a particular candidate while serving in public office.

Contextualising these two theories to informal voting in Zambia and the world over, it can be argued that voters have the potential to participate meaningfully in political matters. Their participation only ends futile once they begin to act under the influence of certain factors as in either being socially excluded or alternatively in response to the voting environment or some ill practices amongst some political players or their representatives at various levels of decision making in public office. Moreover, both theories have also demonstrated that once a voter votes informally under whatever influence, is counted outside the whole exercise as in having said nothing on how the nation should be governed. This is because an informal vote may not successfully achieve its objective especially that in some instances, informal voters happen to be in the minority. Based on these facts, both of these theories were perceived to be better placed to guide the study. While these theories provided some insights on why some voters cast informal votes, we do not know if the same is true with informal voters in Zambia, hence this study.

1.9 Organisation of the Dissertation

This study is divided into six chapters. The first chapter presents an introduction to the study by bringing out the background information, stating the statement problem, research objectives and research questions, purpose of the study, significance of the study, and operational definitions of terms as used in the study. It also presents a theoretical framework which guided the study.

Chapter two presents literature review. Literature was reviewed from Western countries perspective, African countries perspective, Zambian perspective and Namwala constituency perspective and then gaps were identified to justify the need to carry out the study. Chapter three presents a research methodology applied to collect and analyse data. This chapter explains the research design used, study population and sample size, sampling technique, data collection instruments, data analysis, data presentation, validity and reliability of collected data and ethical considerations.

Chapter four presents the findings of the study. Chapter five discusses research findings based on themes generated from research objectives of the study. Chapter six gives a conclusion of the study and makes recommendations based on the research findings.

1.10 Summary

This chapter marked the introduction of the study whose aim was to establish factors influencing informal voting in Zambia. The chapter presented the study's historical background, problem statement, research objectives and questions, significance of the study, operational definition of terms, theoretical frame work and ended with a summary. The next chapter presents literature review and the concept of informal voting.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

This chapter examines related literature on informal voting in Zambia and the world over in order to establish the factors leading to informal voting. Literature review depended mainly on the works done in western countries because at the time of this study, it seemed minimal research had been done in this area especially in the African context. In this chapter, literature review is presented with reference to informal voting in: Western countries, African countries, the Zambian context and Namwala constituency. The chapter ends with a conclusion of the whole chapter. Before getting into all these details, the chapter presents a discussion on the concept of informal voting.

2.2 Understanding Informal Voting

In the world over, ballot papers are widely used to express one's choice of candidate among those running for public office (IDEA, 2014). While voting is seen as an opportunity for an ordinary citizen to add their voice on how they would want to be governed, it has been observed that in Zambia and the world over, some voters have not successfully made use of voting events to provide direction on public issues (IDEA, 2014, AEDB, 2015). These voters are believed to have been marking ballot papers in a way that failed them to choose a candidate to represent them in all levels of decision making. According to Medew (2003), Section 268 of the Commonwealth Electoral Act of 1918 provides that ballot papers must be marked in accordance with the electoral laws governing voting in an individual country. The Act further provides that a vote becomes informal if "the ballot paper has been wrongly marked or not marked at all." This suggests that if a voter does not adhere to the provisions of the Electoral Act governing ballot marking procedures in voting events of a particular country, he or she will have their vote informal. In agreement with the above Act, ECZ (2008) shows that part 11, section D of the 2006 Zambian Electoral Act provides that a vote shall be informal if it has not been marked in a manner that explicitly defines the voter's intentions or indeed choice of candidate. The Act further provides that a ballot paper shall be informal if it has been marked in a manner that identifies the voter as in the use of names, signatures or thumb prints for this undermines the secrecy of the ballot.

This follows, therefore, that the use of any unacceptable voting marks is an election fraud and as such ballots which flout voting requirement rules are classified as informal and are not counted to see who loses or wins the electoral contest. It should be noted that though the informal ballot papers are accounted for in reconciliation of ballot papers meant for a particular election and also to determine voter turnout at the close of an election event, they have no influence on the weight of formal votes cast in an election. Such votes are rejected or thrown out during the counting and scrutiny process. This implies that if one does not observe voting rules, one remains mute on which candidate should hold office. In other words, informal voters are losing an opportunity to make their wishes known through the ballot paper. I seem to argue in this manner on grounds that whether one votes informally in protest against certain issues in their community or because one lacked voting information and skills, at the end of an election, they will both have their votes informal and put aside with regards to determining who should or not be given the authority to govern.

According to the IDEA (2014), informal voting is a global problem which makes some people's participation in the voting process futile. While protesting voters might in a way achieve their goal as in having registered their anger and frustration, it is still very possible that their demands cannot be attended to because in every democratic society, the voice of the majority provides direction on how those in power should govern the nation. Based on this fact, it can be argued that both fronts of informal voters fail to inform elected officials and lawmakers about their need for health care services, education provision, social security and public safety among others which all support human life.

2.3. Informal Voting from Western Countries Perspective

Studies done in some western countries (IDEA 2014, Power 2009) revealed that there are a number of factors influencing informal voting. These are: English language proficiency, compulsory voting, poor ballot design, voting technologies and complicated voting systems. As to whether or not the same could be true in Zambia is what this study would like to establish.

2.3.1 English Language Proficiency

A study conducted by the AEC (2013) on informal voting in Australia revealed that English language proficiency is a key inhibiting factor to formal voting among non-English language speakers. According to the AEC (2013), in Australia, constituencies densely populated with

electorates who are not proficient in English language always recorded higher levels of informal voting mainly because voting instructions were always translated in English language. This conclusion seems to have been arrived at after drawing comparisons among different counties with reference to informality rates. For example, it is evident in the AEC (2013) Report on informal voting that in the 2010 and 2013 Australia's House of Representative elections, five out of ten counties which recorded the highest informality rates also had the five highest proportions of people without English language skills.

Based on the above arguments, it can be concluded that Australian voters go into the polling booth with voting instructions at their disposal. What seems to be a problem is that these instructions are translated in English language which becomes a challenge to those who cannot read and understand what is written on ballot papers. It also seems that the voter has to do all they can within their capacity to cast a vote which counts. This seems to suggest that during the voting process, there is no communication between the election staff and voters with language problems and as such, voters faced with language barriers happen to be disadvantaged where ballot marking and casting votes are concerned. Another finding from these studies indicate that Australia uses the alternative voting system which results in voter confusion about the differences between state and federal voting systems. The AEC (2013) further explains that voters who are unable to use the instructions in relation to different voting systems vote informally by either casting blank ballots, casting ballot papers with incomplete numbering, or even non-sequential numbering. It follows therefore that people who are from countries that do not use this system and lack English Language skills find it very difficult to participate effectively using the alternative voting system.

Given these facts, it can be said that when voters lack basic reading and understanding skills of a language used in the voting process, they are likely to vote informally because they find it a challenge to adhere to voting instructions appearing on the ballot paper. It can also be argued that owing to language barriers, some voters vote informally mainly due to their potential vulnerability to missing out on important electoral information disseminated prior to an election event. These are critical issues which need to be sorted out before elections are held so as to help voters with language barriers to vote effectively. In each of these given situations, my observation is that non-English language speakers voted informally in both the 2010 and 2013 elections in Australia because they were socially excluded due to their language barrier. Thus the Social Exclusion theory is proved right to argue that people's participation in key events of their societies becomes futile due to reasons beyond their control. Much as these

voters made an effort to participate in these elections, their participation was in vain because they were subjected to voting instructions translated into a language which they could hardly understand. Whether or not there are some voters who vote informally due to language barriers in Zambia is what this study would establish.

2.3.2 Compulsory Voting

Power (2009)'s study on informal voting in Brazil's key finding was that compulsory voting was responsible for informal voting behaviour amongst some voters. According to Power (2009), in Brazil, voting is mandatory for the economically productive age group and failing to vote without having justified one's failure to vote within a time frame of two months attracts a fine or serious sanctions. Sanctions against non-voters include exclusion from accessing employment, loans, renewing passports and driver's license, among other services provided for by the public sector. Power's findings are supported by the IDEA (2014) which reports that countries which use compulsory voting to foster high voter turn-out always record high informality rates. Examples of such countries include Peru, Austria, Singapore, Italy, Switzerland, Chile, Belgium, Bolivia, Australia, among others. In each of these countries, non-voters are punished though punishments vary across countries. For example, the IDEA (2014) demonstrates that in Chile and Austria, courts may impose a prison sentence on those who fail to pay the fines. In Belgium, non-voters are subjected to infringements of civil rights. For example, if someone does not vote for four times within a 15 year period, he or she is disenfranchised and also finds it difficult to get jobs within the public sector. In Singapore, the non-voter is removed from the voter register until he or she reapplies to be included and submits an acceptable reason for not having voted in the previous elections. In Peru, the voter has to carry a stamped voting card for a number of months for without it, one is denied access to some services and goods from public offices. In Bolivia, one would not receive his or her salary from the bank without any proof of having voted during three months after the election. To avoid facing such consequences of non-voting behaviour in each of these countries, Power (2009) and the IDEA (2014) established that some voters go to the polls not to vote for any candidate but to express their anger and frustration against being forced to the polls. In line with these findings, some protesting voters opt to cast blank ballot papers while others scribble writings sending critical messages of anger criticising mandatory voting imposed on citizens.

Looking at the mistakes made in balloting procedures, one would argue that there are some people who have not accepted the culture of mandatory voting in these countries and this attitude motivates them to cast informal votes. This implies that in circumstances that voters are mandated to participate in the polls, others deliberately cast informal votes. It must be noted that when one is forced to the polls, it is possible that voting ceases being an intrinsic obligation. Some voters merely go to vote out of fear of facing severe punishments especially that sanctions against non-voting behaviour are attached to services which citizens need for their livelihood. It should also be noted that compulsory voting could be generally against the will of some voters especially that there are people who do not vote on either cultural or religious principles. This being the case, the voter does not care about participating meaningfully and whom to vote for instead they just want to register their presence at the polling station to avoid being punished for not having voted. Based on these facts, I find informal voting resulting from being forced to the polls to be in agreement with the Protest Voting School of thought which argues that in circumstances that voters have negative feelings with some issues in their society, they decide to vote informally so as to express their anger. In this case, protesting voters cast informal votes in protest against being forced to the polls. Whether or not there are some voters who vote informally out of anger and frustration in Zambia is what this study sought to establish.

2.3.3 Poor Ballot Design

A study on informal voting in Scotland's 2007 elections revealed that 14000 voters voted informally due to poor ballot design. According to the Electoral Commission of Scotland Report (2011), the design was done in such a way that both regional and constituency voting papers reflecting pictures of candidates contesting an election were accommodated on the same ballot sheet. Much of the confusion seems to have been that voters were asked for the first time, to enter their choice for the regional list and for their constituency on a single ballot paper. The report further indicates that in this same election, people were given a different ballot paper for the local authority elections on which appeared different voting rules which required voters to mark their ballot papers by using numbers to indicate their preferences. This problem seems not to have been resolved until the 2012 elections were held. This is evident in Denver et al (2012)'s arguments that poor ballot design disadvantaged a lot of voters in Scotland's 2012 elections such that above 27000 voters voted informally because they could not successfully rank order candidates according to their preferences by way of marking their ballots using numbers as

opposed to the usual voting marks. Denver et al (2012) maintains that owing to poor ballot design, some voters cast votes which were either wrongly, not clearly numbered, or not numbered at all. Other ballots were rejected because some voters chose more than the required number of candidates for one vacancy. Some voters voted informally by confusing party names and candidates on the ballot paper. According to Denver et al (2012), other problems came as a result of altering ballot design in order to accommodate larger numbers of candidates contesting an election and this increased the number of informal votes cast. The major problem was that these alterations resulted in fewer and less clear instructions on voting procedures. Mention should be made that the main focus of these studies was on the management of elections and the experience of the voters in the 2007 and 2011 elections. From the foregoing, it is clear that poor ballot design is a factor, which if not well taken care of, inhibits clarity in an election and thus disenfranchises lots of voters in this important political event. However, it is not known whether some Zambian voters vote informally because they have problems with the way the ballot paper is designed hence this study.

Whiney and Chinsell (2010) also did a study whose primary focus was on ascertaining what leads to informal voting in New York. The key finding of the study was that poor ballot design has remained a challenge in voting events despite having researched on it, come up with new ballot standards, best practice templates, including lots of public debate. This finding is supported by the Brennan Centre Report (2010) which reports that sometimes the ballot paper is designed in such a way that one candidate appears under several distinct political parties competing in one election. Such a ballot paper confuses many voters who end up voting for more than one candidate in the same electoral contest and thus have their votes informal. Given below is a typical example of a poorly designed ballot paper on which some candidates appeared against multiple political parties competing in just one electoral contest in New York's 2010 election. This is as reflected in figure 1 below.

Figure1

OFFICIAL BALLOT FOR THE GENERAL ELECTION - City of New York - County of New York - Novem

	A ★ Democratic	B 🐘 Republican	C 🦅 Independence	D 🦔 Conservative	E 🏠 Working Families	F 🌿 Green	G 🏠 Rent Is 2 Damn High	H 🦅 Libertarian	WRITE-IN CANDIDATO POR ESCRITO
Governor and Lieutenant Governor	For Governor Para Gobernador Andrew M Cuomo and y Robert J Duffy For Lieutenant Governor Para Vice Gobernador	For Governor Para Gobernador Carl P Paladino and y Gregory J Edwards For Lieutenant Governor Para Vice Gobernador	For Governor Para Gobernador Andrew M Cuomo and y Robert J Duffy For Lieutenant Governor Para Vice Gobernador	For Governor Para Gobernador Carl P Paladino and y Gregory J Edwards For Lieutenant Governor Para Vice Gobernador	For Governor Para Gobernador Andrew M Cuomo and y Robert J Duffy For Lieutenant Governor Para Vice Gobernador	For Governor Para Gobernador Howie Hawkins and y Gloria Mattera For Lieutenant Governor Para Vice Gobernador	For Governor Para Gobernador Jimmy McMillan	For Governor Para Gobernador Warren Redlich and y Alden Link For Lieutenant Governor Para Vice Gobernador	
Gobernador y Vice Gobernador	★ 1A <input type="radio"/>	🐘 1B <input type="radio"/>	🦅 1C <input type="radio"/>	🦔 1D <input type="radio"/>	🏠 1E <input type="radio"/>	🌿 1F <input type="radio"/>	🏠 1G <input type="radio"/>	🦅 1H <input type="radio"/>	
Vote Once Vote una vez	<p>Andrew M. Cuomo and Carl P. Paladino both appear on 3 different party lines.</p>								
						K 🚫 Taxpayers	J 🦅 Freedom	I 🌿 Anti-Prohibition	
						For Governor Para Gobernador Carl P Paladino and y Gregory J Edwards For Lieutenant Governor Para Vice Gobernador	For Governor Para Gobernador Charles Barron and y Eva M Doyle For Lieutenant Governor Para Vice Gobernador	For Governor Para Gobernador Kristin M Davis and y Tanya Gendelman For Lieutenant Governor Para Vice Gobernador	
						🏠 1K <input type="radio"/>	🦅 1J <input type="radio"/>	🌿 1I <input type="radio"/>	WRITE-IN CANDIDATO POR ESCRITO <input type="radio"/>

Source: The Brennan Centre Report (2010)

Whether there are some voters who vote informally in Zambia due to complications brought about by ballot design is what this study sought to establish.

In a study conducted by Laundie and McKeown (2014) on informal voting in Germany also found that poor ballot design was a major challenge to many voters in Germany. For instance, in Germany's 2013 elections, voters were subjected to very large ballot papers on which appeared over 100 candidates contesting the same election. This suggests that voters found it very difficult to manage a long ballot paper in polling booths. Laundie and McKeown (2014) also argue that the other challenge resulting from this poorly designed ballot paper was that words were in very small print and this required polling officials to provide magnifiers so that the names of candidates could be seen and read clearly. In light of this finding, it can be argued that voters who had problems with the font size, especially those with poor sight, and did not seek help of the poll staff voted informally in this election. Mention should be made that the core purpose of this study was to determine how the ballot paper design impacted voter participation in this particular election.

It is clear from each of these study findings that several informal voters had their participation compromised all because they were subjected to a ballot designs which they found to be non-

user friendly. This argument is supported by the Social Exclusion theory which posits that once an individual is subjected to circumstances that he or she cannot control, his or her participation in any event ends up meaningless as it does not allow the participant to achieve the intended goals. Thus much as one is willing to take part in an event, the level of one's participation is determined by the situation in which one finds oneself. Whether some voters vote informally due to poor ballot design in Zambia is what this study sought to establish.

2.3.4 Long Lists of Candidate

In a study conducted by AEC (2009) on informal voting in Australia established that a highly contested election brings about informal voting behaviour. AEC (2008) argues that long candidate lists influence higher rates of informal voting because they carry along with them more political parties with their candidates competing in just one election. This makes it hard for some voters to locate their candidates on very long lists and then number them sequentially. Another problem brought about by long candidate lists is the preferential voting system used to express one's choice of candidate. As AEC (2009) puts it, this process is so involving and confusing that some voters end up voting informally either by failing to complete their ballot papers sufficiently well or even just give up and cast blank votes. A similar argument is advanced by the AEC (2013) Report which contends that the higher the number of candidates there are on the ballot paper, the higher the informality rates.

The AEC (2013) report also argues that the situation is worsened by the criteria used in selecting candidates in which after locating the candidates of one's choice, the voter has to sequentially number them in his or her order of preference. Additionally, these studies found that increasing numbers of candidates contesting the same election suffers lots of informal voting as people end up failing to make choices especially if many of the candidates appearing on the ballot paper are appealing to the voters. In such instances, voters tend to vote for more than one candidate, an act which flouts electoral laws. I seem to agree with the above findings based on an understanding that long candidate lists place a heavy mental task on the voters since they have to spend lots of time studying the names of candidates in order to successfully make a choice from among several of them on a single ballot paper. Looking at the challenges that came along with long candidate lists in these elections, one would see that voters were subjected to complex electoral choices especially in instances where electoral systems demanded multiple candidates for each seat. The voter's capacity to make decisions in the voting event became compromised thereby resulting in informal voting as in incomplete numbering or indeed non

sequential numbering. It is also possible that some voters risked confusing their candidates with political party names. The situation seems to have been worse off if a voter failed to locate his or her candidates or even suffered from indecision while in the polling booth. This agrees with the Social Exclusion theory that in instances that participants are subjected to situations beyond their control as the case was with subjecting voters to very long candidate lists in these elections, their participation is highly compromised thereby failing to have a say on a contested issue. Whether or not some voters in Zambia cast informal votes as a result of confusion brought about by the number of candidates appearing on the same ballot paper is what this study would like to establish.

2.3.5 Complicated Voting Systems

Voting systems differ from place to place. In some countries, a tick against a candidate of one's choice is all that is needed to express one's preference. However, the case of Belgium, Australia, among others is a different one. It is evident in the AEC (2009)'s study findings that voting systems used to arrive at a candidate of one's choice in the above named countries are very complicated. According to this study, voters are required to rank order their candidates according to their order of preferences using sequential numbers.

According to Medew (2003), the voting system used in Australia is even much more complicated compared to other systems in other countries. Medew (2003) further argues that the Australian Electoral Act provides that in the House of Representatives elections, voters must place a number '1' in the square beside the name of their preferred candidate, and then must place consecutive numbers against the name of each and every other candidate on the ballot paper to show the order of the voter's preferences. Medew (2003) also found that there are constant changes in the Australian voting systems and as such within a time frame of three years, Australian voters are subjected to different voting systems. For example, voters are asked to vote for the Australian Senate, House of Representatives, two state houses and local government representatives using different voting systems under the same electoral contest. The voter may be asked to decide on federal or state referenda questions using another different system of voting. This study also elaborates that voters may be asked on one occasion to mark their ballot papers with sequential numbers and fill in all available boxes except one, on another occasion to put a cross in any one square, and on another one to write 'yes' or 'no'. This seems to be a very serious barrier to meaningful participation as the process seems to be complicated, confusing and tiresome especially that all these must be observed in just one election. The other

observation is that numbering a lot of candidates takes time, and not every voter might manage to make this effort. Medew (2003) states that voters who may not be able to adhere to all these instructions cast incompletely numbered or totally blank ballot papers. It is also very possible that this system can result in voter confusion about the differences between state and federal voting systems thereby making voters to cast votes with incomplete numbering, use ticks and crosses to mark their ballots in some states or territories.

In line with the above facts, it is clear that voting in Australia is very challenging owing to the use of different voting methods in the Senate and the House of Representatives, as well as local government elections and referenda resulting in un sequential numbering of candidates on ballots papers. This follows therefore that in instances where voters are subjected to various changes in voting systems within a short time frame, they find it difficult to adhere to new voting regulations thereby failing to indicate their preferences. The major problem seems to be lack of adequate sensitisation on how the new voting system works prior to an election which requires voters to fill up different seats in just one election. What seems to be much of the problem is that voters are subjected to various ballot papers with different voting instructions in just one election. It is likely that such informal voters are actually trying to cast a valid vote but failing as they are subjected to complicated voting systems especially that preferential voting is compulsory. Thus some voters voted informally not because they wished to do so but because they were socially disadvantaged by the complicated voting systems they were subjected to. This agrees with an argument which is at the core of the Social Exclusion theory School of Thought that people can only fail to participate effectively if they are disadvantaged in one way or another. While this may not apply to the Zambian situation, it is possible that some voters may still find the voting system complicated and confusing and this could result in informal voting, hence the need to do the study.

2.3. 6 Voting Technologies

Studies conducted in the UK, USA, Germany and Australia have shown that the problem of informal voting also results from advancing voting technologies. Card and Moretti (2006)'s study findings were that these countries have a variety of voting technologies such as Lever machines, Optical-Scan systems, Electronic voting, Punch Cards, internet voting, group tickets,

among others. Card and Moretti (2006) further attribute informal voting in Western countries to advanced electronic devices used in voting events.

A similar argument is advanced by Harold (2009) who contends that when voters get into the polling places, many are the times that they are asked to vote through new devices even before they are conversant with and accept the new technology. For example, Harold (2009)'s findings were that the 2006 elections in the USA were conducted using touch screen voting systems which are electronic oriented but voters were not yet familiar with this voting technology. This resulted in more than 14,000 voters voting informally because they found the touch screen technology hard to use. Harold (2009) further reveals that voting technologies mainly become a problem to the voter in the sense that they inhibit accuracy by adding steps in which each and every step added implies more potential errors. These steps include; "voter to ballot, to ovals, to optical reader, to vote tabulator, and finally to centralised total." Though no observations are given on the impact of the increase in steps on voter participation, my observation is that voters who are unable to follow all these steps are likely going to make a lot of errors at each step or even skip some of the steps and end up casting informal votes. This implies that voters tend to vote informally due to their incompetence on operating electronic oriented machines used in the voting process. It is possible that much as they wished to cast valid votes, some people could not do so because they were seriously faced with knowledge and information gaps on how to use voting machines. This being the case, such voters were disadvantaged by the use of the newly introduced voting technologies. This agrees with the Social Exclusion theory that it is very possible that some people fail to participate in key events of their society once they find themselves in situations above their control. Although Zambia does not use any electronic voting machines, these studies are still relevant to the current study as they may provide the way forward to the informal voting problem experienced in Zambia.

2.4 Informal Voting from the African Countries Perspective

Studies carried out on informal voting in African countries revealed that there are three key factors influencing informal voting. These are voter ignorance about voting procedures, confusing voter education and biased poll staff at polling stations.

2.4.1 Ignorance about Voting Procedures

Gyampo (2009) did a study on informal voting in Ghana. The study's primary focus was on the impact of rejected ballots on democratic consolidation in Ghana. Where informal voting is concerned, it was found that ignorance about voting procedures is responsible for the high numbers of informal ballots cast by voters. Gyampo (2009) contends that the voting system used in Ghana allows voters to indicate their preferences by way of using thumbprints. Unfortunately, it seems some voters are still not conversant with the thumb printing process. In this study, it was found that such voters fail to use the thumbprints in an acceptable manner instead they do it in a way they feel is right and this fails election officials to determine the intentions of the voter. Gyampo (2009) further states that other mistakes in balloting procedures made by Ghanaian voters include voting for all the candidates contesting an election either because they are in support of all of them or as a way of voting against them all. The other argument is that some voters do thumbprint for all candidates appearing on the ballot paper due to partisan politics in general. Such voters end up invalidating their ballots as it was in the 2008 elections in which Ghana recorded a total of 205,438 informal votes cast. Given these facts, it can be argued here that in Ghana, some voters are not fully sensitised about how to communicate their choice of candidates especially where balloting procedures are concerned hence their being excluded out of the voting exercise.

2.4.2 Confusing Voter Education

Another finding in Gyampo (2009)'s study was that informal voting in Ghana results from confusing voter education which voters are provided with during the voter education period. For example, Gyampo (2009)'s study elaborates that in Ghana's 2008 elections, voters were initially informed that they were to use any of their fingers to vote. As the author puts it, as time went by, the Electoral Commission, working hand in hand with the Inter Party Advisory Committee (IPAC), resolved that voters were going to vote using a thumb print only. On the contrary, on the voting day, voters were asked to use their small finger of their left hand and it was this same finger that was dipped in indelible ink. Unfortunately, a good number of ballot papers marked in this manner were disqualified by party agents during the counting and scrutiny process.

Looking at the contradictory voting instructions availed to both voters in general and election staff who include party agents, it can be argued that party agents were right to question these ballot papers based on the voting information availed to them prior to the election day. This implies that the voter education messages lacked clarity on balloting procedures and people were not fully aware of how the indelible ink would be applied in relation to the education given to them on the polling day. It can also be said that going by the way voting instructions were conveyed to the voters, there seems to have been communication break-down among the communication channels in Ghana especially during the voter education period up until the election day. There seems to have been no single agreed upon voting instruction to help voters until the voting event was on. In the long run, voters were subjected to different instructions which also contradicted each other in practical terms. It can also be observed that there are lapses in the voter education curriculum especially where ballot marking procedures are concerned. To some extent, one would argue that voters were actually disadvantaged by the responsible authorities and this prevented them from having their wishes known in the 2008 elections. This finding is supported by the Social Exclusion theory proponents that participants can only fail to participate effectively in an event for reasons beyond their control. My argument is that voters who voted informally due to lapses on voting instructions were disadvantaged by the voting instructions which were confusing to a very large extent. Whether or not voters vote informally due to ignorance about voting procedures and confusing voter education in Zambia as well is what this study would establish.

2.4.3 Biased Election Staff

Hanlon and Nuvunga (2009)'s study on informal voting in Mozambique found that there were some irregularities in the way the election staff handle ballot papers in the counting and scrutiny process. It was reported that some election staff tend to be extremely strict in the way they interpret the rules of what makes a ballot paper informal. Hanlon and Nuvunga (2009)'s argument is that much as the law on voting dictates that a vote is formal if the voter's intention is clear, some election staff tend to invalidate some ballots on partisan interests. This is the case even though it is sometimes very possible for vote scrutinisers to infer the preference of a voter during the ballot counting and scrutiny process. In Mozambique, usually the National Electoral Commission (CNE) reconsiders some ballots disqualified by election staff by determining that the ballot papers were correctly marked and thus clearly express voter's preferences. Such was the case in 2004 elections when 33% of Dhlakama's votes which were

disqualified by the election staff were reconsidered as valid by the CNE (Hanlon and Fox, 2006).

The other finding was that invalidating ballot papers is closely linked with biased poll staff at polling stations. What Hanlon and Nuvunga (2009) established was that some ballot papers were invalidated by biased poll staff who, acting under the influence of partisanship, were in a habit of putting extra finger prints on sets of votes for the opposition political parties. Such poll staff behaved in this manner so that votes in support of opposition political parties could be invalidated by a number of finger prints and consequently be disqualified during the counting and scrutiny process. According to these authors' work, on one incident, in Angoche, a Mesa President, was caught in the act of invalidating votes belonging to one of the opposition political parties. Under this incident, the opposition leader Dhlakama suffered this experience because his votes were invalidated with an extra finger print in the same position on each ballot paper. Hanlon and Nuvunga (2009) go on to reveal that owing to such conduct of the election staff, in 2009 elections, 25 de Junho primary school in Marromeu had one polling station with 56% invalid votes in the presidential election, a situation which raised concerns as to whether more than half of voters had no knowledge about voting procedures. These findings are supported by Fox and Hanlon (2006) who confirm that some ballot papers are invalidated by the poll staff at polling stations. For instance, these authors have argued that on one occasion, Dhlakama, an opposition party leader had his valid votes classified as "nulo" or invalid by the election staff. In each of these study findings, it is argued that such biased election staff are also in a habit of deliberately packing sets of opposition formal votes in sacks or piles of informal ballot papers with a view to reducing votes for the opposition. Such was the situation in the 2014 elections when 461,861 were deliberately invalidated by the election staff who packed ballot papers in support of the opposition political party in the same sack with invalid votes.

Going by what transpired in past Mozambican elections, one can conclude that it is not always that informal votes are cast by voters but that some election staff are responsible for this. It can also be argued that not all election staff go there to conduct elections as expected by the general public instead, they go there to ensure that a particular party loses elections. It could also mean that election monitors do not strictly monitor the activities taking place at polling stations or could also be acting in collusion with biased election staff to ensure that a particular party loses elections even when it received a good number of votes compared to the one declared to have won the electoral contest. Based on this study's findings, it can be argued that while informal

votes are always perceived to be cast by the voters, some of them are invalidated by the election staff at polling stations. Given this fact, it can be argued further that some of the elections held in various countries are not free and fair as usually reported after the declaration of the winning candidate. This situation could somehow be prevailing even in Zambia especially that there are a number of political parties contesting elections and the game of politics seems to be characterised by hatred amongst various political leaders. It should be clearly stated here that this study was mainly interested in the conduct of election staff at polling stations. Therefore, whether or not there are ballot papers that are invalidated by the election staff in Zambia as well especially that partisanship is everywhere is what this study would endeavour to bring out.

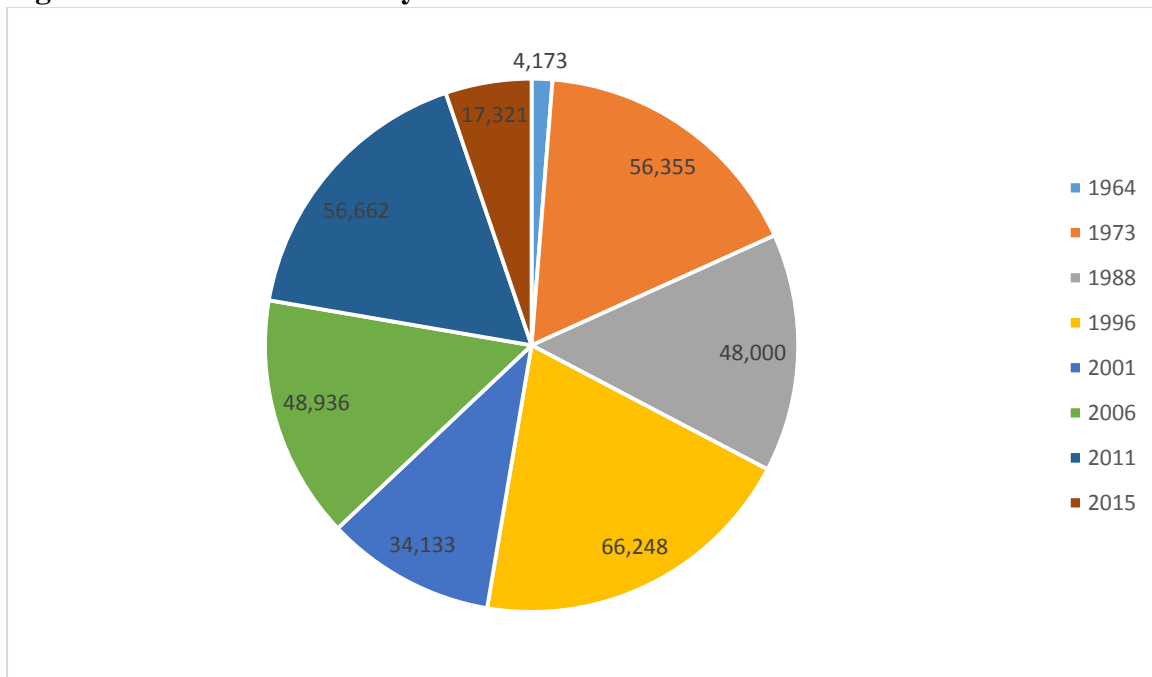
2.6 Informal Voting from the Zambian Perspective

Literature on informal voting in other African countries, Zambia inclusive, was not accessible at the time of this research and it is for this reason that no reference to them was made in this study. The only information which is there in relation to the study is about election results reflecting informality rates and these are not reflected here because they could not help bring out factors influencing informal voting in any of these countries. For instance, in Zambia, the 1996 tripartite elections recorded 66,242 informal votes, the 2006 elections recorded 48,936 informal votes and the 2011 elections recorded 56,662 all country wide while 2015 presidential by-election had 17,313 informal votes country wide. As for Namwala constituency, the informality rates are as follows: in 2001 elections, 182 informal votes were cast, in 2011 elections, 300 informal votes were cast and 2015 by elections, 120 informal votes were cast (African Elections Data Base, 2011, The Post Newspaper, 2015).

2.6. Trends in Informality

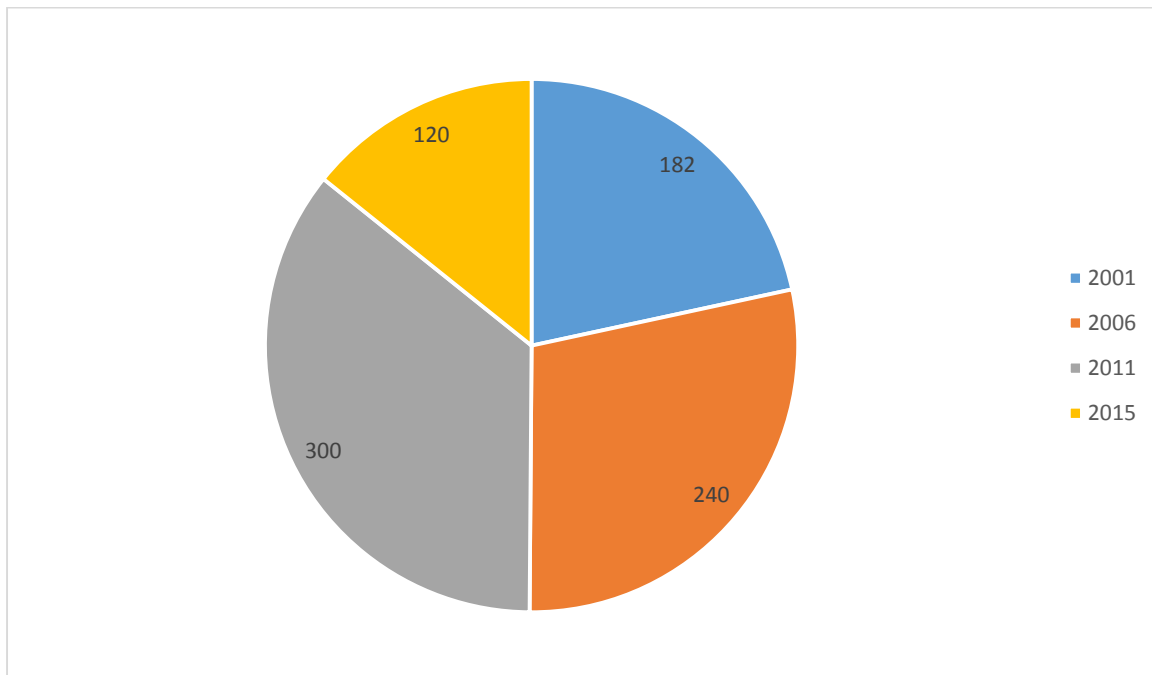
Zambia has never recorded a stability in informality rates as the informal vote graph continues to rise and fall (African Elections Data Base, 2011). Despite this being the fact, there are important differences in informality rates across types of elections. For instance, at the liberation elections, 4,173 people voted informally. The 1996 tripartite elections recorded 66,242 informal votes while the 2006 elections recorded 48,936 informal votes. In 2011, 56,662 cast. When a national by-election was held in 2008 only 23,596 were recorded while 2015 presidential by-election had 17,313 informal votes cast (African Elections Data Base, 2011, The Post Newspaper, 2015). Figures 2 and 3 below give a summary of these informality rates.

Figure 2. National informality rates



Source: AEDB (2015)

Figure 3-Namwala constituency informality rates



Source: AEDB (2015)

Note that the constituency's informality rates for the years not reflected here were not accessible at the time of this research.

It should be noted that informal voting has the potential to raise serious concerns about whether the intended choice of the voter is really that which is declared having won the contest. However, the problem of informal voting in Zambia seems to have remained unabated since the actual causes and solution to the phenomenon seem not to be established so far. This suggests that as things stand, in Zambia, we do not know how and why people vote informally since there seem to be not much study done on this subject matter. This study, therefore, aimed at bringing out information on the issue of informal voting by focusing on the factors causing the problem.

2.7 Summary

Revealed literature has demonstrated that informal voting is a historical global problem in the world over. In this study, the available literature has demonstrated that in western countries, informal voting happens under the influence of the following key factors; Poor ballot design, English language proficiency, voting technologies, long candidate lists, compulsory voting and complicated voting systems while in the African context, it happens under the influence of ignorance about voting procedures, confusing voter education and biased election staff. However, the available literature on informal voting in Zambia seems not to clearly bring out any explanation on the actual causes and solution to the phenomenon. This suggests that as things stand, in Zambia, we do not know how and why voters vote informally since there seem to be not much study done on this subject matter. This study, therefore, aimed at bringing out information on the issue of informal voting by focusing on the factors causing the problem of informal voting in Zambia.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

3.1 Overview

This chapter presents the methodology and methods used in order to achieve the main objective of the study at hand. The chapter discusses the research design, research site, the target population and sample size, sampling procedure, data collection instruments used, the method of data analysis, ethical considerations and limitations encountered in the process of data collection. This is in agreement with Kombo and Tromp (2014)'s arguments that a research methodology concerns itself with steps, strategies and procedures that the researcher uses to collect and analyse data to the research problem. Kombo and Tromp (2014) go on to say that a research problem can be adequately handled using either the qualitative or quantitative research methodology. Mention should be made that this was a purely qualitative study.

3. 2 Research Design

The study used a descriptive survey design because the researcher needed to collect data by interviewing respondents. The descriptive survey design allowed for the researcher to conduct in-depth structured interviews and focus group discussions with respondents and successfully collected data from primary sources with different literacy levels and age groups. Using this research design helped the researcher to collect data based on people's opinions and experiences in a social event in which people are directly involved. This is in agreement with Kombo and Tromp (2014) who posit that a descriptive survey design can be used when collecting data about people's attitudes, opinions, habits and experiences on social issues. In this study, this design was the most appropriate since voting for representatives is a social event. Additionally, the design's flexibility was to the researcher's advantage as it allowed for the researcher to accommodate the use of the language that the respondents were comfortable with. This created an atmosphere conducive enough for respondents to express themselves freely and then gave out relevant data that the researcher was interested in to address the research problem.

3. 3 Research Site

The research was conducted in Namwala constituency in Southern part of Zambia, a site identified on grounds that it is among other constituencies which record high numbers of informal voters. The other point was that time and the available resources were not enough to do a research covering more than one constituency or the whole country and so this site was found to be more convenient for the researcher.

3. 4 Study Population

According to Creswell (2009), a study population refers to a group of people that the researcher targets as sources of data for the study and on grounds that the target population shares certain characteristics in common. In this study, the population consisted of all district ECZ officials, all presiding officers and all voters in general. These respondents were viewed to be better placed to provide information necessary to meet the study objectives. The selection of these respondents is in agreement with Creswell (2009) who further argues that on a research mission, the researcher must approach respondents perceived to be in possession of relevant data on the subject under investigation.

3. 5 Study Sample.

In a research study, the sample is the small group or sub set of the whole population selected to be in a researcher's study. Sampling is defined as the process of selecting units (e.g., people, organisations) from a population of interest so that by studying the sample, the researcher may fairly generalise the results to the entire population in the study area or country (Creswell, 2009). In this study, a sample size of 100 respondents from the seven wards of the constituency was captured. This number of respondents was considered to be a suitable number that would give adequate and varied information on the subject under study. The breakdown of the data collection process was as follows: Two in-depth interviews with two ECZ officials at constituency level, one in-depth interview with presiding officers in each ward and two focus group interviews with voters in each ward. These participants were drawn from urban, rural and remote wards within Namwala Constituency. This was to allow for the researcher to collect data which is more representative of the population being studied

3. 6 Sampling Procedure

In this study, purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents for the study. In each of the 7 wards captured in the study, the researcher selected 13 voters who were in possession of voter's cards and had participated in voting for more than two times. Respondents were also asked to produce their voter's cards before they could take part in the study. The researcher also sampled 9 ECZ officials. Two of the ECZ respondents were drawn from the District Electoral Officer's office while the other seven were drawn from the 7 wards captured in the study. For the purpose of this study, the researcher sampled one presiding officer in each ward.

In this study, ECZ officials were selected because they were deemed to be respondents with expert knowledge about voting and ballot marking procedures. Due to their involvement in the electoral process as in conducting elections, counting and scrutinising votes as either formal or informal and better understand reasons for classifying votes as informal, these respondents also acted as key informants to the study. Furthermore, these respondents were targeted because they are responsible for compiling reports on election results reflecting informal votes cast. Voters were also purposively sampled because they were understood to be respondents directly involved in casting informal votes. The application of this technique to this study is in line with Creswell (2009)'s view that a researcher needs to be very strategic in identifying and selecting a sample with a view to interviewing relevant respondents to the study.

3.7 Data Collection Instruments

In this study, a document check-list was used to examine the provisions of the Zambian Electoral Act of 2006 on voting regulations. This instrument was also used to analyse data on election results reflecting informal votes cast in various elections held in Zambia and Namwala constituency. An interview guide was used to collect data from key informants (i.e., ECZ officials) in the selected wards of the constituency. The study also used a Focus Group Discussion guide to collect data from voters from selected urban, rural and remote wards of Namwala constituency. Conducting interviews with ECZ officials and Focus Group Discussion guide with voters enabled the researcher to have an insight of what really transpires in voting events with regards to why voters vote informally. The selection of this methodology is in line with Creswell (2009) who argues that the researcher must strategically collect data with the help of such instruments as interview guide, document analysis checklist and observations.

3.8 Methods of Data Collection

This study made use of qualitative approaches to data collection. These included structured interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis. Interviews and focus group discussions were used to collect data from primary sources while document analysis was used to collect data from secondary sources. Data collection is the process of finding necessary information on a research problem (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2007).

3.8.1 Structured Interviews

This research employed the use of in-depth structured interviews with the help of a well formulated interview guide. In-depth structured interviews were conducted with 9 ECZ officials. Structured interviews were conducted with the respondents in person so as to ensure that they understood the research problem under investigation and also ensure that the discussion was within the realm of the research problem. Respondents were given enough time to express their views on the subject matter so that they supply the required data in line with the well prepared interview guide. Using this type of a research instrument using same questions phrased the same way was aimed at helping respondents to understand the questions the same way though they reacted differently to the issue at stake. The method also helped the researcher to take care of any ambiguity of questions so as to avoid misleading the respondents and also help them provide almost the same responses for only when does the information collected become valid.

3.8.2 Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions with the voters comprising 6-7 respondents each were conducted in the 7 wards of the constituency. This helped bring about a fruitful social interaction between the researcher and the respondents which resulted in generating data that would be unlikely going to emerge in other data collection methods. This method also allowed for the researcher to have a first-hand insight of the required data as it emerged through respondents' attitudes, opinions, and experiences on the research issue. The selection of this approach is in line with Patton (1990) who contends that focus group discussions lead to the interaction of respondents and consequently stimulate richer responses as respondents are most likely going to say what they know about the subject matter.

These methods of data collection enabled the researcher to have a more interactive face-to-face experience with the respondents and moved respondents to supply a richer and more detailed data as needed by the researcher. Conducting personal interviews with the respondents was instrumental in getting respondents' opinions and note any emotions arising from the interview in relation to what leads to casting of votes which do not count in an election. Collecting data in this manner helped the researcher to see how respondents interpret their experiences in the voting process since the study sought to understand the research problem from the perspective of the respondents by gathering data in relation to their involvement in voting events, their knowledge of the circumstances under which informal votes are cast, mistakes that are made in balloting procedures and finding out what they feel should be done to bring the problem to an end. For the purpose of this study, all the responses were recorded for easy data analysis and coding purposes.

3. 8.3 Document Analysis

The study also depended on document analysis checklist in order to obtain secondary data on election results reports reflecting informal voting in Zambia. This was done to enable the researcher to have a clear understanding of informality rates in Zambia since the liberation elections. Using this method also helped the researcher to have access to factors resulting in informal voting in Zambia. For this reason, secondary data collected and analysed also included literature review and theoretical frameworks, review of relevant research publications on informal voting as well as the Zambian Electoral Act of 2006's provisions on voting regulations.

4.0. Data Analysis

Data analysis deals with the systematic arrangement of the outcome of the researched data. Data collected in this research was analysed thematically in line with research objectives. This was successfully done by identifying major themes and then classifying them under code schemes coming from samples of collected information. Coding of themes helped the researcher to narrow the collected data for easy transcription. Thus the study took into consideration sorting out, categorising and grouping, as well as proper arrangement of data with the help of a single master sheet for manual analysis.

3.9 Data Presentation

Data presentation was done in an orderly manner following the major themes that were in agreement with the research objectives as these led the researcher to the actual responses to the research problem. The validity and completeness of an interview guide was examined so as to find it manageable to marry responses with the research problem. Coded data was organised into major themes and tables were created to help the researcher identify the main categories suggested by the interviews. Major themes were used to explain issues surrounding informal voting in Zambia. The explanations that were given formed the base for writing the dissertation.

3.10 Validity

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001), a research validity is understood to mean the certainty and truthfulness of the findings in response to the research problem. This is very important because research findings are a reflection of the situation at hand and as such must be supported by the collected evidence. To ensure validity, research instruments were thoroughly examined and tested before a research was undertaken. Other measures put in place were ensuring that the researcher conducted the interviews personally with participants to clear up any misunderstandings of the research topic and ensuring that all responses were accurately recorded. The researcher also made use of research assistants to capture as much details as possible from respondents. Additionally, participant validation was also done.

3.11. Reliability

Leedy and Ormrod (2001) further indicate that reliability is much more concerned with the extent to which the findings of a research problem are consistent and dependable. To ensure reliability, the researcher put in place the following measures. To start with, the researcher identified the precise data needed to be gathered and then repeatedly made use of the same research instrument across respondents in the research field. The researcher also provided clarifications on the research questions so as to ensure that respondents understood the questions.

Finally, to ensure both validity and reliability of data collected, the researcher further applied member checking technique with 3 of the key informants (i.e., ECZ officials) and 7 voters. Member checking laid a foundation for the researcher to draw conclusions on what factors are responsible for informal voting in Zambia.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

Among other respondents, the study involved people from Electoral Commission of Zambia. For this reason, the researcher took into consideration the fact that these officers needed to be protected on grounds that they may be suspected of leaking information about election results especially that election results in Zambia are marred with complaints of election rigging by some poll staff. The other critical issue was that the study was conducted during an election year and respondents needed to be assured that the researcher was not spying on anything but was on an academic mission only. The principle of informed consent was observed in line with research ethics. Before the respondents were asked to participate, they were informed about the purpose and focus of the study. Consent to participate was then sought from them and they were asked to sign a consent form showing their willingness to participate. They were also told that they were free to withdraw from the interviews once they felt so. All respondents remained anonymous in order to maintain confidentiality.

3.13 Limitations of the Study

This study was carried out in only one constituency in Zambia and its focus was on factors influencing informal voting. Therefore, generalisation of the findings must be done with caution as they may not apply to other constituencies within Zambia. The major challenge that the researcher encountered was lack of adequate documentation on informal voting in Zambia.

3.13 Summary

This chapter presented a discussion on research methodologies employed in the study on “Establishing factors influencing informal voting in Zambia with a case focus on Namwala constituency”. The study made use of a descriptive survey design. The study’s sample size was 100 respondents who were perceived to be relevant sources of information necessary to address the research problem. The research made use of purposive sampling technique to identify respondents for the study. Interview guides were used to collect data from respondents. The researcher also observed ethical considerations to ensure respondents did not suffer loss of self-esteem, stress and implored them to contribute freely. The next chapter presents the findings of the study as collected from the field.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Overview

This chapter presents the findings as analysed from the data collected from the field on factors influencing informal voting in Zambia. Data was collected by way of document analysis, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. In this chapter, findings are presented in a manner that reflects responses from each group of the respondents that include ECZ officials and voters in general. Furthermore, findings are presented in relation to the themes generated from the study questions stated below.

- What are the types of informal voting take place in voting events?
- What mistakes do voters make when marking ballot papers resulting in informal voting?
- What measures should be put in place to prevent informal voting in Zambia?

4.2 Types of Informal Voting Taking Place in Voting Events

With a view to collecting valid information on the types of informal voting taking place in voting events, the researcher asked the participants the following question: What types of informal voting take place in voting events? In response to this question, respondents advanced divergent views which revealed that there are two types of informal voting. These are intentional and unintentional informal voting respectively.

4.2.1 Intentional Informal Voting

While every voter present at the polling station is expected to cast a vote which counts towards a candidate of his or her choice, this study established that there are some voters who go to the polls with a view to casting votes which do not choose any candidate at all. Generally, all key informants expressed knowledge of the prevalence of intentional informal voting taking place in voting events. Respondents revealed that some voters deliberately decide to cast informal votes despite being fully aware about how votes become informal and that informal votes are not given to any of the candidates competing in an election. One ECZ respondent had this to say:

In a voting event, some voters decide not to choose any candidate even when they have knowledge and skills about ballot marking procedures. Such voters deliberately cast informal votes by either leaving their ballots blank or scribbling things conveying negative messages about candidates contesting an election or any issues that may be of concern. Such voters deliberately do this because they know that their messages will be read by the election staff who count votes at the end of an election. Such voting behaviour is very common amongst angry voters.

4.2.2 Unintentional Informal Voting

Respondents also disclosed that not every voter invalidates their votes intentionally instead some do so ignorantly while others do so owing to some challenges that they may be faced with in the voting process. One ECZ respondent disclosed that:

Some voters vote informally out of ignorance. Others may not choose any candidate not because they would not want to but because they are not aware that their votes are informal. While others may be aware about how votes become informal, they still vote informally because of the challenges they may have with the voting process.

Having established the types of informal voting taking place in voting events, the researcher asked the respondents to state the factors perceived to be responsible for intentional informal voting. In response to this question, respondents revealed the following as factors leading to intentional informal voting.

4.2.1 Factors Leading to Intentional Informal Voting

- **Lack of Preferences amongst Candidates Contesting an Election**

Findings revealed that some voters invalidate their votes in instances that they fail to choose amongst those candidates appearing on the ballot paper. In this regard, respondents indicated that such voters exhibit this behaviour because they lack confidence that their views are represented by the running candidates and to them, supporting any one of those would mean forming a government which has no vision for the nation. This is what one of the ECZ respondents had to say:

During the voting exercise, not every voter has got a choice among those running for public office. In an election, the voter examines the level of representation of individual political parties' manifestos. Once a voter sees no possibility of any party or candidates delivering to his or her expectations, they

cast informal votes. Still others do so when their preferred candidate has been barred from contesting an election. Such voters simply scribble things that communicate messages of lack of candidates worth their support (e.g., none of the above, none of you is worth my vote, my beloved candidate is missing here) while others merely communicate their feelings by casting blank ballots.

- **Poor Economic Performance by the Sitting Government**

Findings also revealed that poor economic performance by the sitting government influences informal voting behaviour. Respondents explained that in a democracy, economic concerns play a significant part in influencing people's voting behaviour. This is what one ECZ official had to say:

Voters vote for representatives whose policies reflect people's economic interests. Any well-meaning voter considers policy performance, especially the government's capability in handling unemployment problems, inflation, and governance issues across the country. When this is not done to the voter's satisfaction, everyone in government is perceived to be a liar. When voting time comes, instead of choosing candidates, people express their frustration by casting blank ballots while others simply write messages like failed regime, end poverty, abash corruption, among others across the ballot paper.

- **Public Commentary on Election Results while Voting Continues**

Findings have shown that public commentary on the performance of individual candidates in an election also affects some voters negatively. The majority of the participants observed that the election staff at the totalling centre, with the help of the media houses, give election results updates reflecting the margins of performance amongst candidates contesting an election. However, respondents said that this only becomes a problem when it is done while some people are still voting in some polling places. This is mostly experienced in tripartite or any other presidential election in which voting for one candidate is done across the country. Respondents' main concern was that this frustrates voters supporting a seemingly losing candidate especially if the margin of victory is sufficiently large. One voter had this to say:

Election results updates reflecting margins of performance of candidates affect some voters negatively. Upon learning that their candidate has already lost an election, some voters become emotional and if still in the voting queue, they opt to cast invalid votes since they feel convinced that they have already lost an election. Such voters scribble things like, 'God's time is the best, we will win next time, unfair election results...

- **Participation of perceived Corrupt candidates in an Election**

Findings also revealed that the participation of corrupt and selfish candidates in an election brings about informal voting behaviour. Respondents explained that some people feel mocked and betrayed upon seeing that they are about to usher into office individuals that they think are corrupt. Respondents further explained that corruption is not acceptable in a democracy because it only concentrates resources into few individuals' hands while the majority of the people remain in abject poverty. It is also clear from respondents that some voters use voting events as a platform good enough to express their withdrawal of support from selfish and corrupt representatives all because there is no other platform where they can engage with their representatives and caution them against lack of accountability in public office. One voter had this to say:

Our politicians are not in power to create jobs and make life easy for the citizens but to make themselves rich using resources meant for public consumption. In an election, the participation of candidates with corrupt records frustrates any well-meaning citizen...voting informally is taken as an indication that people are not content with the current state of affairs and that it cannot be tolerated any more. When voters cast informal votes, representatives begin to learn that they are losing power since their supporters are withdrawing their support.

One of the respondents even disclosed how one of the voters voted informally in one election in reaction to perceived corruption practices amongst some government officials. This is what one ECZ official had to say:

... I remember what one voter did. Instead of choosing a candidate, he shared his loss of confidence in one of the candidates he had supported in the previous elections and wrote that, 'We did not send you to parliament to steal public resources and enrich yourself but to bring development here... you deserve to lose this election ...

- **Physical Violence in the Political Scene**

Findings have further shown that physical violence in the political scene is another thrust behind intentional informal voting in Zambia. Some respondents said that Zambian political players had failed to exercise tolerance of divergent views in the political scene hence the perpetuated practices of bloodshed in the political arena. Respondents' concern was that once politicians get into power, they become immune to advice and undermine the fact that everyone

has a right to have a political opinion and thus fail to co-exist in political life. Respondents lamented that well-meaning Zambians seem not to appreciate the idea of holding elections in order to employ people to work for the masses and hold the nation as one. This breeds anger in people's hearts. They further lamented that instead of protecting and promoting what our forefathers fought for in the pre-independence era, modern politicians are in the business of betraying the motive of attaining political liberation. One voter had this to say:

Violence has continued to characterise our political scene... Governments have come and gone, but none of them has fought against political violence in its entirety ...our commanders in chief of the armed forces have failed to wipe out violence in this country because they are responsible for it. This angers some citizens because they cannot exercise their political opinions free of victimisation by some of those in authority and so people retaliate by casting votes which choose no candidate as in end violence, this country belongs to all of us...

Respondents further argued that as things stand currently in Zambia's political arena, people are living in constant fear of their lives as there appears to be organised serious physical violence and thuggery in the political scene. They further explained that what they see and hear about through the media (i.e., pictures reflecting victims of electoral violence) instils fear in them especially that this violence can even take place in view of the police who, in most cases, do not even rescue the victims especially those from the opposition. One voter lamented that:

It is annoying that a team of high level decision makers, people representing our interests and forming government have failed to end political violence instead have started using pangas in political life of this nation. Voting informally is one way of saying 'NO' to blood shed induced by our own people put in power by our votes.

Having established factors responsible for intentional informal voting, the researcher went ahead to find out on factors resulting in unintentional informal voting by asking the following question. What could be the factors leading to unintentional informal voting? In response to this question, respondents revealed the following as factors responsible for unintentional informal voting in Zambia.

4.2.2. Factors Leading to Unintentional Informal Voting

- **Lack of Basic Reading and Writing Skills**

Findings established that some voters cast informal votes because they lack basic skills of literacy. Respondents explained that it is very difficult for someone who has never been exposed to reading and writing activities to do it on the ballot paper. Respondents went on saying that it was unfortunate that in some constituencies, many people who take part in voting events are those who have not attended formal schooling and are without any literacy skills. This is what one ECZ official had to say:

In Zambia, illiteracy levels are very high and it is a serious problem to voting events. People who lack basic skills of reading and writing fail to do simple reading and writing tasks. Voting by using a pen is a very serious challenge and thus makes some voters lose confidence about how to vote correctly. In the process of struggling to put a mark, they find themselves tearing the voting paper or putting multiple marks on the ballot paper. Some do not even bother to write anything instead drop unmarked ballots while others opt to use thumb prints instead of a pen not because they wish to do so but because they cannot write.

- **Ignorance about Voting Regulations**

The study also established that informal voting also happens as a result of ignorance about voting rules. The majority of the ECZ respondents observed that some voters have had no chance of accessing voter information and so only learn about how to vote right in the polling booth. This compromises their participation because they start wondering about what to do. Respondents also observed that unless they ask for help, such voters mark their votes in any way they feel is right. Others still cast ballots without an official mark by the election staff. However, respondents also expressed concern on such an error caused by some election staff who may not have date stamped the ballot paper issued to the voter. Respondents explained that if a voter does not know that the ballot paper must be stamped, they just drop it in the ballot box and leave.

- **Lack of confidence in the Secrecy of the Ballot Paper**

While voting by secret ballot is aimed at protecting the voter's choice, this study's findings have shown that some people fail to exercise meaningful participation in the voting process because they do not believe in secret balloting. What this study has established is that an act of loudly announcing the names and other particulars of a voter done at polling stations makes them doubt the secrecy of the ballot. One voter had this to say:

Those people found in the polling stream see how we vote. We fear that if you do not choose a popular candidate in your area, you can be identified, reported or even be followed for that. Sometimes the poll staff threaten us when we take long choosing a candidate. Worse still, our National Registration Cards (NRC) and voter's cards are checked and our names are also made public at polling stations and are also written on the ballot paper. This means that each vote is known that it was cast by this person and can be followed. Since the poll staff see one's choice, some of us fear to write anything on the ballot paper.

Findings also established that fear of the poll staff present at polling stations was also a factor behind informal voting as one voter had this to say:

... I failed to choose a candidate because I noticed that one of the election staff saw that I had not voted for his brother and I feared that I might be reported for this. So I decided to cancel out my choice and left without choosing any candidate...

- **The Presence of Armed Men and Women in Uniform at Polling Stations**

Findings revealed that the presence of armed men and women in uniform at polling stations leads to informal voting behaviour amongst some voters. Respondents said that they become intimidated at the sight of armed men and women in uniform present at polling stations especially that regardless of where they are, these officers are associated with brutality. In view of this, respondents further disclosed that they fear to be beaten up or arrested by these officers should anything happen or should they make a mistake of voting for someone not standing on the ruling party ticket. What seems to worsen the situation is that these officers are government workers and voters take them to be sent to polling stations by the government of the day. This is what one voter said:

What do those police officers carrying guns come to do at polling stations? We get intimidated at the sight of their uniforms and guns. We even fear to vote for our candidates on opposition party tickets because we have heard of police officers beating up those supporting opposition political parties.

One voter went on saying that:

The process of scrutinising voting identity cards (IDs) like National Registration Cards and voters' cards done in the presence of armed police officers instils fear in some of us. We fear that should you mismark the ballot paper or make any movement in the presence of these officers, you can be arrested.

4.3 Mistakes that Voters Make when Marking Ballot Papers

With a view to establishing the actual mistakes voters make in ballot marking procedures, respondents were asked to state the actual mistakes voters make on ballot papers. Findings revealed that there are a variety of errors that voters make in ballot marking procedures. These are as discussed below.

- **Choosing More than the Required Number of Candidates to Fill up One Vacancy**

While voting regulations require voters to select only one candidate to fill up one vacancy, findings have shown that some voters error by marking their ballots against two or more candidates. When this is the case, the voter is understood to have voted for more than the required number of candidates against a single office. Consequently, such votes are thrown out during the vote counting and scrutiny process because they flout voting instructions. One ECZ respondent had this to say:

Some voters error by voting for two or more candidates but the law requires them to vote for only one candidate for each vacancy. For example, each constituency can only be represented by one MP, while only one presidential candidate is needed to fill up the presidential office. Ballots on which voters have marked against more than one candidate are thrown out during vote counting.

Some respondents admitted having voted for more than one candidate in just one election. When asked why they voted in this manner, respondents explained that they did so to avoid disappointing candidates who supplied them with certain things during the campaign period. Findings also established that some voters are also misled by party symbols which look alike.

For example, some clearly stated that there are two hand symbols that appear on the ballot paper. Since they are told to tick against the hand, they vote for both political parties represented by the hand symbol. One voter had this to say on over-voting;

During the campaign period, some candidates give us services and tangible goods like pressure cookers, shoes, farming in-puts, T-shirts, rappers, money, and employment in the public sector from which we continue benefiting even after the election period. So we also vote for all those who give us such important things in appreciation.

Another voter reported that:

Some of us live in the same communities with candidates who give us some things so we feel guilty and fear that if they discover that we did not vote for them, they will hate us and not give us anything in future. The other reason is that we vote for everyone who promises to do what we want and it is up to those who choose the winners to choose from among those we voted for.

Findings have also shown that some voters find the use of an 'X' misleading in the sense that letter X is associated with negative connotations. Respondents argued that some voters use a tick to show their choice and an 'X' to vote against candidates they do not like on the same ballot paper. When they mark ballots in this manner, voters seem to be thinking that marking a ballot paper with an 'X' is a wrong way of voting.

This is what one voter had to say:

I always put more than one mark on the ballot paper. I use a tick against a candidate I have chosen and an 'X' against the ones I have not chosen so that my candidate can win while the others can lose...

Findings also revealed that some voters always voted for two candidates for their constituency in just one election so that between the two, one would win the election. This is what one voter had to say:

There are many pictures of candidates appearing on the ballot paper and I always choose more than one candidate so that if one loses the election, then the other one can win it and we will have a representative.

- **Expressing their Choice by Using Unauthentic Voting Marks**

The study has established that some voters make such errors as using certain marks different from the standard and officially accepted ones. Respondents explained that the official marks authorised to express one's choice on a ballot paper are an 'X', a tick, or any other officially recognised mark. On the contrary, some voters mark their votes by writing sentences of party slogans, their names, signatures, drawing party symbols or any drawings of their design like a gloomy face, big head, among others. Findings also revealed that some voters error by writing sentences conveying hatred of certain candidates or in protest against the sitting government while others mark their ballots using indelible inked thumb prints. When probed to explain more on this error, respondents revealed that some voters use such marks because they wish to emphasise on their choice of candidates for a particular seat. This is what one ECZ official had to say:

In a voting event, ballots are supposed to be marked by either an 'X' or a tick or even any other mark that clearly expresses the voter's choice without revealing one's identity. Some voters error by marking their ballots using party slogans, their names, signatures, indelible inked thumb prints, or writing sentences reflecting messages of hatred against some candidates on the ballot paper. Some voters behave in this manner to show emphasis of their choice while others do it to intimidate the winner of an election.

Some of the respondents confirmed having used such marks as slogans, party symbols, their names among others. When probed to disclose why they found themselves using such unauthentic marks on the ballot paper, they explained that the use of names and slogans on ballot papers is a way of aiding the poll staff to get to know clearly that a voter's choice is a candidate on whom a name has been written especially that in some instances, voters have a warm rapport with their candidates. Findings revealed that some voters are motivated to do so based on the information given to them by some candidates during the campaign rallies that if voters hated these candidates, they should just put an 'X' against the candidates' names and they would lose the election. One voter had this to say:

We use slogans, party symbols, our names, or other words known by our candidates to make sure that those counting ballots do clearly see our choice of candidates. Also so that our candidates can know that we voted for them. The other reason is that some candidates instruct us to mark against their names with an 'X' so that they lose the election. So we write our names to protect our votes in support of our candidates because if we use an 'X', they will lose an election...

- **Casting ballots which do not bear any mark at all.**

While voters are required to choose a candidate out of those appearing on the ballot paper, this study established that some voters cast votes which do not convey any messages in terms of who their candidate is. Such voters possibly do this by casting blank paper ballots. When probed to explain more on this mistake, respondents said that some voters vote in this manner intentionally, while others do so all because they lack basic literacy skills needed for them to mark the voting paper with an appropriate mark. They further explained that such voters become intimidated by the idea of using writing devices and also would not want to be seen struggling putting a mark on the ballot paper. This is what one ECZ official had to say:

Some voters error by leaving their ballots blank. Such cases are common among illiterate voters especially those who feel embarrassed to expose their inability to write in the presence of the poll staff present in polling streams. Others behave in this manner after failing to make a choice when their preferred candidate was not adopted to contest the election.

- **Marking Ballot Papers in a Manner that does not Clearly Express a Voter's Choice of Candidate**

The study further established that some voters error by marking ballots in a manner that does not show the candidate chosen to take up a particular position. Participants explained that such errors are where voters put marks all over the ballot paper, in the spaces between two or among several candidates on the same ballot paper for the same seat. One ECZ official further explained that:

Some voters fail to mark their ballots to clearly show their choice of candidates. For example, they put marks in between two boxes, on top of the ballot paper, outside the boxes or all over the ballot paper. Ballots marked this way are deemed informal because there is no provision for a voter to mark their ballots in such a manner.

4.4 Measures Advanced Towards Preventing Informal Voting in Zambia

The study also collected views of respondents on possible measures which should be put in place to help bring informal voting to an end. In order to get respondents' views on the possible solutions to informal voting in Zambia, respondents were asked to suggest what they felt should

be done to help curb the problem under investigation. In response to this question, respondents brought out divergent views as given below.

- **Educate the Voters on the Effect of Informal Voting**

The majority of the respondents suggested that electors should be fully informed about how informal voting disadvantages them in this important decision making process. Respondents felt that while it was important to send messages of anger against some undesirable behaviours that are contrary to the expectations of the society, opting to waste votes only prevents the wishes of the voter from being expressed through the ballot paper. One ECZ official suggested that:

People should realise that informal voting does not help them bring about the desired changes on public policy and even undesired behaviours amongst politicians. Much as putting votes to waste insinuates withdraw of support and undermines the pride of the winner, it may not successfully inform policy makers that people wish to be governed in a certain manner.

- **Perceived Corrupt Candidates should not be Allowed to Run for Public Office**

The majority of the respondents suggested that corrupt candidates should not be involved in participating in electoral matters as these merely seek public office with a view to amassing wealth to themselves. Respondents explained that what is disheartening about some politicians is that they only consider themselves as the most deserving beneficiaries of this country's resources. Findings also established that respondents were for the view that candidates running for public office should be arrived at in consultation with voters in their respective constituencies so that selfish and corrupt politicians are not given chance to contest any election. Another suggestion was that there is need for parliamentarians to come up with a committee which fights for transparency and accountability in public office. One voter suggested that;

There should be a law which prevents corrupt politicians from running for public office. Voters at constituency levels should be involved in choosing whom they would wish to be their representative. This will help teach corrupt candidates a lesson that any well-meaning Zambian voter is not willing to employ someone to plunder public resources meant for public consumption. Our representatives should form a committee which is going to foster transparency and accountability in public office.

- **Intensify Voter Education Programmes across the Country**

The majority of the respondents suggested that ECZ should intensify voter education across wards in the country. They also suggested that voter education projects should not only be carried out towards election time instead must be on-going even after election time. One voter further suggested that say:

ECZ should ensure deploying voter education campaign facilitators who understand the importance of voting and voting procedures as this will help disseminate important information on the voter's needs in ballot marking exercises. As organisations with bigger audiences, schools and churches should also actively provide voter education on ballot marking procedures.

- **Help Voters Build Confidence in Secret Balloting**

The majority of the voters suggested that responsible authorities should find a way of helping voters build confidence in secret balloting. They explained that voters should not be left alone to determine how confidential their vote stands since the polling booth is just in the open where everyone within the voting stream can vividly see what the voter is doing. One voter suggested that:

ECZ must create standards that promote the privacy of the voter and the confidentiality of secret ballots. Voters should be fully sensitised on how a ballot's contents are completely detached from their identity especially that the voter's identity is publicly revealed at polling stations. Voters must be served with voting instruction lists so that those who fear to ask for help can use them to competently cast their votes.

Findings also revealed that voters were for the view that the voter's identity should not be made public instead the responsible election staff should read through the voters' particulars on identity cards silently so that the voter is not intimidated by this act. One voter further suggested that:

... voters' names, registration card numbers... should not be shouted out to the hearing of everyone at the polling station or polling stream for this instils fear in some of us. Shouting out a voter's name makes it easy for those people in the polling stream to check the voter's choice. Since the voter's particulars are checked again inside the polling stream, it is better that they are not publicly announced...

- **Violence should not be allowed in the Electoral Matters**

The majority of the respondents suggested that there should be a level playing field for all political players in the political arena. Respondents were for the view that politicians should take into consideration political interests of other citizens regardless of one's political party affiliation for only when does democracy flourish. They also observed that every serving Head of State should ensure that people's lives are secure in political activities of this country. They further suggested that there should be a law that prevents the use of machetes in the political arena and candidates with violent behaviours should be barred from running for public office. One voter had this to say:

Each and every politician needs to consider that plural politics are about competition and violence is not the best method towards winning an election. Politicians should know that violence does not hold Zambians as one. It merely erodes the one Zambia, one nation philosophical approach to common good. The chief commander of the armed forces should always endeavour towards ensuring that order and peace prevail in political affairs of this country.

One voter also suggested that:

There should be a law that prevents violent oriented politicians from participating in the race to public office.

When asked how they feel about these huge numbers of people who fail to participate meaningfully in voting events, respondents said that it is sad that people still exhibit informal voting behaviours amidst massive voter education campaigns carried out across the country and so, being a young democracy, Zambian voters must take decision making events seriously. Respondents further explained that this time around, a lot of voters have had access to information on acceptable marks and so must attach seriousness to this important event.

4.5 Summary

This chapter presented data collected from the respondents by way of conducting in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The presentation of findings was done in a manner that addressed the three objectives of the study. The next chapter discusses these study findings in detail.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1 Overview

This chapter serves to discuss findings on the factors influencing informal voting in Zambia. These findings revolve around the following key factors: Lack of preferences amongst candidates running for public office, poor economic performance by the sitting government, giving election results updates while voting continues in some polling stations, participation of perceived corrupt candidates in an election, physical violence in the political scene, lack of basic reading and writing skills, ignorance about voting regulations, lack of confidence in the secrecy of the ballot paper and the presence of armed men and women in uniform at polling stations. The findings highlighted above are drawn from the study objectives which were:

- To investigate the types of informal voting taking place in voting events.
- To establish the mistakes that voters make when marking ballot papers.
- To determine measures to be put in place to prevent informal voting in Zambia.

5.2 Types of Informal Voting Taking place in Voting Events

This study has established that basically, there are two types of informal voting taking place in voting events. These are intentional and unintentional informal voting.

5.2.1 Intentional Informal Voting

The study found that intentional informal voting was a very common practice in Zambia. Some voters felt that casting informal votes was an effective way of expressing their concerns and disillusionment against some irresponsive government officials or individual representatives at various levels of decision making. This study also established that in most cases, intentional informal voting is a common practice amongst angry voters as evidenced through the marks they put on ballot papers. Such voters were understood to deliberately cast informal votes knowing too well that their votes would not help any candidate to win an election. It is clear from the findings that intentional informal voters were aware that the poll staff would have to read through what is written on ballot papers during the ballot counting and scrutiny process. This suggests that such voters do so hoping that targeted candidates would get the messages through the election staff. The study further found that intentional informal voting in Zambia takes place under the influence of the following factors. Poor economic performance by the

sitting government, participation of perceived corrupt candidates in an election, lack of preferences amongst candidates contesting an election, giving election results updates while voting continues in some polling stations, and physical violence in the political scene.

While an election can only take place with candidates parading themselves to be voted for to represent the masses at various levels of decision making, this study findings have shown that there are some voters who do not choose any candidate amongst those who parade themselves to be elected into public office. It is clear from the respondent's views that some voters become frustrated if names of candidates and political participating in an election are those whose manifestos or policies do not meet the voters' expectations. This suggests that some voters tend to lose confidence in candidates whose policies seem not to answer or provide solutions to problems faced by communities in which they live. In my view, some voters seem to find it worthless to support candidates who seem not to have the capacity to bring development in their respective constituencies and wards. Instead of choosing a candidate, such voters simply write such things as, 'none of the above, you are all the same,' among others when in the actual sense, these do not reveal the voter's choices in an election.

What this study has established is that lack of preferences amongst candidates stands as a very serious problem especially among the informed voters on grounds that these are able to analyse and evaluate issues tabled before them by candidates running for public office. This suggests that in any decision making event, voters' interests need to be considered to their satisfaction. This agrees with Ngware et al (2000)'s assertion that in a democracy, for electors to participate effectively in any election event, voting must be patterned along with voters' preferences and not only as determined by the choices available in the political system. Based on this fact as well as respondents' views, we can argue that when people go to the polls, they must have already made a decision on who to vote for. In instances where voters fail to identify with any political party or candidate taking part in the electoral contest, it becomes a problem to choose a candidate and as such, some opt to cast blank ballots while others simply write things reflecting lack of choices. This finding agrees with Myatt (2012)'s protest voting theory that an individual voter may cast an informal vote when he or she has got his or her own preferred candidate other than the one adopted to contest an election. Thus when voters' interests differ from those advanced by candidates' manifestos, voters tend to see no possibility of any candidate or party delivering to their expectations. Such voters become frustrated and use informal voting to register their anger and frustration. This seems to suggest that such voters

behave in this manner to avoid forming a visionless government as this would be the worst assault to national development.

The study also established that poor economic performance by the sitting government also results in informal voting behaviour amongst some voters. While every government ushered in office is expected to improve the economic welfare of the citizens, this study found that sometimes the sitting government may not meet the economic aspirations of each and every individual in the country. This is mostly experienced in situations that the sitting government seemingly fails to increase employment opportunities for the masses, exercise strict control of inflation and ensure there is an equitable income distribution across the country. From the findings, it can be argued that citizens expect their representatives to provide solutions to economic strife as in reducing the high cost of living, improving conditions of service for workers, subsidise essential goods and services, among others. When this is done, it means services like provision of quality education and health care services, clean water and sanitation, poverty eradication, among others, are well taken care of by the government. Failure to meet such expectations makes some citizens angry and lose confidence in both individual representatives and the government of the day as they feel cheated and betrayed. When voting time comes, they express their anger by scribbling messages which send a vote of no confidence in the sitting government. Such messages include; failed regime, create jobs, end poverty, among others.

Based on such scribbles, it can be argued further that these are typical examples of messages written by emotional or dissatisfied voters and that this kind of voting is done intentionally. This finding is supported by the Protest Voting School of Thought which argues that some voters vote informally when they have negative feelings against the government of the day or indeed an individual candidate. In my view, this suggests that some emotional voters go to the polls not to vote for any candidate but to express their anger over burning issues in their constituencies which representatives may not have paid attention to during their tenure of office. I seem to agree with Power (2009)'s findings that there are some voters who intentionally vote informally out of anger and frustration (see p. 12).

This study also established that public commentary on election results while voting continues in some polling stations also induces informal voting behaviour. Findings were that, while it could be done in good faith, giving election results updates is a problem because some political parties and their candidates do not command enough support of the voters in some

constituencies and wards. This problem commonly occurs during tripartite or any presidential election in which a presidential aspirant happens to be the sole candidate to be voted for by all electors across the country. Given this fact, it can be argued that in constituencies where such a candidate has not performed to the expectations of his or her supporters, some voters tend to demine their efforts to cast votes as they believe that their vote will not have any positive impact on election results since their candidate has already lost the election. This suggests that upon realising that they have lost an election, some voters feel intimidated, become emotional and opt to vote informally either by leaving their ballots blank or write messages reflecting how annoyed they are with losing an election. We can argue further that some voters react negatively to election results updates once they feel that their electoral choice is highly challenged. My argument here is supported by examples of mistakes cited by respondents that, voters who feel they have already lost the election through election results updates mark their ballots by scribbling things like 'God's time is the best, we will win next time, unfair election results,' just to mention but a few. Such writings do not reflect the voter's candidate of choice in any way but express voter's emotions over the expected election outcome. In the long run, ballot papers marked in this manner are rejected and put aside during vote counting and scrutiny process. Another observation is that for one to write such things on the ballot paper even before the final election results are given and the winner is declared, it means one is well informed about who has won and who has lost an election. Where public commentary on election results is concerned, it can be argued that some informal voters deliberately cast informal votes with a view to undermining the election outcome hoping that it will be seen that many of the voters did not vote successfully in an election. Based on this finding, it can be argued further that the main idea behind informal voting in reaction to public commentary on election results updates while voting continues is that should the number of informal votes be extremely high, the election results should be hardly seen to be valid or fair and thus intimidate the winner of an election. This finding agrees with the Protest Voting Theory which argues that in plural politics, some voters intentionally vote informally when they are angry or frustrated by certain events they are not happy with in their communities. In this regard, public commentary on election results while voting continues is found to be an event which raises emotions in some voters who decide not to vote for any candidate even when they were not willing to do so at the beginning of an election event. We can argue further that despite being fully aware about what constitutes an informal vote, such emotional voters deliberately cast informal votes in protest against having lost an election.

This study also established that some electors are very much aware and sensitive to corruption activities taking place amongst politicians. Respondents' argument was that sensitive voters become angry and vote informally on grounds that any government formed on corrupt principles does not put the plight of the general citizenry at the centre stage. Thus there are some voters in Zambia who feel marginalised in the governance issues in that resources are seemingly shared amongst those in power, contrary to campaign promises candidates table before the electors during the run up to an election. Generally, where corruption is concerned, it is clear that voters also perceive some politicians to be nothing but office-seekers. This suggests that when voters interpret their representatives' major aim to be that of wanting to attain and hold on to power so that they have access to public resources at the expense of the voter and not necessarily to use the power to bring about social change in people's lives, they tend to withdraw their support by casting informal votes. This may be done with a view to ensuring that a targeted candidate loses an election. In this regard, it can be argued that some voters cast informal votes in a bid to challenge their representatives especially in instances that they are not happy with certain behaviours of some government officials or individual representatives at various levels of decision making. This finding agrees with Myatt (2012)'s protest voting theory that in circumstances that voters have negative feelings about the choices they are faced with, they use voting events as a platform good enough to register their dissatisfaction against the available choices. In some cases, the theory further argues that voters behave in this manner in the hope of correcting a particular candidate's behaviour in an event that he or she returns the seat. While this could be true, it can still be argued that, such a situation is only possible if a candidate pays attention to election results and voter turnout in their respective constituencies since each and every candidate knows their strongholds.

We can also argue from the findings that winning an election requires a politician's focus on the interests of the voter who happens to be at the core of the policy and political spectrum. Failure to do this moves some voters to abandon even their preferred candidate just to ensure that he or she loses an election. It can also be argued from this finding that no individual who endorses democracy as an organised way of governing the country renders their support to corrupt representatives. Thus some voters use voting events to protest against any spotted corrupt practices amongst politicians with a view to fostering transparency and accountability in public office. In view of this argument, Oken (2005) provides a good example of this when he argues that a call for accountability in public office is often perceived to be an important means of discouraging politicians to indulge in corruption activities.

Where intentional informal voting is concerned, this study has established that if voters were to be given a platform to choose who should run for public office, some political parties, both the ruling and the opposition parties, would face serious challenges in arriving at credible candidates to run for public office right at grass root level. This argument is in line with respondents' concerns that many are the times that their aspirations are turned down by the people chosen to represent them in decision making processes. Respondents further argued that there are voters who vote informally when they feel betrayed and that they are about to usher in office a corrupt team of representatives as they would bring down the economy of the country. To disillusioned voters, casting informal votes is good enough to send messages of discontent to those running for public office. The study further established that informal voting undermines the legitimacy of the winner of an election as one realises that a good number of voters, including one's dependable supporters in their strongholds, opted to put their votes to waste. In my view, this calls for some political parties to change their candidates especially those with questionable characters.

The study further established that physical violence in Zambia's political life is responsible for informal voting behaviour taking place in Zambia. It was clear from the respondents' views that many voters are angry with this vice especially that it is assumed that it is induced by some law makers. The study established that many people out there put the blame on the Head of State and his government of the day as being responsible for brutalising people's political rights. These arguments were based on an understanding that as the chief commander of the armed forces, the Head of State has the capacity to end violence experienced in the political circles. My argument is that some voters perceive of the government to be strategically using violence to force its opponents of political life of this country. This angers and frustrates voters who retaliate by casting votes bearing writings like, "end violence, this country belongs to all of us," among others. Based on the respondents' revelations, the study established that political violence breeds tension amongst voters even when they are not directly affected by the act. Concerns from the findings were that the use of dangerous weapons like machetes (locally referred to as pangas) instils fear and intimidation in some voters. The study further established that the failure by police to provide security in time of political violence makes people perceive of these officers as instruments of violence used by the state to silence its political opponents. These findings agree with Wiseman (1995)'s argument that the party in power can only use political violence as a strategy to stop its opponents from taking part in the art of politics. It can be argued further that perhaps Heads of State with records of practising political violence

failed to curb the vice all because they wished to instil fear in people's minds towards politics and thus stop the opposition political parties from taking part in the political activities of this country.

While this could be of benefit to the party in power, I find it to be a problem because it hinders some voters from participating meaningfully in voting events as they opt to express their general discontent about what transpires in the political arena. Given this fact, we can argue further that it is very possible that in communities that have been severely oppressed in political life, voting events are not only important because they act as a means through which citizens unanimously take part in their governance but they also serve as an opportunity for citizens to protest against the oppression which they might have suffered in the hands of their own government. Such communities then vote as a team to air out their frustrations and have their disillusionment registered by way of an informal ballot paper.

We can also argue further that every single act of violence either from the opposition or ruling political party has the potential to induce informal voting behaviour during election exercises. This finding is supported by Myatt (2012)'s protest voting theory which contends that should there be any issues of concern in the society, voters will not use a voting event to give authority to any candidate to assume public office. Instead, angry and protesting voters will go to the polls to cast votes reporting 'emotionally-charged (i.e., typically-negative)' messages expressing their anger against some political players. In view of this argument, I seem to agree with Welch (2006)'s view that should the state fail to fulfil what was bargained through the ballot paper, as experienced through the gross violations of citizen's political rights in modern Zambia, citizens are at liberty to revolt and terminate their contract with the state. This acts as a call to those in leadership to govern according to people's interests and as such, the will of the electorates should never be undermined.

Generally, this research has established that intentional informal voting happens in reaction to certain ill practices by high level decision makers in public office. Intentional informal voting in Zambia is actually a protest vote just like it happens in Brazil, Peru, Austria, Singapore, among others in which citizens protest against being forced to the polls following compulsory voting imposed on them (see pgs.12-13).

While intentional informal voting is done at will, this study has established that unintentional informal voting happens accidentally, or as a result of ignorance, or out of fear and intimidation which voters may be confronted with right at polling stations. Where ignorance is concerned,

this study established that there are some voters who are not sensitised about voting procedures and so are not aware about voting rules and requirements. Such voters fail to choose a candidate even when they would wish to do so. The study further established that there are instances that unintentional informal voting takes place accidentally. Under such situations, some voters may mistakenly mismark their ballots by having their marks crossing over to the other boxes. Still others mistakenly leave thumbprints on the ballot papers. Such people just leave their ballots even when they are fully aware that their vote is informal because they think they cannot do anything to correct their mistakes. In this regard, the study established that such voters lack information about replacement ballots through which their mistakes can be corrected. The study also established that amongst some voters, there are still misconceptions about the ‘One man, one vote principle’ as some voters take it to mean having voted twice or more, an act which can send them to prison. It is also clear from the findings that some voters vote informally out of fear and intimidation (i.e., perceived challenges) that they may be faced with at polling stations and the voting process as a whole. Based on the responses given by the respondents, this study has established that some informal voters may deliberately mismark their ballots or even leave them blank once they feel insecure or intimidated by the voting atmosphere at their polling places. Generally, this study has established that unintentional informal voters vote informally under the influence of the following factors: lack of basic reading and writing skills, the presence of armed men and women at polling stations, lack of confidence in secret balloting and ignorance about ballot marking procedures.

Where lack of basic reading and writing skills is concerned, the study found that some illiterate voters are greatly excluded from participating in voting events because voting requires all participants to read and interpret voting instructions and then write something on the ballot paper. Though illiterate voters may be willing to cast a vote that counts, their participation mostly ends futile owing to their inability to properly hold a pen and put a mark on the ballot paper. The study established that once intimidated, illiterate voters may not take their time in the voting booth and hence decide to mark their votes in whichever way they may find it easy. In the process of struggling to put a mark on the ballot paper, some end up tearing the ballot papers, or mark ballots in a manner that fails the election staff to determine the voter’s choice. Findings have also shown that some illiterate voters do not even bother to write anything on the ballot paper instead they cast unmarked ballots. Others even opt to use a thumb print.

It is also possible that in Zambia, constituencies and wards densely populated with illiterate voters are vulnerable to high incidences of informal voting experiences on grounds that many of the people who take part in voting events are those who have not attended any formal schooling and are without any literacy skills while others are of low literacy levels. I seem to agree with UNESCO (2008)'s argument that for an individual to participate effectively in events that require reading and writing skills, they must be in possession of basic skills of literacy. It can be argued further that people who left school at primary levels of schooling before acquiring literacy skills do not participate meaningfully in events that require them to read or write as it is with voting events. This finding is supported by the Social Exclusion theory which argues that peoples' participation in key events in their communities is compromised when they are disadvantaged in one way or another. My argument is that voters who vote informally due to illiteracy are actually disadvantaged because in Zambia, unless one has got some deformity of some kind, voting can only be successfully done by way of putting a mark on a ballot paper using a pen. Therefore, voters who cannot write are disadvantaged and thus socially excluded out of the voting excises.

The study also established that some voters vote informally because they experience fear and intimidation brought about by the presence of the armed security officers found at polling places. It is also clear from the findings that the fact that men and women in uniform are associated with brutality regardless of where they are instils a lot of fear and intimidation into the civilians' minds. This makes the voting atmosphere tense and unconducive for some voters to participate freely and competently cast a vote. Further, the study established that some voters are just filled with fear and intimidation at the sight of the guns carried by the police officers even when these guns are just left hanging down the officers' shoulders. It can also be argued that some voters are intimidated just at the sight of the uniform worn by these officers. Therefore, instead of thinking about how to mark the ballot paper sufficiently well, some voters concentrate on their safety in the presence of the armed police officers. What this study has established is that the presence of armed men and women in uniform makes some voters shiver a lot to an extent of failing to hold a pen and write correctly hence mark beyond one box and have their vote invalid. The fear is worsened by the wrong assumption some voters have that they will be discovered and arrested should they vote for, say, the opposition political party. Such voters strongly believe that counter checking of votes would be done at the close of an election event and so can be identified and followed. Some voters also fear to be arrested by

the security officers present at polling stations should they mark ballot papers wrongly hence leaving their ballots blank.

This study also established that the process of verifying voting identity cards like the National Registration Card and the voter's cards in the presence of the armed men and women in uniform and the act of loudly shouting out a voter's particulars as they appear on the identity cards all make the voting environment even much tenser and too compromising to some voters. What seems to be a problem is that shouting out a voter's particulars is done in the hearing of all poll staff in the polling stream. Generally, some voters just become nervous and fail to take their time marking their ballots since they are filled with a false sense of insecurity in the presence of the men and women in uniform especially that they are always armed.

Lack of confidence in the secrecy of the ballot paper was found to be among other factors responsible for unintentional informal voting amongst some voters. The study has established that the presence of the poll staff near the voting booth makes the voter become suspicious of being monitored on how they have voted in an election. What worsens the situation is that after the voter's particulars are made public at polling stations, voters suspect that their names are also written in the ballot paper book. This makes them become even more suspicious of being identified and exposed over having not voted for either a popular candidate in their constituency or voting against the government of the day. In a bid to avoid victimisation should the candidate they voted against wins the election, some opt to invalidate their votes either by mismarking the voting papers or not putting any mark on the ballot paper so that it does not count towards any candidate since they cannot make an independent choice. What seems to be a serious problem is lack of an understanding of the extent to which voting by secret ballot is exercised. Thus if electors have no confidence in the confidentiality of the choices they make, they tend to undermine the potential benefits of the secret ballot. In this regard, it has been observed that some mistakes voters make when marking ballot papers reflect more than merely lack of voting skills but also fears that their vote choices may be exposed and this results in informal voting amongst some voters. Given these findings, the Social Exclusion theory is proved right to suggest that citizens fail to participate effectively should they be subjected to situations beyond their control. Thus the fact that voting has to be done in the presence of armed men and women in uniform as well as the election staff and that the voter's identity has to be made public at the polling station means that some voters are socially disadvantaged. They have no capacity to manipulate such voting environments to suit their wishes so that their

participation is not compromised hence vote informally even though they may be aware of what constitutes a formal vote.

5.2 Mistakes Voters Make when Marking Ballot Papers

Further the study has established that there are a variety of mistakes that voters make when marking ballots. The errors made include voting for more than one candidate to occupy a single vacancy, putting marks in two or more places or boxes on the same ballot paper, defacing ballot papers, and marking all over (i.e., both inside and outside) the boxes on ballot papers. Other mistakes include putting marks between or among candidates' pictures, casting ballots without an official mark by the poll staff, casting blank ballots, using unacceptable voting marks like voters' names, signatures, using indelible inked thumb prints, among other marks that are not acknowledged by the electoral law. This study found that non-informed electors do not understand that ballots marked in this manner are not counted towards any candidate instead they are put to waste because they do not reflect the voter's intentions while others can identify the voter thereby undermining the secrecy of the ballot paper.

Findings revealed that, some voters error by using unacceptable voting marks like party slogans (e.g., Zambia forward, The hour has come, ifintu ni X.), writing their names, leaving signatures on ballot papers, among others. Basically, the study has established that such unacceptable voting marks are used to express the voter's emphasis of choice of candidate. While this is true about some voters, it can still be argued that ignorance about how to vote is the major contributing factor amongst such voters. Figure 4 below gives an example of a voter who ignorantly voted informally in a bid to show emphasis of his or her choice of candidate.

Figure 4



Source: Field work 2016

The study has also established that some voters error in ballot marking by voting for more than one candidate on the ballot paper. Such voters do not know that by using more than one mark, they have voted for more than one candidate for the same office and that over-voting is an election fraud (see p. 42). Given such examples, it is clear that voters who mark their ballots in this manner do not know that an 'X' is an acceptable voting mark recognised by law. They also do not know that when they use an 'X', they have voted for those candidates who are not their preferences. This finding is an equivalent of Gyampo (2009)'s study findings that ignorance about voting procedures is responsible for informal voting in Ghana (see P. 15). Therefore, the Social Exclusion theory supports these findings in that such voters vote informally because they lack necessary participatory information and skills. Much as they were willing and had made an effort to choose a candidate, they failed to do so because they did not know how to vote correctly or reasons beyond their control.

The study further established that clientelism in politics exerts lots of influence on how voters mark their votes. In situations where voters vote for more than one candidate to take up one seat, it was established that some voted in this manner based on what they benefited from some candidates during the campaign period. My argument here is that politicians' use of money to attract voters to give them support in an election contributes to informal voting behaviour in voting events. While this is strategically done in the name of helping to meet voters' needs as seen through the distribution of farming inputs like fertilisers, seed, broiler chickens and other things like mealie meal, money, among others, it is a problem because it confuses several voters in making choices in the voting event. This results in voters voting too many times in just one election. As observed earlier on, such voters also lack information and skills about voting correctly because when they vote to please everyone who gave them goods and services, they do not know that voting for more than one candidate flouts election rules. Such voters also lack an understanding that when they mark their votes in this manner, they have not voted for any candidate.

Based on the above findings, it can be argued that there was inadequate voter sensitisation on voting procedures. While key informants' views are in agreement with FODEP (2007) and ECZ (2008) who have maintained that ECZ and other stakeholders do sensitise the voters on how to vote properly, this study's findings are that it is not clear as to what extent this is done because there seem to be a lot more people who lack voting information and skills. We can argue from the findings that some voters do not even know that the ballot paper itself contains voting instructions which they can make use of to successfully cast their votes. While the (2006) Electoral Act puts it clear that voters are entitled to replacement ballots in an event that one realises that his or her vote is informal, this study further established that some voters are not equipped with this information. Moreover, the fact that there are still misconceptions about the 'one man, one vote principle' amongst some voters also means that this concept is not adequately tackled by voter education providers. To a good number of voters, the above voting principle means that each voter is entitled to using only one ballot paper. The underlying assumption is that asking for another voting paper upon realising that one has made a mistake on the ballot paper before dropping it in the ballot box would mean having voted twice and would be arrested. In fear of voting twice, people just cast wrongly marked ballot papers even when they may have realised that they have not voted properly. Additionally, some voters still lack information about their privilege to seek help from the poll staff. This typically suggests that there are lapses in the handling of voter literacy campaigns in this constituency. Failing to

participate effectively due to ignorance agrees with the Social Exclusion Theory School of thought's arguments that citizens can only fail to participate in any event should they be disadvantaged in one way or another as in lack of participatory information and skills. This is the case with some voters in Zambia who vote informally due to lack of an understanding of the 'One man, One vote principle' and ignorance about replacement ballots.

Looking at the mistakes that voters make in the voting process, the study established that there are high levels of political ignorance amongst some electors. Much as some voters may be well equipped with information on acceptable voting marks and requirements, some voters go to the polls to cast informal votes with a view to protesting against unresolved issues between them and their representatives. On this finding, my argument is that, much as citizens would wish to punish some corrupt and selfish representatives for their actions in public office, they are not aware that invalidating their votes does in a way create room for the same candidate to win back the seat as others may be in support of him or her. This study argues that such informal voters are not aware that casting invalid votes may not be the best solution in that they decide not to vote for another candidate since they remain mute on who should hold office. Should a candidate they wished to lose an election to his opponent win back the seat, he or she will continue making decisions which will affect voters in their daily lives. Moreover, voting informally may give a corrupt candidate a platform to continue with his or her corrupt behaviour in public office in an event that he wins an election. In light of the identified political knowledge gaps, I seem to agree with Mahajan (2009)'s argument that for citizens to participate effectively in the electoral process, they need to be adequately educated. Thus when citizens lack necessary knowledge and skills, participation becomes much more of a challenge and some electors go to the polls with an indifferent attitude towards election results.

The study has also established that some voters vote informally due to lack of knowledge about where votes go after they are cast. By choosing more than one candidate to take up one seat, marking ballots using slogans, their names or signatures, such voters assume that candidates contesting an election have access to votes cast and should they discover that a certain voter did not support them in an election, they would victimise them especially if such a candidate wins an election hence their voting for all those who gave them help during the campaign period. This study further established that such voters do not know that they are disenfranchising themselves since their votes are deemed invalid during the scrutiny and counting process. Moreover, such voters do not know that they made no choice but put their votes to waste in a bid to exchange with private goods which they benefited from the

candidates. Another observation is that such voters do not know that voting for political leaders gives them an opportunity to have a say on public policy and so should be done not to benefit one individual but the entire community or nation. I seem to argue in this manner based on an understanding that as a key political event, voting stands as the best method through which the general will on public issues can be expressed. Therefore, the voter must always consider the interests of the common good as opposed to his or her private gains and advantage as evident through some respondents' arguments that they vote the way they do based on their short term benefits at individual level. We can argue further that this kind of political ignorance amongst some voters also contributes to some political leaders' failure to honour their campaign promises. I seem to argue in this manner based on the fact that once individuals feel content with short term benefits, communities cannot act as a block to hold their leaders accountable on grounds that they are already content with what they received from candidates or political parties during the run up to an election. When they go to the polls, they do not give their votes the best of their judgment in terms of adding value to public policy. Based on these facts, the study established that the Social Exclusion theory proponents were right to argue that people fail to participate effectively in key activities of their societies if they are socially disadvantaged as evidenced in informal voting taking place in Zambia due to lack of an understanding of why people must vote for a particular candidate, lack of participatory skills, illiteracy and when they are subjected to environments which compromise their participation. Lack of necessary political information disadvantages some people to a very large extent and thus prevents them from having a say on public policy.

5.3 Measures to be put in Place to Curb Informal Voting in Zambia

The study established that there is an urgent need of educating the voters on the effect of informal voting. Respondents observed that voters should be informed that when they cast informal votes, they do not provide direction on how they would want their representatives to run the affairs of this country. The study further established that people need to be informed that an informal vote has never won an election in Zambia as only a very small percentage of people go to the polls to express their anger through the ballot paper while others completely stay out of the whole exercise as in voter apathy. My argument is that no matter how valid they may be, the interests of informal voters are likely going to be opposed to the interests of those who vote formally since informal voters are seemingly always in the minority. Thus informal voting compromises citizen's capacity to hold leaders accountable because the ideas

of the electors who cast the blank vote may never be implemented. Another observation is that any informal vote cast intentionally is merely an individual voter's protest opinion and does not propose any new political changes or programmes.

The other measure advanced by respondents was that candidates labelled with records of corruption should not be allowed to run for public office since their appearance on the ballot paper triggers emotions in some voters. Such emotions are common in voters who perceive of politicians as job opportunists as opposed to being servants of the electorates. Though such politicians may not be easily identified, we can argue from the findings that some voters are aware that there are some candidates who once appeared before the courts of law and were convicted for their corrupt behaviours. It is clear from the findings that some voters are well informed that other corrupt politicians had their cases dropped without appearing before the courts of law or even before they were proved guilty or innocent by the courts of law. My argument is that once voters get wind of corrupt practices amongst some government officials, some opt not to vote for any candidate instead invalidate their votes thereby failing to add their voice on national issues. All this happens because some people have not intuitively felt the immediate benefits of voting and have been frustrated to a very large extent. It is imperative for politicians to work with the people on the grass root so as to be informed on their specific needs and then put public interest at the centre stage. The study further established that voters were for the view that parliamentarians should form a committee which would take care of corruption issues amongst representatives as this will help promote accountability and transparency in public office. Another critical issue is that the voter should be actively involved in the process of adopting candidates to run for public office at various levels of representation as this will help satisfy the voters that they are ushering in office a candidate with integrity and dignity. This will also provide the voters with an assurance that their interests will be upheld in the governance process.

The study further established that voter education programmes should be intensified across wards throughout Zambia. It is clear from the findings that some voters are disadvantaged by some voter education facilitators who lack skills and understanding of Voter Education material and as such fail to meet the voter's educational needs. Based on this finding, this study argues that ECZ should desist from engaging non skilled voter education facilitators as this does not help some voters acquire ballot marking skills needed for them to competently cast a formal vote.

The study further established that people wish voter education programmes to be a continuous project as opposed to being run only during an election period. This disadvantages some voters as they cannot put into practice what they learnt within a short period of time. Further, the study established that voters were for the view that schools and churches should play an active role in delivering voter education to the masses especially the ballot marking concept. This is because these organisations can possibly capture huge numbers of learners who will also share information with their peers, families and other community members at large.

This study also established that there is need for responsible authorities to help build confidence in secret balloting in the voters' minds. The majority of respondents observed that ECZ should ensure coming up with standards that assure voters that their vote is confidential and the act of publicly revealing their identity at polling stations does not in any way disclose their choice in the ballot box. Some voters were for the view that polling agents should silently go through the voter's particulars since these are still checked by other staff in the polling streams. It can be argued from the findings that voting booths should be designed in a way that prevents monitoring the voter's activities while casting votes as opposed to leaving the voter solely alone to determine the extent to which their vote remains secret. This will help overcome the wrong assumptions some voters seem to have about being monitored on how they have voted.

The study has also established that it is important for politicians to exercise tolerance of opposing views from various stakeholders in the political field. People out there are intimidated by reports of escalating levels of political violence in Zambia such that when they are at polling stations, each one is intimidated by the presence of the other person as they are in constant fear of their lives. Some constantly feel that violence can erupt at anytime and anywhere. Respondents further suggested that there should be a law that prevents the use of deadly weapons like machetes in the political arena, and also that candidates labelled with violent behaviours should be prevented from participating in public affairs because they are seemingly to blame for that.

5.4 Summary

This chapter has presented a discussion on findings of the study on factors influencing informal voting in Zambia and these are; poor economic performance by the sitting government, lack of preferences amongst candidates running for public office, political violence, participation of perceived corrupt candidates in an election, lack of confidence in the secrecy of the ballot paper, lack of basic reading and writing skills and the presence of armed men and women in

uniform at polling stations. The chapter also discussed measures advanced by respondents towards curbing informal voting in Zambia. The next chapter presents a conclusion of the study and recommendations on what should be done to help resolve issues resulting in informal voting in Zambia.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Overview

The study established the factors influencing informal voting in Zambia. Thirteen focus group discussions were conducted with voters and nine in-depth interviews were conducted with ECZ officials in seven wards within Namwala constituency. Conducting interviews and focus group discussions with these participants helped the researcher have an insight of the factors

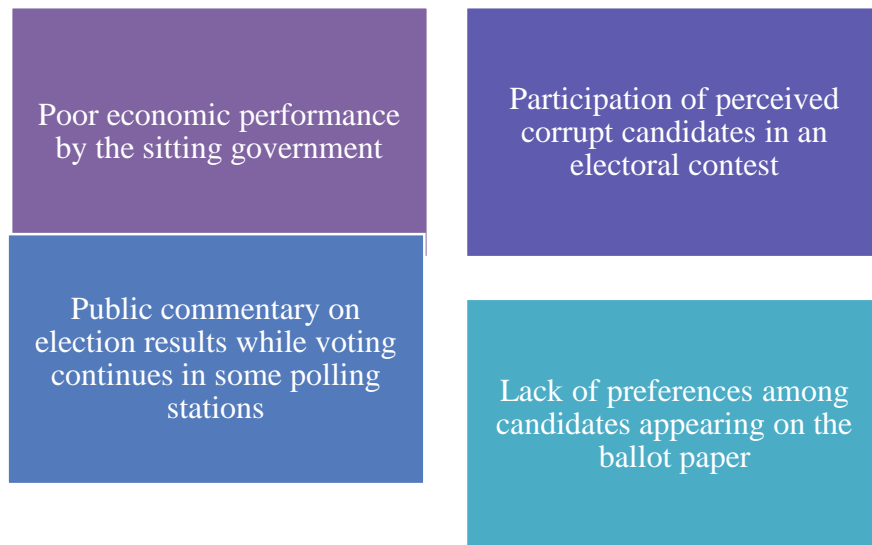
influencing informal voting in Zambia. This was possibly done by establishing the types of informal voting taking place in voting events, identifying mistakes that voters make when marking ballot papers and determining possible solutions to the problem under investigation.

6.2 Conclusion

From the findings, this study concludes that informal voting in Zambia takes two forms which are intentional and non-intentional informal voting respectively. It has been established that while some people intentionally vote informally under the influence of such factors as: poor economic performance by the sitting government, lack of preferences among candidates contesting an election, physical violence in the political scene, participation of corrupt candidates in an election event and public commentary on election results while voting continues in some constituencies, others do so due to lack of basic reading and writing skills, ignorance about voting rules, the presence of armed men and women in uniform at polling stations, and lack of confidence in the secrecy of the ballot paper.

Where intentional informal voting is concerned, the study concludes that angry and frustrated electors deliberately vote informally in protest against some undesired behaviours such as greed and selfishness amongst some representatives as this has resulted in failure to uplift the will of the people. Such behaviours make some voters find it worthwhile to withdraw their support by putting their votes to waste other than staying out of the exercise completely as in voter apathy. This shows that some voters are very sensitive to undesirable behaviours amongst some politicians. Thus an informal vote is nothing but a vote of no confidence in the candidates contesting an election as electors feel that their views are neither represented nor respected. It is therefore imperative that people be involved in choosing who should run for public office in their respective constituencies and wards as this will help reduce not only frustration amongst electors but also the number of informal voters in this important decision making process above an individual level. Figure 5 below gives a summary of the above highlighted factors leading to intentional informal voting in Zambia.

Figure five



Source: Field work 2016

Much as some voters intentionally vote informally, this study concludes that others do so as a result of lack of reading and writing skills, the presence of armed men and women in uniform at polling stations as this instils fear and intimidation in the voters. Some people do not relax in the presence of these officers due to their background knowledge of police brutality especially that even during the campaign period, some officers engage in violent activities against the opposition political parties' sympathisers. Some voters are generally filled with a sense of false insecurity and thus focus on their safety and not what to do with the ballot paper.

Lack of confidence in the secrecy of the ballot also intimidates voters who feel closely monitored by some polling officers present near the polling booth. Moreover, as the voter walks into the voting stream, he or she is already convinced that one is already known by the poll staff present on grounds that the voter's identity is disclosed at a certain stage of the voting process as required by law. Some voters fear to make choices free of external influences in fear of being exposed especially if their choice does not give them the required protection by winning the contested election. Once such thoughts cross the voters' minds, they invalidate their votes. There is need to build a strong sense of voter privacy in order to minimise on voters voting informally once they feel that someone would know how a they voted. Voters need to know that the secrecy of the ballot serves to promote voter anonymity and thus reduce voter intimidation and external influence through protecting their privacy in voting events. It is imperative that voters are informed on how our voting system works without revealing any

piece of information about how a voter voted. Given below is a summary of key factors responsible for unintentional informal voting in Zambia.

Figure 6



Source: Field work 2016

Another conclusion is that there are variations in the actual mistakes voters make when marking ballot papers. These include marking outside the boxes, putting marks all over the ballot paper, casting votes without an official mark by the polling agent, using unauthentic marks like signatures, thumbprints dented with indelible ink, slogans, drawing pictures of their own design, putting marks in spaces between or among candidates, choosing more than one candidate for one vacancy, or even casting ballots without anything written on them, among others. Looking at the reasons advanced to justify these errors, the study established that some voters do not know how ballots become informal while others have an idea of what constitutes an informal vote. Another conclusion is that a good number of voters do not know that they are entitled to replacement ballots due to misconceptions about the ‘one man, one vote principle’.

Given the above findings, the study concludes that there are high levels of political ignorance in this country and this results in many voters’ failure to attach to the ballot paper some

reasonable value that it deserves in determining public policy. Some voters do not know that by putting their votes to waste, they are assisting the winner of an election by not supporting the disliked candidate's opponents. Some voters do not even consider the fact that even though they do not participate meaningfully, they will still engage with the candidate who will have won the electoral contest. Another point is that informal voters do not realise that by putting their votes to waste, they are allowing for the formation of an illegitimate government put in power by a handful of voters who will have made their choices known through the ballot paper. This suggests that voters who cast informal votes intentionally do not know that voting goes beyond merely ushering in their preferred candidates in public office instead, it is also about agreeing with a candidate's policies and issues in the interest of the whole nation. What should be born in mind is that casting informal ballot papers can lead a country into a very vulnerable and perilous situation as it gives incompetent and irresponsible leaders high chances of retaining power. Thus there is need to widen the voter education curriculum so as to accommodate political education content for the sake of empowering electorates with necessary information in all areas of political participation. Citizens must be exposed to a wider and diverse range of political information especially that an election cannot be run without the voter. Looking at how informal voting has been taking place in Zambia since the re-introduction of plural politics, one still remains sceptical about how free and fair these elections have been since some voters' votes have been thrown out during the counting and scrutiny process, giving an impression that some voters have had no chance of providing direction on how the affairs of this country must be run.

6.3 Recommendations

In view of the above study findings, the following recommendations are made.

- The electoral Act that prevents candidates with violent and corrupt records from running for public office should be adhered to when choosing candidates to contest an election right at political party level.
- ECZ should ensure providing polling booths which provide voters with a complete sense of security in the polling stream.

- ECZ and other voter literacy providers should distribute brochures, magazines and other relevant forms of literature focusing on ballot marking procedures and the effect of informal voting.
- The voter education curriculum contents should not only aim at making the voter knowledgeable about when and where to vote but should include political education aspects on why and how to vote in order to increase people's access to political information, knowledge and skills relevant for them to successfully and competently participate in voting events

6.4 Recommendations for Future Research

Further research to be conducted on the category of informal ballots and individual mistakes on each ballot paper immediately after an election so as to see and classify these ballots in relation to the mistakes made and come up with individual rankings of informalities for a particular election at constituency, ward and polling place level. Its major focus should be on coming up with a report giving a breakdown of informal votes into the various categories and polling places with high informality rates with regards to intentional and non-intentional informal voting in various polling stations across the country.

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APPENDICES

Appendix (i) DOCUMENT ANALYSIS GUIDE FOR ELECTION RESULTS REFLECTING INFORMAL VOTING IN ZAMBIA FROM 1964-2015

Informal Voting at National level- 1964 to 2015

Election Year	Type of election	Total votes cast	Informal votes cast

Appendix (ii) Informal Voting at Constituency Level- 1964 to 2015

YEAR	Type of Election	Total votes cast	Informal votes cast

Appendix (iii) DOCUMENT ANALYSIS GUIDE FOR THE ANALYSIS OF THE ZAMBIAN ELECTORAL ACT OF 2006 ON WHAT CONSTITUTES AN INFORMAL VOTE

What are the provisions of the Zambian Electoral Act on voting regulations?

1	
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Appendix (iv) INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR ECZ OFFICIALS

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL SCIENCES EDUCATION

Research Topic

Factors Influencing Informal Voting in Zambia: A Case of Namwala Constituency

1. In your opinion, what types of informal voting take place in voting events?
2. What could be the causes of each type of informal voting taking place in voting events?
3. What are the actual mistakes voters make when marking ballot papers?
4. Are there any efforts that responsible authorities have put in place to enhance effective voter participation?
5. What are your views on informal votes cast in every election held in your constituency?
6. What measures should be put in place to mitigate informal voting in Zambia?

End of the interview. Thank you for your participation

APPENDIX (v) FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR VOTERS

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL SCIENCES EDUCATION

RESEARCH TOPIC

Factors Influencing Informal Voting in Zambia: A Case of Namwala constituency

1. Have you ever participated in an election before?
2. In your view, what types of informal voting take place in voting events?
3. What could be the factors responsible for the different types of informal voting taking place in voting events?
4. What mistakes do voters make when marking ballot papers?
5. What are your views on the informal voting taking place in Zambia and your constituency in particular?
6. Do you think there is anything that has been done to help bring this problem to an end?
7. What do you feel should be done to help mitigate the informal voting problem in Zambia?

End of the interview. Thank you for your participation

DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES

RESEARCH TOPIC: INVESTIGATING FACTORS LEADING TO INFORMAL VOTING IN ZAMBIA: A CASE OF NAMWALA COSTITUENCY

REFERENCE TO PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

1. Make sure you read this information sheet carefully.
2. Be informed that this research is for academic purposes only.
3. Be informed also that the information to be collected in this interview will be strictly kept confidential.
4. Please note that this interview will use an audio tape recording
5. Your participation in this research is strictly voluntary. If you wish not to participate, you are free to do so and this will cost you nothing.
6. If you decide to participate, you are still at liberty to withdraw your participation at any time of your preference.
7. You are at liberty to refuse to answer certain questions I this interview. If there is anything that you feel you would discuss in this study, please feel free to say so.
8. If you wish to participate in this research study, you are required to sign your consent form given below before I proceed with the interview with you.

Voluntary Consent Form

I have read or the researcher has explained to me the information about this research interview as contained in the participant information sheet above. I have had an opportunity to ask questions about the research and had all of them answered to my satisfaction.

I now consent voluntarily to participate in this interview and understand that I have the right to end the interview at any time and to decide whether to or not to participate, or even answer certain questions in the process of the interview.

My signature below expresses my interest in taking part in this interview.

Signed:.....

Printed Name:.....

Date:.....