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AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE EFFECTS OF DEINDUSTRIALISATION ON THE LIVELIHOODS OF YOUTHS. A CASE STUDY OF MAKOKOBA SUBURB IN BULAWAYO.

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ABSTRACT

The study was set out to investigate the effects of deindustrialization on the livelihoods of youths. This has been done through establishing the perceptions of young people concerning the factors underlying the decline in industrial activity in Bulawayo, understanding the challenges that young people have faced owing to this phenomenon and evaluating the relevance and effectiveness of measures that have been introduced by the government to empower youths in the face of industrialization and those bent towards resuscitation of industries. This research was conducted in Bulawayo, a city previously regarded as the industrial hub of the country as it is housed gigantic food manufacturing, textile and clothing industries, heavy industries and the National Railways of Zimbabwe which was undoubtedly a hub in the national train transport system but today has been reduced to nothing but a pale shadow of its former self as various major industries have shut down, scaled down or relocated from the city. This research was mainly qualitative as it required discovering the perceptions, experiences and feelings of youth with regards to the impacts of reduction of industrial capacity on their lives which would have been difficult to uncover through quantitative research. The study, through use of questionnaires administered to youths and interviews with key informants from relevant institutions revealed that the reduction of industrial capacity has disrupted the major source of livelihood, employment trends and this has generated other social and economic strains such as reduction of standards of living, disruption of social structures responsible for the upbringing of children, as such, youths have been exposed to illegal activities as they try to make ends meet in an economically troubled city and gave birth to other social ills such as rise in early indulgence in sexual activities by young people. Kaldor’s first law of growth was used to explain the linkages between decline in industrial sector and the resultant effects. The study uncovered that the Government of Zimbabwe has designed a youth empowerment program and other various measures meant to curb deindustrialization, seemingly a larger proportion of youth who participated in this research were not aware of any of these strategies, this is why it is recommended that the responsible development actors engage youths in programs bent towards economic development as they are the productive age group and they might be disadvantaged due to their lack of knowledge.