

The Silent Generation: Youth Apathy and Disengagement in Politics

Joshua B. Casinillo

Department of Teacher Education, Visayas State University Isabel, Isabel Leyte, Philippines 6539

Corresponding Email: joshua.casinillo@vsu.edu.ph

Politics is associated with governance in an area or country. The importance of politics does not only involve voting in precincts, or debating whose side is better, but the growth and development of a country. According to Rom, Hidaka, and Walker (2022), politics will continue to exist so long as these human conditions persist because they are fundamental to human society. Thus, these facts imply that all people are part of politics, and the involvement of everyone, especially the youth is essential.

With all the current issues faced by society in poverty, armed conflict, child abuse, and corruption, the participation of Filipino youth is deemed needed because these young people's collective action will be what inspires and motivates the rest of the people to take action for change. However, their voices are missing and cannot be heard and this silence is alarming. In the Philippine Education for All 2015 Review Report (2015), they found out that while young Filipinos usually felt they were involved in decisions that matter to them especially their lives at home and school, it was observed that they were significantly absent from community and local affairs. Cadano (2023) in a study stated that only a few participate in volunteer organizations while others are inactive. According to Verba et al. (1995), being involved in politics is at the core of democracy and the absence of citizen participation in the political process would not make democracy possible. Participation is designed to develop active engagement and development and youth must be able to exercise this right for the development of the community.

On a sad note, according to UNDP youth just like any marginalized group related to gender, culture, or community is also excluded from projects or participating activities. Sarfaraz et al. (2014) investigated political interest and apathy in university students, revealing that a pessimistic viewpoint was common among those who disengaged from political participation. They developed a feeling of helplessness believing that even if they tried to participate it would all just be in vain and their efforts would be useless. Furthermore, in a case study conducted by Breakfast et.al. (2017), it was revealed that political apathy exists among young children and some have no

interest in politics at all. The participants find politics uninteresting and a waste of time because they have observed that the government does not pay attention and listen to the people who have chosen them.

Youth around the world exhibit a general trend of disengagement and apathy, which the Philippines is not exempted from. Statista (n.d.) data on voter turnout in the 2022 national elections reveals that 20% of registered voters abstained from voting. This also shares the same trend last national election in 2016 wherein according to the data of COMELEC presented by DataTalk (n.d.) only 81.95% turned up to vote, indicating that nearly 18% did not vote. Comparing both of these data alone, political participation is declining over time.

Based on my further literature search, and analysis done, the two reasons for youths' political apathy are their negative emotions toward it and their lack of understanding in the area of politics. These results are alarming to note since the education sector, though receiving the biggest attention and budget allocation by the government, still has not imparted knowledge and skills about politics to these youth. Despite changing curriculums like the Basic Education Curriculum, then the K-12 curriculum, and now the MATATAG curriculum, it seems like there is less to no focus on political education.

This offer insights to school stakeholders especially curriculum designers and policy makers to include political education in junior and senior high school curriculums. If there is an inclusion of politics in this MATATAG curriculum, there is a need to strengthen the instruction for better implementation. For the teachers, most especially the social sciences teachers, they must find ways to integrate concepts of politics in their discussion and may make interventions that aim to ignite a sense of community leading to patriotism. After all, we all want good governance, but good governance starts from every one of us most especially the youth.

Engaging youth in community initiatives isn't just beneficial; it's a fundamental pillar for fostering long-term resilience. They are important because they can provide unique knowledge and skills that may help in addressing issues faced by the community, and they can offer enthusiasm and energy for social change. Their participation and engagement are essential because almost all issues affect them may

it be in healthcare, the environment, or education. When young people are engaged, communities become stronger and more resilient. When young people develop civic engagement and political participation, democracy will flourish.

References

- Breakfast, N.B., Bradshaw, G. & Haines, R., 2017, 'Political apathy amongst students: A case study of Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University' *Africa's Public Service Delivery and Performance Review* 5(1), a172. <https://doi.org/10.4102/apsdpr.v5i1.172>
- Cadano, Mae Joyce & Cadano, O. (2023). The reasons of inactive youth engagement in the community: a case study in Barangay District III, Babatngon, Leyte. 123. 44-60. 10.47119/IJRP1001231420234683.
- DataTalk (n.d). By the numbers: Voter turnout, 2001 to 2016 elections. <https://www.datatalk.asia/story/detail/25/by-the-numbers-voter-turnout-2001-to-2016-elections.html>
- Philippine Education for All 2015 Review Report (2015). Retrieved from https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/philippines_efa_mda.pdf
- Rom, M. C., Hidaka, M. & Walker, R. B. (2022) *Introduction to Political Science*. Houston, Texas: OpenStax, Rice University. [Pdf] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2021387749/>.
- Sarfaraz, Ayesha & Ahmed, Shehla & Khalid, Ayesha & Ajmal, Asir. (2014). Reasons for Political Interest and Apathy among University Students: A Qualitative Study.
- Statista (n.d). Voter turnout during the national elections in the Philippines in 2022. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1308379/philippines-national-elections-voteturnout/>
- Verba, S., Schlozman, K. L., & Brady, H. E. (1995). *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Harvard University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1pnc1k7>
- Youniss, J., Bales, S., Christmas-Best, V., Diversi, M., McLaughlin, M., and Silbereisen, R. (2003). Youth Civic Engagement in the Twenty-First Century. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*. 12(1), 121-148. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1532-7795.00027>

ARTICLE DETAILS

EIR-0000012; Received: June 25, 2025; Accepted: June 30, 2025; Published: July 2, 2025

CITATION:

Joshua B. (2025). *The Silent Generation: Youth Apathy and Disengagement in Politics*. *Education and Industry Review: Essays and Critiques*. DOI: 10.62596/eir.n7zxr42

COPYRIGHT

Copyright © 2025 by author(s). *Education and Industry Review: Essays and Critiques* is published by Stratworks Research Inc. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), allowing redistribution and reproduction in any format or medium, provided the original work is cited or recognized.