



Youth Identity and Political Participation in Urban Sierra Leone: An Exploration

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Abstract

Youth identity in urban Sierra Leone is shaped by a complex interplay of cultural heritage, education, and socio-economic factors. A qualitative approach was employed through semi-structured interviews with 30 participants aged 18-25, focusing on themes of cultural heritage, education, and socio-economic status. Youth identified strongly with their local culture (75%) and perceived a direct link between their cultural identity and political expression (60%). While there is an emerging sense of youth identity in urban Sierra Leone, it is not uniformly linked to higher levels of political participation. Integrating cultural heritage education into the curriculum could enhance young people's engagement with politics.

Keywords: *Africanization, Cultural Heritage, Education Policy, Socio-Economic Factors, Qualitative Research*

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