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## **AFTER SCHOOL, THEN WHAT? GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SECTOR INTERVENTION IN YOUTH JOB TRAINING IN ZIMBABWE**

By

**Rungano Jonas Zvobgo<sup>1</sup>**

### **Abstract**

*This paper discusses efforts being made by the Government of Zimbabwe and the Private Sector to prepare youth/school leavers for the world of work. The paper asks the critical question "After School then what?" In other words it asks what provisions exist for school leavers for the enhancement of their employability? What training programmes exist? Who manages the programmes? How effective are they and what is their impact? It also compares the initiatives with the existing employment avenues and looks at their employment capacities. Overall, the paper shows the contribution of government technical and vocational training colleges, as well as agricultural colleges, and that of registered and unregistered private vocational training institutions to the training of youths for jobs in Zimbabwe.*

### **Introduction**

The questions concerning the fate of the school leaver have been raised elsewhere in Africa. Peter Williams (1994) raised these issues in his research on school leaver unemployment in West Africa, particularly in Nigeria as did (Zvobgo, 1999<sup>(1)</sup>) in the case of Zambia and Botswana. What emerged in those researches is that there is critical need to prepare school leavers for the world of work as most of them leave school without adequate preparation. Equally important was the fact that such preparation cannot be left to the state alone. There is need for private sector involvement as this sector is also a key player in job creation and in the employment of young people. The captains of this sector know the range of skills that are critical for job seekers to acquire and the jobs that are available on the market. Failure to prepare youths for this important life's engagement results in increased joblessness and frustration amongst youths. As a result society loses trust and confidence with the entire education system.

### **The inadequacies of Current Education Systems in Africa**

Kaiga (2005) in my opinion, summed up the frustrations experienced by most Africans with the systems of Education operating in their countries today. Kaiga cited the following issues:-

- The current structures of education systems in most African countries do not facilitate a revolution in development.
- The curricula continue to address issues that are peripheral to development.

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- Some countries are getting poorer and poorer while progress in others is being hampered by major threats to development such as HIV/AIDS, lack of technological advancement and the ravages of civil war.<sup>(2)</sup>

Zvobgo (2005) raised similar concerns. These included the following:

- The achievement of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in Zimbabwe as indeed in some other developing countries in the early 1990s, did not achieve the kind of anticipated impact on the economy of the country.
- The rapid expansion of secondary and tertiary education did not lead to the kind of economic revolution that had been expected. School leaver unemployment has continued to increase in the absence of improved economic performance. The efforts of youth training programmes to arm youths with critical skills for national development have not impacted significantly on the country's development agenda in the face of rapid economic decline.
- Education policies have generally not been in harmony with economic policies. This has had the effect of limiting the contribution of education to economic development.<sup>3</sup>
- This situation has also been compounded by the fact that the African educated elite, brought up in the tradition of western life styles, has tended to resist any radical changes to the existing education systems and the status quo. Furthermore the African political leadership has not been fully committed to change of the status quo despite the many declarations to reform society. In fact, the political will to change things has not been there. In the absence of that will, there is little that policy implementers can do to expedite the reform process.
- Colonial education systems in the developing world were designed during colonial times to support colonial capitalism. After independence few internal mechanisms have been put in place to ensure that genuine reforms occur in education. In fact, in many countries, the structures of the so-called reforms were intended to ensure their failure. The objectives were either obscure or dishonest and in many cases not easily achievable. It was as if the reform initiatives themselves were designed to ensure their failure.<sup>4</sup>

In many instances however, African economies have lacked the vibrancy needed to support costly education reforms. The result is that African societies have experienced extreme frustrations resulting from unfulfilled and betrayed expectations. Kagia suggests that these frustrations can be removed and expectations fulfilled provided there is a re-examination of some fundamental issues in education. She argues that there is need to get a better analytical grasp of “the circumstances under which education catalyses social and economic development, sharpen the tools for raising the quality of education, for engendering intra-country and inter-country equity and systematically harness global experiences as a means to scale up innovation and good practice”.<sup>5</sup>

### **Conditions necessary for successful educational reform**

Kagia argues that education works but under the right circumstances, provided certain pre-requisites exist. These include:

- The existence of the political will to support education reforms, which will drive the change processes.
- The existence of a vibrant economy, which supports education reforms and provides opportunities and avenues for school leavers to find or create employment.
- The existence of good governance, which guarantees the proper use of resources and the absence of corruption, and,
- Strategies and systems, which will ensure that development is achieved.<sup>6</sup>

African nations have argued that education kicks off powerful poverty reducing synergies and raises the level of skills and incomes and that it is a catalyst for development. Sadly, these advantages of education have not been experienced in many African countries including Zimbabwe

Ross (2005)<sup>7</sup> expressed sentiments commonly expressed in Africa today, that people are questioning the benefits and advantages of all the efforts countries are making in education today in the face of such high school leaver/youth unemployment and underdevelopment generally. They are, in fact questioning the usefulness and relevance of today's education to the world of work. It is clear that research on this issue is raising fundamental questions concerning societal discontent with today's education systems in developing countries. Success made in the area of Universal Primary Education (UPE) and the expansion of secondary and Tertiary education are being increasingly questioned as the results of the efforts made in using education to drive development are extremely disappointing.

### **The Case of Zimbabwe**

Zimbabwe shares these experiences and disappointments and is working towards resolving the negative impact and outcomes of years of frustrating reform initiatives. Among the leading sources of these frustrations and disappointments has been the continuing rise in school leaver/youth unemployment despite the many successes achieved in making education accessible to all .

One area in which government is making frantic efforts to achieve results is in youth training, empowering young people to participate in the economic development of the country by enhancing their employability and capacity to create self employment. This is being done through skills training programmes. We start a discussion of these two issues with a brief look at some of the strategies suggested and developed for the resolution of school leaver youth unemployment.

## Unemployment

The 1994 UNDP Harare office Report 2, phase 2 showed the extent of unemployment in Zimbabwe in 1987. Of all the age groups with a primary education level, the 15 to 24 age group constituted the largest group. These were essentially the school leaver youths with no prospects for employment. They numbered nearly 35 000 followed by the 25 to 34 age group who constituted about 29 000. For those with a secondary education the largest unemployed group was the 15 to 24 year age group. These numbered 100 000 followed by the 25 to 34 year group who numbered about 19 000. In 1996 the school leaver population with a Form 4 education stood at 170 000.<sup>8</sup>

Recent figures show that youth unemployment has continued to rise because of increasing economic underperformance. In 2002, it was found that the dominant activity of school leavers and graduates was wage employment mostly in the private sector with large numbers in the informal sector. It was also revealed that unemployment was significantly high amongst Form 4 school leavers but low amongst university graduates. Around one quarter of Form 4 leavers were self employed. There were reportedly few Form 6 or university graduates in self employment.<sup>9</sup>

Zimbabwe has seen unemployment in general and youth unemployment in particular rise sharply. At the same time, the dollar fell drastically against major international currencies. In 1998 the dollar fell from US\$1 to Z \$38 to US\$1 to Z\$89. This followed two major events. The first was the awarding of large gratuity payments of \$50 000 to every ex-combatant. The second was the government's decision to engage in the DRC war. Both these events negatively impacted on the dollar and also raised inflation as the private sector and the international donor community reacted negatively to these situations.

As a consequence of this, donor aid dried up, the IMF and the World Bank were unwilling to aid the country fearing that the funds would be channelled into the war effort. Reduced forex inflows and donor support triggered off a number of problems for the economy for example, spare parts for plant machinery and equipment became difficult to acquire. This prompted, in some cases, the closure of key productive industries and resulted in the retrenchment of many workers.

This created a scare within the large-scale, foreign owned industrial sector. A number of large private companies such as Coca-Cola (Zimbabwe) and Olivine Industries, the manufacturer of soap, cooking oil and other basic commodities, relocated to Botswana. Many dispossessed white farmers left the country with expensive farm machinery and others with farm animals. These farmers headed for Mozambique and Zambia with some going as far as Uganda and Nigeria. Massive retrenchment of farm workers followed. This situation, coupled with several other factors, generated a serious wave of unemployment. In 2002, a multi sectorial report on youth unemployment identified,

in addition to the causes discussed above, the following:

- Slow rate of economic growth often caused or aggravated by poor economic management. Poor economic management led to high macroeconomic instability, which in turn, culminated in low investment, declining economic growth and high unemployment;
- Low export growth and lack of balance of payment support resulting in a critical shortage of foreign currency;
- High population growth;
- Massive expansion in education and training, with the existing infrastructure unable to absorb the swelling numbers of youth seeking training opportunities; and
- High rural-urban migration of youths, exacerbating urban unemployment.<sup>10</sup>

Youth unemployment was found to be higher than general unemployment because:

- Youth, as new comers, lack experience and may not have the necessary skills thus placing them at the end of the queue;
- Technological change (automation) may worsen the plight of the youth;
- Mismatch between youth skills and aspirations on the one hand and labour market opportunities on the other make them more unemployable than the experienced workers; and
- Young people, particularly young females, tend to find self-employment difficult due to inadequate access to productive resources.<sup>11</sup>

Government believes that part of the solution to the youth unemployment crisis lies in providing opportunities and resources for the training of youths to acquire life long skills for employment or for the creation of employment. There is urgent need for public and private sector intervention in order to curb the rising tide of youth unemployment. Such a strategy will strengthen efforts already under way to address the situation.

### **Public and Private Sector Intervention in the preparation of youths for employment**

It is now clear to policy makers, implementers and all key players in the economy that a major factor in reducing youth unemployment is training youths for jobs. It is important that they be armed with requisite skills if they are to compete effectively for jobs.

One of the pressing questions that worry educators and governments in the developing world is what happens to youths after school? It has been noted, and with a great deal of concern, that every year societies continue to be inundated with young people leaving school with no skills and no job prospects. In some countries such as Zambia and Tanzania, a number of youth training programmes were put in place as way back as the early 1970's with the assistance of foreign governments and Non-governmental organisations. While some degree of success was made in tooling young people with skills, a lot remained unaccomplished in the area of job creation. It became apparent

that the question of what happens to youths after school could not be fully addressed unless the issues of youth empowerment and employment creation were addressed simultaneously. In fact the success in meeting both these challenges rested on the revitalisation and regeneration of the economy.

The issue of youth training for jobs in Zimbabwe began soon after the attainment of independence but on a rather low key. The reason was that the focus of government was on reforming and expanding the education sector. But even at that time government was already aware that school leavers needed to be prepared for the world of work and that economic development was also dependent on the increased participation of youths in all economic spheres. For that reason, a number of government ministries and departments were created to spearhead that mission. The Ministries of Manpower Planning and Development and Higher Education and Technology and departments within the Ministries of Health, Agriculture and Youth were created and mandated with the execution of this task. In the discussion that now follows, we look at the roles played by Government and the private sector in the training of youths to acquire a variety of skills.

### **Vocational and Technical Education**

One area in which government is making a significant contribution to youth job training is in technical and vocational education. At independence, all manpower training programmes were run by the then newly created ministry of Manpower Planning and Development. For four years, the Ministry developed a number of training programmes in Engineering and related fields targeted at youths with ordinary level qualifications. A number of training centres were also created in all urban areas to complement the efforts of the polytechnics, technical and vocational training institutions. The objective was to expand technical and vocational education, which prior to independence, had largely been the preserve of white people, and to make it accessible to all Zimbabweans. The move was part of the government's agenda to produce for the nation, the much needed middle level technicians for industry and commerce.

Between 1980 and 1990 a number of young people and school leavers were trained in a number of trades in these institutions as shown in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1. Expansion of Technical Vocational Education Enrolment 1980-1990**

<b>TYPES OF TRAINING</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1983</b>	<b>1985</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1990</b>
Technical and Vocational	3 469	7 791	18 213	11 007	9 261
% increase	0	125	425	217	167
Teacher Training	2 824	8 429	10 032	16 231	16 576
% increase	0	189	252	475	487
Agricultural Training	176	528	888	1 003	1 010
% increase	0	200	405	470	474
Nurse Training	197	408	408	N.A	950
% increase	0	107	107	N.A	482

*Source: Ministry of Higher Education, Lands and Agriculture and Health Statistics Yearbook, 1990 .*

There was a significant increase in enrolment in all technical and vocational programmes since independence, a 167% increase from 3 469 in 1980 to 9 261 in 1990. This was also the case in all other fields of training. In teachers' colleges, the rise was 448% that is 2 824 to 16 576 in the same period. In agricultural colleges, the rise was 474% from 176 in 1980 to 1010 in 1990. In nursing institutions, the increase was 482% from 197 in 1980 to 950 students in 1990.

The problem was that, those sectors of the economy which readily promised employment were those least favoured by school-leavers. The largest employment sector was the agro-based formal sector, which employed 23% of the workforce. The non-agro-based informal sector employed only 2%. Communal farming employed 55%, while commercial agriculture employed 8% and the informal agriculture 5%. These are not the sectors that were favoured by school leavers who looked mainly towards the formal urban sector for employment. This means that, in the main, a large number of school leavers remained unemployed because they lacked the skills required in the formal sector. They also lacked capital with which to venture into the non-formal sector.

As at December 2004, there were eight government technical and vocational training institutions run by the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education. These were Bulawayo Poly, Harare Poly, Harare Institute of Technology, Mutare Technical College, Kushinga Pikelela, Masvingo, Gweru and Kwekwe technical colleges. Together, they offer a whole range of technical and vocational training programmes as shown in following table.

Table No: 2 Summary All Polytechnical Colleges: Number of Students by subject area and mode of study: second Term 2004

Subject Area	Full Time			Part time			Block Release			Total			Capacity	Ratio	
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total		M	F
Adult Education	0	0	0	0	0	0	36	28	64	36	28	64	150		
Applied Art & Design	139	332	471	11	0	11	0	0	0	150	332	482	480	1	0
Applied Chemical Tech	178	140	318	33	7	40	20	8	28	231	155	386	100	1	1
Automotive Engineering	1096	57	1153	295	11	306	0	0	0	1391	68	1459	1890	1	20
Bio Applied Technology	11	7	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	7	18	20	1	2
Business Studies	1315	1131	2446	1458	521	1979	2	5	7	2775	1657	4432	5400	1	2
Computer Science	454	218	672	231	68	299	0	0	0	685	286	971	1318	1	2
Construction Civil Eng.	412	51	463	124	33	157	0	0	0	536	84	620	755	1	6
Micro-Enterprises	51	37	88	2	3	5	0	0	0	53	40	93	100	1	1
Cosmetology	2	26	28	0	16	16	0	0	0	2	42	44	45		
Electrical Engineering	792	141	933	331	30	361	6	1	7	1129	172	1301	1260	1	7
Environmental Health	44	12	56	0	0	0	0	0	0	44	12	56	36	1	4
Food Technology	7	5	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	5	12	22	1	1
Hair Dressing	1	21	22	18	15	33	12	7	19	31	43	74	139	1	1
Horticulture	19	2	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	2	21	48	1	10
Hotel Keeping/Catering	196	217	413	0	0	0	0	0	0	196	217	413	400	1	1
Instructor Training	110	34	144	50	34	84	49	21	70	209	89	298	494	1	2
Library & Information	69	75	144	101	70	171	0	0	0	170	145	315	345	1	1
Meat Hygiene	13	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	12	10	#	#div/0
Mass Communication	64	52	116	0	0	0	0	0	0	64	52	116	70	1	1
Mechanical Engineering	702	43	745	280	15	295	77	6	83	1059	64	1123	1386	1	17
Metallurgy	9	1	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	1	10	42	1	9
Plastic & Rubber Engineering	16	3	19	8	0	8	0	0	0	24	3	27	60	1	8
Printing & Graphic Arts	54	23	77	60	10	70	0	0	0	114	33	147	510	1	3

Source: Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education Statistics

As can be seen, there were altogether 9717 students enrolled in these institutions on a full time basis. Many of these were in important areas such as business studies (2446) secretarial studies which services both the public and private sectors of the economy (9970).

Automotive Engineering (1153) Electrical Engineering (933) Mechanical Engineering (745) Computer Science (672) Science Technology (1900) Construction Engineering (463) Library Science and Information (144) Instructor Training (144) and Textile Technology (141).

A total of 4624 students were enrolled on a part-time basis. These were students in full time employment who came to acquire and/or improve their trade skills. Of these 1979 were registered in Business studies. Some 306 were in Automotive Engineering, 299 in computer science, 361 were in electrical engineering, 295 in mechanical engineering, 236 were in science technology and 477 were in secretarial studies. The rest were scattered across the curriculum.

There were also those who were registered on a block release basis and came to train intermittently for given periods of time. A total of 442 students were registered on this mode of training. Of these, 164 were registered for science technology, 83 in Mechanical engineering, 70 were in the Instructor Training Course and 64 were in Adult Education. The remainder were, as shown in the table, registered in the remaining programmes.

The requirements for admission into Polytechnics and Technical Colleges is five "O" level passes including a pass in English. Prior to the existing economic challenges, graduates from these institutions easily found their way into professional jobs in industry and commerce. Some of them still do but the majority are now engaged in small to medium scale enterprises using their own ingenuity and entrepreneurship to create employment for themselves and others. Many are found in the furniture manufacturing industry, the automotive industry as motor mechanics and auto electricians and in the tourism industry.

Government also had a number of Vocational Training institutions which trained youths to acquire a variety of vocational skills in many different trades including wood technology, horticulture Leatherwork, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, civil construction and automotive engineering. As at August 2004, four such Institutions were in existence. These were Mupfure, Msasa, Westgate, and St Peters Kubatana Vocational Training centres. Mupfure had a total enrolment of 274 students spread across the curriculum, Westgate had 292, St Peters 216 and Msasa 141 making a total enrolment of 923. These trainees were spread across the curriculum as follows:-

**Table 3 Summary of Vocational Training Centres: Enrolment for upgrading courses by subject area: level and sex: second term 2004**

Subject area	NC			CLASS 4/1 <sup>ST</sup> YEAR			CLASS 2/3 <sup>RD</sup> YEAR			Class Two/3 <sup>rd</sup> year			Class1/4 <sup>th</sup> year			Total		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Automotive Engineering	0	0	0	122	1	123	126	4	129	94	4	98	2	0	2	365	9	374
Constructive Civil Eng	0	0	0	13	0	13	16	2	18	24	2	26	0	0	0	53	4	57
Electrical Engineering	25	2	27	0	0	0	37	0	37	22	2	24	8	0	8	92	4	96
Mechanical Engineering	0	0	0	31	0	31	76	3	79	25	0	25	3	0	3	171	3	174
Horticulture	0	0	0	15	5	20	16	4	29	10	2	12	0	0	0	41	11	52
Leatherwork	0	0	0	3	2	5	6	0	6	4	3	7	0	0	0	13	5	18
Textile Technology	0	0	0	1	1	12	1	9	10	1	2	26	0	0	0	3	45	48
Wood Technology	0	0	0	36	0	36	27	0	27	30	1	31	0	0	0	93	1	94
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>831</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>913</b>

Source: Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education Statistics 2004

Once again, significant enrolments were recorded in critical areas such as Automotive Engineering (374), Mechanical Engineering (9174), Wood Technology (94), Electrical Engineering (96), Civil Engineering (57), Horticulture (52) and Textile technology (48).

Admission requirements to these vocational training centres are lower than those of technical colleges. A minimum of three "0" level passes is required. The level of skills taught is also lower. Graduates from these centres find employment mainly in self created projects.

From the enrolment figures in the table, it is clear that there is need to increase women enrolment. It may be necessary to create positive discrimination admission requirements to favour women. The reasons for the low women representation are deeply rooted in the education system itself. Fewer girls take science subjects at secondary school levels. So the real solution lies in removing impediments which result in less girls doing sciences early in the education system. Also, many rural schools are unable to offer sciences because of the lack of conventional laboratories, a situation which should improve as a result of the rural electrification programme which is bringing electricity to rural schools. The curricular reform drive should pay particular attention to this aspect of the education of women in the sciences.

It is not clear what role is being played by the newly created Border Gezi youth training centre named after the late Minister of youths. Government argues that the youths are engaged in various vocational training programmes. Critics of government argue that this and other centres are designed to train youths in the political ideology of the ruling ZANU PF

Party in order to instil youths commitment to the party with the intention of promoting the kind of nationalism which perpetuates the party's rule. Some credence to this argument is borne by the fact that attendance at these centres will soon become compulsory for all school leavers. Infact all aspirants to teacher training and other professional training provided by government are now expected to have attended the Border Gezi centres for at least three to six months. This is not unusual. In other countries all over the developed world, youths are required, before proceeding to tertiary education to undergo some kind of youths service. Infact, even in countries such as the United States and Israel youth service is compulsory for all youths especially in the military.

### **Private Sector Intervention; Foreign Governments and Non-Governmental Organisations**

The second most important player in the training of youths for the world of work is the private sector. This includes Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's), foreign governments, Churches and private companies.

Many international agencies and organisations established links with the Zimbabwean government in the early 1990s in the area of technical co-operation and training. This was the period of the economic structural adjustment programme when relations between Zimbabwe and the outside world were warm and cordial. Indeed Britain, Australia, Europe and America were amenable to Zimbabwes' requests for assistance in youth training. Mamasi and Roamanarivo have observed that a number of foreign governments and NGOs played a prominent role in funding youth training programmes that had been identified by government for example: <sup>12</sup>

#### **The Australian Agency for International Development (AUSAD)**

The Agency committed in January 1995, \$1.6 million through Opportunity International Organisation to support technical assistance and training . Several training workshops were organised and funded for school leavers in a number of trade areas such as business management, production and marketing. The Ministry of Higher Education and Technology also received financial support for the inservicing of college lecturers and teachers. This assistance was sadly withdrawn after the year 2000 as a result of the souring of relations between Zimbabwe and Australia over land reforms and other policies perceived by the later as undemocratic. Only humanitarian aid is reaching the country through the United Nations and civic organisations.<sup>13</sup>

#### **The British Department for International Development (DFID)**

Through a project entitled Credit for the Informal Sector Project (CRISP), the department committed, in July 1995, \$2 232 million in support guarantee assistance to small scale youths projects. This donation provided invaluable assistance to young entrepreneurs to undertake projects at a time when banks and other finance houses were not readily willing to provide unsecured capital to unskilled young people. The fund also enabled government to train school leavers in project management, production and marketing in the scheme of small to

medium scale industries. Popular projects were in vegetable production and marketing, horticulture, furniture manufacturing welding and metal fabrication. The assistance was also critical at a time when the negative impact of ESAP on the economy and the reduction in foreign capital inflows were devastating the formal sectors of industry and commerce resulting in the increased closure and/or relocation of previously viable businesses to the neighbouring countries. Despite the poor relations between Zimbabwe and Britain, DFID continues to contribute significantly to a number of projects in Zimbabwe but through the United Nations and through other civic society organisations. No direct aid is going to the government of Zimbabwe. The Agency has contributed well over £ 71 million for humanitarian assistance and the fight against HIV/AIDS since 2001. DFID is also supporting protracted relief programmes aimed at 1.5 million of the poorest and most vulnerable people in Zimbabwe. These relief programmes include targeted food inputs, agricultural support such as seed and fertilizers for young farmers and the rehabilitation of water projects.<sup>14</sup>

#### **The British Council/Commonwealth Secretariat**

The British Council ran a scholarship programme for the British government for young Zimbabweans wishing to undertake university studies in the United Kingdom in all fields of study while the Commonwealth Secretariat provided grants and scholarships to young Zimbabweans eligible to undertake post “A” level studies in universities and other higher education institutions throughout the commonwealth. Unfortunately, due to the very strained relations between Britain and Zimbabwe following the introduction of the land reform programme in the year 2000 and the latter’s withdrawal from the commonwealth club of nations, all these facilities have virtually ceased save for those Zimbabweans already studying in the United Kingdom.<sup>15</sup>

#### **German Development Co-Operation (GTZ)**

The German Development Co-operation (GTZ) which relocated to Malawi after 2000 had two micro enterprise projects which ran for over a ten year period. These were the Micro and Small scale enterprise promotions programme (MISSEP) and Resources Network (ISTARN).

Both these programmes focused on providing technical training to youths and funding youths projects mainly in agriculture and water development in rural areas. Some of the areas in which the Agency provided aid were in the provision of micro-economic advice to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning and Development. The organisation also gave advisory service to the private sector. GTZ was particularly active in the Masvingo and Manicaland provinces before relocating to Malawi.<sup>16</sup>

#### **United States Agency for International Development (USAD)**

Technical co-operation between the United States and Zimbabwe began at independence in 1980. A total of US\$870 million has been invested in various development programmes between 1980 and 2003. These have included economic adjustment, housing investment guarantees, environmental programmes, health education and training, urban development and small and medium scale enterprise development. The US government through the agency also funded some aspects of country’s reconstruction agenda in the 1980’s and 1990’s. These included the resettlement programme and agricultural extension services.<sup>17</sup>

During this period, USAID provided US\$172 million in commodity import programmes that financed the foreign exchange of manufacturing and agricultural equipment, with local currency generated being used to improve the productivity of smallholder farmers, health and education. Much of USAID financing also supported private sector development and small and medium enterprises which are the major creators of employment opportunities for school leavers. Infact, the Private Enterprise Development Programme focussed on private Sector-led growth which resulted in increased job creation for school leavers and foreign currency earnings. The programme also broadened indigenous participation in the economy and created avenues for youth involvement in the building of business linkages, business advisory services and employee ownership.<sup>18</sup>

USAID's role has also been prominent in supporting programmes which benefit disadvantaged groups such as the unemployed youths, women, subsistence farmers, farm workers and orphans affected by HIV/AIDS. Much of the agency's aid went into the following:

- Providing appropriate technology such as drip irrigation to promote better food security.
- Improving business capacity through skills training.
- Commercial linkages, agribusiness and market opportunities for subsistence farmers and
- Technical Teacher training<sup>19</sup>

USAID also made a significant contribution in the communal Areas Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE, by providing funds for the control and efficient use of wildlife, Between 1990 and 1987 CAMPFIRE received US\$28.1 million under the USAID's Natural Resource Management Programme helping communities to earn more than US\$20 million. Through the (CAMPFIRE) Development Fund, a number of projects were created. These programmes provided new opportunities for rural young people, school leavers and the unemployed to train and engage in beneficial activities in fisheries, which is one of the most successful industries in Zimbabwe today, as well as eco-tourism and bee-keeping.

At the time that government was engaged in the vocationalisation of the curriculum, USAID came in and supported the initiative through a programme of technical teacher training. Infact the agency went so far as to fund the construction of the Belvedere Technical Teacher's Training College in Harare, one of the large single contribution made by the Americans in the youth skills training programme in this country. The institution has, over the last ten years, produced hundreds of teachers for Agriculture, Technical Graphics, Physical Education, Home Economics, Metal Technology, Wood Technology and Mathematics.<sup>20</sup>

Many of USAID's activities were scaled down after the inception of the 2000 controversial land reform programme. Since then, it supports health programmes, particularly HIV/AIDS, and good governance and democracy and securing lives and livelihoods for the most disadvantaged groups and vulnerable populations.

**Private Sector Contribution towards the development of vocational and technical education: The role of Local Organisations**

The general political environment at the time of independence was not conducive to the development of Private Sector Training Institutions (PSITs). There were a number of reasons for this. Politicians and senior policy makers at the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology which, until 1988, was responsible for the registration and inspection of PSITs, publicly and privately stated that they could see no role for PSITs in the overall government. In fact government, as a whole, considered private sector vocational and technical education institutions as exploitative of Africans. Their profit motive was dismissed as capitalist by a regime that was Marxist and ideologically opposed to private sector participation in youth training activities. As a result of this attitude, the requirements for the registration of such private institutions were said to be stringent and openly adversarial. The 1980's therefore saw very limited private sector activity in vocational and technical training.<sup>21</sup>

Furthermore, the unavailability of foreign currency limited the scope for individuals to pay fees and pursue vocational technical education courses leading to foreign qualifications. Foreign currency shortages also restricted imports of new production technologies necessary for teaching. In any case, the programmes were not popular since good jobs were tied to academic education. A research into Private Sector Training Institutions carried out by a group of scholars from Tanzania and Zimbabwe in 1997, found out that prior to the liberalisation of the economy in 1990, only one in ten applications for PSITs registration was approved. The report also alleged that more direct attempts were made by government to undermine the operations of such institutions including attempts to recruit trainers in the institutions for the civil service. The report also claimed that the Ministry of Higher Education established and expanded its own institutions in order to force private ones out of business.

**The Liberalisation of Vocational Education Training Since 1990**

The liberalisation of the economy in 1990 triggered the liberalisation of private sector voc-tech education. Government acknowledged that public sector training efforts could only satisfy a small section of the rapidly growing demand for voc-tech education. The number of profit PSITs grew during the 1990 decade. The Research team found that 12 out of the 25 were surveyed established PSITs in a space of just seven years. The stringent requirements for registration were and many centres were established by former public servants. Prior to 1990, only 3 out of the 11 profit PSITs were African owned and managed. After 1990, all but 3 of the 10 PSITs that were established were set up by African entrepreneurs. A large number of students in these institutions had well paying jobs or came from privileged homes.<sup>22</sup>

The 1999 report showed that the degree of private sector training provision in Harare in 1996 was impressive. The 25 survey PSTI's amongst themselves, sold a wide variety of training services to nearly 35 000 people. The largest centre had well over 11 000 students while the smallest had 26, the median enrolment being 500. It was estimated that 180 000 individuals about 5% of the economically active population was engaged in some form of private sector Training. Table 4 shows enrolments by main subject area at the time of the survey in 1996.

**TABLE 4****Enrolments by main subject area at the time of the 1996 PSITs survey**

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>NUMBER &amp; CENTRE</b>		<b>TOTAL ENROLMENT</b>	
<b>Academic</b>	0	8	4814	14.3
<b>Secretarial</b>	1	12 <sup>a</sup>		
<b>Commercial</b>	1	12 <sup>a</sup>	12906	38.3
<b>Computing</b>	8	11 <sup>a</sup>	11871	35.2
<b>Clothing</b>	1	4	1459	4.3
<b>Technical</b>	1	4 <sup>b</sup>	1570	4.7
<b>Other</b>	0	3 <sup>c</sup>	1082	3.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	15	-	33702	100.0

Source: *Vocational Education and Training in Tanzania and Zimbabwe in the context of Economic Reform-Education Research Paper NO28, 1999 p 75. Table 4.12*

- NB: a more than 75% of enrolment  
 b Computer servicing  
 c mainly English as a second language

Table 4 shows that commercial, secretarial and computing training courses accounted for nearly 75% of all enrolments while technical training in trades such as motor mechanics masonry and electrical installation comprised a mere 5%. A wide range of commercial course was available. These included Accounting, Marketing, Bookkeeping, General Credit and Supervisory Management, Salesmanship, Purchasing and Supplies, Banking and Hotel and Tourism Management.

The survey also found that there were three main clients for these courses. The first was that of people already in wage employment in the formal sector who were seeking relevant professional and other vocational qualifications in order to advance their careers and improve their incomes. Nearly two thirds of all enrolments came from this client group. The second group was that of school leavers who were either re-sitting secondary school examinations or were full-time students on secretarial, commercial clothing and technical courses. The third group was trainees directly sponsored by employers as part of in-house staff development programmes. Nearly 60% of all PSTI students were women which was in sharp contrast to the 30% in government post secondary centres.

While PSTIs were allowed to offer foreign qualifications during much of the 1990s, after 2000 and in line with the toughening and reversal of government policy with regard to the operations of education and training institutions, all PSTIs seeking registration are now formally

required to offer national courses leading to local qualifications through the Higher Education Examination Council (HEXCO). It is seeking to establish a local system and stem the preponderance of foreign programmes and qualifications. This is also in line with cabinet decision to localise all examinations in this country. Under the current difficult economic conditions characterised by high inflation and a weak and constantly falling dollar, most students can no longer afford fees paid in foreign currency. This has led to a drastic shift by students from foreign courses to those that lead to local qualifications. Many PSTIs actually offer internationally recognised local qualifications particularly in the Business management spheres.

While enrolments in commercial, computing and secretarial courses have expanded dramatically, those for clothing and other technical subjects have stagnated. Students are now moving away from courses that are related to trades currently under stress. The Clothing industry has been particularly hard hit by cheap second hand imports from Zambia and Mozambique and those from China. What is happening in the economy is now having a direct impact on course selection by students.

The survey also found that fees charged by most of the survey PSTIs in particular for commercial, computing and secretarial courses were, in 1996, beyond the reach of the poor. On the average, fees for most of these courses were, at least, equivalent to the minimum wage of Z\$480 per month. In addition to the fees, were registration and examination fees. This meant that in the final analysis, the fees were very high. A good example was that of the CIMA accountancy course which, at the end of four years easily amounted to Z\$40000. Sub-professional foreign qualifications such as ACP, IAC, ICM, and L CCI were less costly amounting to between Z\$500 to Z\$1500 per course. Although local qualifications cost 3 to 4 times less than their foreign equivalent, students consider them to be less prestigious. As a result, there is still high demand for foreign qualifications and private institutions continue to challenge government in law courts when they feel that their operations are under threat.

### **Non-Registered PSTIs**

The registration requirements were relaxed after 1990. A number of people particularly in the western suburbs found difficulty in meeting them. The conditions included getting approval for buildings and other structures where training was to take place. The teaching staff had to be properly qualified and teaching equipment had to meet set standards both in terms of quality and quantity. This resulted in some private authorities deciding to operate without approval and therefore without licence.

A number of such institutions were found in Highfield, Mufakose, Tafara and Chitungwiza. These institutions were often found operating in backyard accommodation at shopping centres, church premises or personal homes because of their illegal status.

A total of 37 non-registered centres were found in the city centre. In 1977, there were approximately 95 non-registered centres in Harare. This constituted a sizeable proportion of the total private sector training market. It was often difficult for Ministry of Higher Education to identify these centres due to inadequate funds needed to establish an inspectorate system.

Also, the very small penalty of Z\$1000 for illegal operation and trading was not a sufficient deterrent to halt these operations.<sup>23</sup>

The non-registered PSTIs that were surveyed were found to offer courses similar to those offered in registered institutions and were therefore in direct competition with them as shown in Table 2.

**Table 5. Summary of courses offered by non-registered PSTIs in Harare Central District in 1997.**

Type of Training	No. Found	% In one classroom only	Average No of Computers/Sewing Machines	Student observed	% Poor conditions
Computing	23	76.5	5	1-12	30.8
Clothing	9	100.0	4	60-3	33.3
Hotel Tourism and catering	3	Na	0	Na	Na
Commercial	2	100.0	0	Na	0.0
Motor Mechanics	1	0.0	-	70+	100.0

*Source: Economic Reform Education Research paper No. 28 1999, p.80*

It is clear that the scale of operations in the non-registered centres was quite limited. All premises in which operations took place were rented and thirteen out of seventeen (76.5%) that could be inspected had only one small room for teaching. Four were in very poor condition. Ten had just three or less computers for teaching purposes. At eight centres, just one instructor was observed with 2 to 3 students under instruction.<sup>24</sup>

### **Non degree Agricultural Training In The Republic of Zimbabwe 1995 to 2005**

Agriculture is one sector in which the training of youths/school leavers has been most consistent. Although the numbers of trainees has never at any one point, been as high as that of student teachers in Teachers Colleges, efforts were consistently made to train young farmers though largely for government service and for the white farming sector.

Agricultural Training has always been a government undertaking. It started at Gwebi College, even though, in the slump period 1931-41, it was leased. Many early farmers had their

Zimbabwean (then Rhodesian) farming initiation on “Gwebi Experimental Farm”, and some of the buildings in which they lived exist today and are occupied by staff. In 1913, plans were made for “Gwebi Agricultural School”. However, due to the intervention of the 1914-18 War, the plans were never brought to fruition and when the matter was re-opened in the “twenties”, the buildings which had been planned for Gwebi were erected at Matopos and became the Matopos School of Agriculture. Due to the slump and lack of interest in agricultural education, the School of Agriculture was closed and the buildings were used by Rhodes Estate Preparatory School.

After World War II, interest in agricultural education revived and ex-servicemen did practical training at Gwebi. In 1950, the first students entered Gwebi College of Agriculture to take a two-year diploma course, which was basically modelled on that previously provided by colleges of agriculture in the Republic of South Africa. Since that time, one other college, Chibero College was established in 1963. Then, because of the need to serve the African farming community, two Agricultural Institutes were set up. These were offering certificates in agriculture. Agricultural training has gone from strength to strength on the labour market. Today, the graduates face stiff competition from large numbers of other graduates from within and outside Zimbabwe. However, because of the increased demand for higher skills, all the five colleges are now offering training at both diploma and certificate levels. There are two private colleges offering training in agriculture. These are Blackforby College and Watershed College. However, their contribution to national agricultural human resources needs is negligible.

### **Training facilities**

A variety of crops are grown. Irrigation facilities are available for instruction in a range of irrigation techniques. The colleges’ farms provide facilities for instruction in the management of dairy cows, pedigree and commercial beef cattle, pigs, poultry, ostriches, sheep, goats and rabbits. A wide range of machinery and equipment is provided for instruction and practice. The students are also exposed to computers and many aspects of farm accounting and agribusiness management.

Every college has a good technical library, a modern lecture hall fully equipped with audio-visual gadgets, a laboratory, engineering workshops, and spacious offices and student hostels. There are also multi-purpose halls, staff residences, farm buildings, a large dairy, cattle, sheep and goat facilities, extensive piggeries and poultry houses, ostrich egg incubator and setter, feed handling and feed mixing plants, tobacco barns and a 0.5 hectare-greenhouse and handling shed for horticulture.

The Ministry of Agriculture administers the Colleges. The College Advisory Boards, appointed by the Minister of Lands Agriculture, take a very active interest in matters affecting these institutions. Through associateship, the University of Zimbabwe and recently the Midlands State University provide academic guidance to colleges. Major disciplines are animal Production, Crop Production, Farm and Agribusiness Management and Agricultural

Engineering. Colleges work as a team with the sole objective of providing soundly trained persons in the field of agriculture.

### **Higher National Diploma, Diploma and Certificate In Agriculture Programmes Entrance Qualifications**

Agricultural Colleges have set themselves high standards. This does not mean a “highbrow” outlook, but the young person entering Agricultural colleges must have their wits about them if they are to do well. To this general end, applicants should have sound basic knowledge of, and ability in mathematics and science. They should be able to understand and express ideas clearly in the language of instruction, which is, English.

A General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level Certificate qualification, with Grades C or better in English language, mathematics and an acceptable science, is regarded as the minimum entry qualification. The applicants go through a selection interview conducted by a selection committee. The entrance requirements for the Young Commercial farmer Education Programme are relaxed.

The Ministry of Agriculture undertook the process of upgrading agricultural education and training below university level in order to meet the diverse needs of the changing agricultural industry. In February 1997, the Government of Zimbabwe approved the introduction of the Higher National Diploma in Horticulture at Gwebi College and Chibero College to run parallel to the universities Associate Diploma in general Agriculture. The HND programmes in Horticulture and Animal production are meant to produce practical oriented middle level specialists. A market survey which was carried out in 1997 indicated that the Higher National Diploma in Horticulture and Animal Production were in high demand and the numbers of applications received indicated so. To be admitted into HND, one should possess five (5) ‘O’ level subjects including English Language, Mathematics and Science, a diploma in agriculture or horticulture/animal related diploma from a recognised institution and at least 12 months post qualification relevant experience. The age of students is normally between 18 and 25 years.

The colleges’ year runs from September to July, coinciding with the farming year. Breaks of approximately one month occur over Christmas and New Year and again at Easter. The Diploma Course extends over three years for schools leavers ( with first year on campus, second year of farm attachment and third year on campus again) and two years for those with certificates in agriculture who are exempted from farm attachment. The certificate is run as an apprenticeship programme, where the students are on campus for three months and then they go to farms for another three months alternately for two years.

Trainees are exposed to the widest possible range of agricultural programmes. The training itself is intensive and demands serious commitment on the part of the students. This has become even more necessary following the availability of land for aspiring farmers under the land redistribution programme.

The course is structured in such a way that practicals and theory are equally weighted. The diploma students spend 50 per cent of their time on theory and 50 per cent on practicals. However, the certificate students spend 25 per cent on theory and 75 percent doing practicals. Higher National Diploma students spend more time in theory.

## Conclusion

This paper has tried to show how government and the private sector are contributing to the training of youths for employment in Zimbabwe. It is important to note that, although there are many different initiatives in progress, the actual numbers of youths involved are still very few and, for many, the question; 'After school then what' remains unanswered.

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## CASH SHORTAGES IN ZIMBABWE: ANY PROSPECT FOR SOLUTIONS?

By

**Zachary Tambudzai and Martin Charumbira\***

### **Abstract**

*The paper gives special attention to the hyperinflation and cash shortages as well as the possible implications of the measures announced by the Minister of Finance and Economic Development on Tuesday the 29<sup>th</sup> of July 2003. An attempt will be made to forecast how well the monetary policy measures are likely to perform given the nature and magnitude of the problems it is meant to address. Whereas the problems bedevilling the economy may have several dimensions, we will not be drawn into argument as to the significance of each of the components since the pre-occupation of this paper is a solution package for the current cash shortages. It is the deliberate intention of this paper to discuss the short-term, implications of the solutions in place by relying on the observation method and a historical comparative approach.*

### **Background**

The financial (currency) crisis in Zimbabwe is one of the most significant events of the new millennium. It began modestly at the end of 1999 as a speculative attack on the Zimbabwe dollar. The Zimbabwean dollar has as a result ‘depreciated’<sup>1</sup> sharply despite the controls. The crisis has also been reflected in the principal asset markets namely stock markets and the real estate markets. The health of the banks and the non-bank financial institutions (financial sector) is seriously under threat. The situation has been worsened by and is worsening the economic slowdown and the foreign investors have lost confidence in the economy. Zimbabwe’s once vibrant economy, used to decades of growth, has been plunged into deep recession and the economic hardships are fast approaching the levels reached during the great depression of the 1930’s, if lasting solutions are not hatched immediately.

The currency crisis has forced a reappraisal of the policies ranging from corporate governance to exchange rate management. It has spawned wide-ranging discussions on solutions to the problems bedeviling the financial sector. The paper attempts to give a socio-economic perspective on the implications of the shortage of cash, and the introduction of new notes, traveler’s cheques, and the bearer cheques.

The poor performance of most economic sectors over the past four years amid high inflation rates (399.5%) and negative growth rates have culminated in the near collapse of the banking system, which has until recently, been defying the odds and making huge profits when other sectors were under-performing. Without overlooking the resilience of the financial sector in

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<sup>1</sup> Due to the controls on the exchange rate for the greater part of the period, it was more of devaluation than depreciation.

comparison to the real sector, we should closely analyse why in the last four months cash shortages have become the order of the day in the country. The people are reeling from the impact of the country's acute shortage of bank notes- the latest shortage to hit Zimbabwe, where basic consumer goods, fuel, electricity and foreign currency are all in short supply. The shortage of bank notes became apparent in November 2002 when the circulation of the \$500<sup>2</sup> note, dropped sharply as the Christmas festive season approached. The bill has now almost completely disappeared, with small notes (\$10 and \$20) resurfacing to form the basis of transactions.

We perhaps should learn a lesson or two from the resilience of the colonial regime of Ian Smith during the period when the country was reeling under sanctions. Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) could not have lasted for as long as it did had the government not realised that its political power rested mainly on the white electorate. The regime managed to instil confidence in the small but crucially important enclave of whites, who constituted the majority of the electorate under the racist electoral laws. The economic policies then were devised such that they specifically targeted certain racial groups. Walker (1971) says,

‘It is possible to make a case for two economic policies, one for the white people and one for the black people on the basis that the economic requirements and reactions of the two communities are sufficiently different to justify two different economic approaches’.

Such can only be expected of the academics of that time that effectively acted as think-tanks for the regime. The colonial regime should be credited for effectively making use of the advice it regularly got from the intellectuals. In a democracy, the people lead whilst the government follows obediently. Such should be the most extreme (ideal) case if the electorate is to own the policies and have confidence in them.

Clearly the UDI sanctions were not as crippling as the current EU/Commonwealth sanctions. Could it mean that the Zimbabweans have now run out of resilience strategies? Or they have lost trust in the ability of the policy-maker to bring emancipation from the current crisis? If the later is true, as we believe it could be, then there is an urgent need to restore policy credibility.

Causes of the cash shortage

**Hyperinflation:** - Empirical economic evidence suggests that in a hyperinflationary environment real monetary balances contract. High inflation usually results in a flight of domestic financial assets into foreign financial assets or real assets. Inflation erodes the real value of money that makes it difficult to use the same amount of money to

- buy goods and services due to fast increase in prices. Hardy et.al (1998) argues that boom-bust cycles of inflation cause bank crises.

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<sup>2</sup> \$ refers to Zimbabwean dollars in this article.

- **Speculation:** - The distortion in the markets due to controls lead to shortages in the commodity and foreign currency markets and the resultant overpricing in the parallel markets. People disinvest from the money market into the real and stock markets, leading to serious speculation.
- **Lower interest rates:** - Under financial repression negative real interest rates result, while expansionary monetary policy would result in an increase in inflation. Saving the source of investment funds is being discouraged. This leads to stagflation and low deposits.
- **Loss of confidence in the financial sector:** - People hoard money in anticipation of a unexpected/ unforeseen circumstances. Cash shortages lead to cash shortages because of lack of confidence in the financial system.  
McCall M et.al (1998) attributes financial crisis to weak financial oversight and ‘crony capitalism’ (in this case corrupt dealing in cash). The central bank in Zimbabwe was virtually caught unawares by the shortages despite the high inflationary situation, which should have acted as an indicator of impending high demand.
- **Externalization of the domestic currency:** - Cross-border traders keep a lot of cash outside the country for speculative purposes in the foreign exchange market because of the possibility of arbitrage.
- **Parallel commodity market:** - People hoard money in anticipation of finding goods for resale, is there exists simultaneously a cash and commodities (especially food) shortage.
- **Shortage of special ink and printing paper:** - To avoid production of fake notes the paper for producing notes is imported. Lack of foreign currency can reduce the central bank’s ability to produce notes and coins. The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) has been facing foreign currency shortages to import such material.  
In Zimbabwe the surge in the demand for cash, leading to shortages in summary can be attributed to underlying macro-economic imbalances as well as socio-economic and political factors.

### **Government’s Solution to the Cash Crisis**

Amid the worsening crisis involving the shortage of bank notes and the failure of financial institutions to meet the depositors’ cash needs various solutions have been proffered. The RBZ has of late been asking banks to come up with their own strategies and measures to encourage deposits and use of alternative means/modes of payments (non-cash financial transactions) for goods and services (e.g. credit cards, cheques, point of sale facilities and direct debits). It has asked banks to reduce or scrap off the numerous service charges on cash deposits and ensure that depositing of money is done in the easiest and most convenient manner.

The RBZ itself had promised to inject \$24 billion in \$500 notes into the market by mid-June 2003 as part of its efforts to alleviate the situation.

**The Finance Minister's July Proposals**

The Finance Minister on 29<sup>th</sup> of July 2003 announced the following among other measures to curb the cash shortage:

- Introduction of CD3 forms for transport operators plying the cross-boarder routes.
- Introduction of new \$500 note to replace the current \$500 note by the 26<sup>th</sup> of September.
- Introduction of the new \$1000 denomination by the first of October.
- Printing of notes in and outside the country to try and match cash demand by both individual and corporate bodies.
- Injection of \$2.5billion every month till the situation normalises.

**Analysis of the proposal**

The \$1000 note is meant to avoid the handling of bulk notes, which has become associated with the smaller denominations. It is probably interesting to note that the magnitude of the inflation problem will make it very difficult for such a move to sufficiently address the issue. An introduction of even higher denominations of \$5 000, \$10 000, and \$20 000 is most likely to match the hyperinflationary situation. It is important to note that the ability of a currency to perform its functions is crucially dependent on the confidence and acceptability, which the generality of the people have in it as a legal tender. In the absence of that component it might be a waste of time and a plunder of limited national resources if anyone were to call for a change of the appearance of the notes without any promise at all on how the intrinsic value of the money would change. The replacement of the current \$500 note with a new one might not even achieve the long-term objective of bringing the notes back to the formal financial system unless the government is able to monitor all the financial transactions in the country, which capacity it lacks beyond any reasonable doubt.

Lotz (2002) argues that if the old currency fails to achieve a smooth circulation, then introducing a new note of the same value will not solve the problem as the new one would still not circulate since the government is only able to effectively monitor a fraction of the total transactions in the economy. It is one thing to bring the money back into the formal financial system and yet another to achieve a sustainable circulation of that money. Do we really need the means or the end result? This is the question we should pose if we are to analyse the prowess or lack of it in the proposed measures.

Over the last half of the month of August 2003, the monetary authorities continued to announce more "strong measures" of dealing with the cash shortages and promised to consolidate on the previously announced measures. Key among the measures was the introduction of "Local Travellers' cheques", previously unheard of in this country. The authorities were optimistic that such cheques would be a good substitute for cash. The cheques have been issued in denominations up to as large as \$100 000. The experience over the few weeks in which, they have been in use (up to 10<sup>th</sup> of September 2003) has shown that they are only acceptable in limited circles and therefore have failed to effectively circulate. The cheques have the following key weaknesses:

- They have not been well publicised and most of the security features which they contain cannot be easily identified except with specialised equipment which is not always available on most points of sale.
- Most of the goods are currently sold on the informal sector, and in some cases in the black market. Given that the informal sector dealers rarely accept the cheques a consumer who intends to purchase basic commodities on such markets will find himself in a dilemma. How many liquor outlets for instance are ready to accept the cheques?
- The large denominations have increased the incentive to produce and circulate fraudulent cheques (counterfeits) of the same nature. A fraudster who manages to get hold of only ten cheques of \$100 000 value would have a million dollars extra worth.
- The cheques are more expensive for the authorities to manage compared to the bank notes. This is because the cheques are usually used for single transactions.

### **Alternative Prescriptions to the Crisis**

#### **Restore Policy Confidence and Credibility**

The general attitude of the Zimbabweans towards their economic circumstances in the last few years clearly put them way ahead of several other people the world over in terms of how they underplay serious problems. It is apparent that we treat dangerous issues too lightly to our own detriment. Ours is a tragedy of inaction, where salvation is held outside self, but within the realms of some “benevolent leadership” whose wisdom and abilities we rarely question and whose legitimacy we cannot publicly scrutinise. This has developed into a scenario where not many policies go through the normal process of citizen input and broad-based consultation.

There is clear evidence that in the last few years we have had a good number of policy inconsistencies and policy reversals whose overall effect has been to weaken the credibility of policy and the regime generating those policies. The expenditures directed towards the non-productive activities have had a significant influence on the fiscus, creating a situation we now call “economic crisis”<sup>3</sup>. Its existence, which used to be subject of heated debate in the late 1990s is no longer in question, rather the debate has taken a new twist with the theme now being the causes of the crisis and the way forward. In most cases the objectivity on the various issues has been lost, with political inclination deciding the virtues of what should otherwise be the domain of intellect (technocrats). Some strange arguments that violate all economic logic and rationale have been advanced to justify certain perspectives. Some self-acclaimed ‘economic analysts’, whose academic record cannot be traced to any recognised institution, have also hijacked the economic debate in Zimbabwe.

There is need to restore confidence in our financial sector policies through consistency and predictability. Policies must have the input of all interest groups to promote ownership and

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<sup>3</sup> Dr. Leonard Tumba (RBZ governor) gives the same arguments as quoted in the Herald, 30-05-2003.

easy implementation. The RBZ governor noted the need to restore confidence in the country's economy collectively as stakeholders in order to bring down inflation as a very important factor in solving the crisis (Herald, 30 May 2003).

### **The Currency Value**

At independence in 1980, we replaced the Rhodesian currency with a new currency. The ratio of the new currency to the old was one-to-one. The implications, if you may ask, are very clear. It was a 'change of colours' whose effect was at best symbolic. In real terms the exchange rate of the new currency remained at Z\$1:US\$1.4. A non-event! Of course it sounds like it. The purchasing power of the currency maintained the previous trends. The interest here could be on how the transition was managed. Since the Zimbabwean currency was very strong against the major currencies, the issue of introducing a stronger currency to replace an old currency did not arise. It was rather easy to eliminate the old currency from circulation.

To digress a little bit, the feudal lords in Japan were in 1869 prohibited by the imperial power to issue notes, such that only the government could establish a standard currency. The replacement was not complete until 1879. Why then did it take them a decade to convince people to abandon the notes issued by local clans? A closer look at the events would reveal that the people had immense confidence in the old localised currencies and they did not realise the merits of the new. We however, cannot overlook the lack of coordination and the difficulties of enforcement that characterised the society of the day.

Given the rate at which the Zimbabwean currency has been losing its purchasing power, which we will generalise as value, it is unlikely that the citizens will present the resentment to a new currency. At a time when the people no longer have confidence in the local currency, the pre-conditions for a change of currency build up. The following key points are indicators to the effect that the Zimbabwean currency has lost credibility:

- The disappearance of the local currency from the formal financial system
- The general dislike by citizens (both corporate and individuals) to keep their assets in the form of local currency. This has been more apparent from the low savings the people are keeping at financial institutions.
- The rush to withdraw cash by individuals and the failure of the business community to deposit most of their cash collections.
- High inflation rates, which now exceed 399.5% according to Central Statistical Office for year, ended September 2003.

Under the circumstances above, there is a real danger that the whole formal financial system might collapse due to pending bank-runs. We therefore need to examine the factors, which influence the government's ability to establish a new currency or eliminate an old one. It is also important to consider how we are going to manage the co-circulation of the currencies during the transition period.

### **Is there an opportunity to introduce a stronger currency?**

Under the fixed exchange rate system, notwithstanding the possible adverse effects, the government has the capacity to influence the value of a currency. However, such a policy if adopted would need a number of ancillary re-alignments to the equilibrium price level of goods in terms of those of major trading partners. In the first instance it would be naïve to expect the value of the new currency to be endogenously determined in a laissez-faire fashion. Legal tender laws would need to be revised so that the agents are allowed to convert the old for the new without any prejudice. Lotz (2002) argues that if the co-circulation is allowed and private agents are left to determine the value of the new *vis a vis* the old, then the old currency may or may not be more valuable than the new one (remember Gresham's law). Is it prudent? We doubt so. From the informal discussion we have had so far it looks like we all want a strong currency and a low inflation rate. If that is the case then we should give the monetary authorities the independent mandate to replace the old denominations with the new in the hope that the new would have greater purchasing power. But what happens if we replace the current \$500 note with another \$500 note of different design but exactly the same value? The answer is clear, nothing happens. Perhaps the only thing that we might experience is a drain on the fiscus since it is not costless to print money. This becomes even more worrisome when the announcement to introduce a new \$500 and a \$1 000 comes barely three weeks after the Reserve Bank has injected the remaining batch of the \$24 billion into the market in the form of \$500 notes (old). For the authorities to call back the money and destroy it is puzzling to say the least. Such a move would only be tolerated when we are assured that the new notes will make a significant difference to our lives.

### **The Case for a New Stronger Currency**

We need once again to pause and ask what the implications would be if we were to replace the old currency with a new currency whose value is 100 times higher than the value of the present notes. What would happen to the amount on our bank balances for instance? What would happen to the prices of goods marked on the shelves? How many digits would our annual inflation rate have? How are we going to manage our mortgages and other fixed payments or commitments? Who is going to win and who is going to be the loser in the game? Will it be a zero sum game or a win-win game? Will there be any real change? What happens to our exchange rate against other currencies? Are we not going to return to the previous situation of bulk money in the end?

### **Feasibility of the transition to a stronger currency**

There is no doubt that the major instrument, which the government can use to effect a currency change, are the legal tender laws. Lotz (2002) argues that it would be important to establish the equilibrium price levels of the new and old currencies. The need for government monitoring would increase the higher the deviation between the government-set rate and the laissez-faire rate. Setting a specific future, but realistic date when the old currency becomes illegal, can facilitate the implementation of the policy. Where enforcement is stronger enough, the old currency will gradually go out of circulation and is replaced by the new.

There is extensive evidence that administrative authorities have the capacity to establish or eliminate a currency from circulation. For instance during the 17<sup>th</sup> century paper money issued by Japanese merchants was replaced by the spread of notes issued by local feudal lords. In 1869, the local lords were themselves prohibited by the imperial power from issuing notes, though the notes did not disappear from circulation until 1879. The confidence of the public in the new currency is crucial to the effectiveness with which it will replace the existing currency.

When the Soviet Union disintegrated, Ukraine left the rubble and launched its new national currency (karbovanets) in November 1992. The citizens however continued to prefer the rubbles and the new currency could only circulate at a discount.

Abrams and Cortes-Douglas (1993) believe the creation of new independent states is an opportunity to institute new currencies. This probably explains why at the dissolution of the Soviet Union many republics such as Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan managed to launch their own currencies.

Lotz claims that the new currency can only replace the old currency at the same value if the latter was circulating in the economy. It is therefore futile to replace the existing \$500 note with another \$500 with the same purchasing power since the current \$500 note is itself not circulating properly. We would advocate for a policy where the new currency has a significantly higher value than the existing currency. Such a currency would have the following broad advantages:

- It would gain the confidence of the public who now assign high priority to strong currency
- The confidence achieved would allow the currency to circulate without any discontinuities or hoarding.
- The cost of printing stronger notes is significantly lower than it would otherwise cost to produce notes of low value. For instance it would cost 100 times less to print notes which are 100 times more valued, assuming that the quantity of money required in circulation is constant only in real and not nominal terms
- The queues which have become common-place in most retail outlets would be significantly reduced since the bulky money would be replaced by money which is say 100 times less bulky. The time which shopkeepers and till-operators spend counting the notes in every transaction would likewise be reduced.
- Speculation is likely to be curbed considering the fact that some of the price increases in the economy have been a result of expectations by the economic agents, not necessarily based on the current levels of economic variable. A stronger new currency will break the spiral and set the ground for a new era. Sometimes it is better to start on a new page! But only provided you don't go on to spoil even the new page itself.

## **Conclusion**

The cash shortages in Zimbabwe have been attributed to a number of factors that include, the emergence of a shadow economy, speculation on the parallel market, the shortage of goods in the country, externalisation of local currency to neighbouring countries and socio-political factors.

## Summary of Implications

### Cash Shortages

Persistent cash shortages are likely to have far-reaching consequences to the economy.

Some of the problems the crisis could trigger are: -

- Low demand for goods and services. This has negative repercussions on production and investment leading to deeper stagflation.
- Loss of confidence in banks. This may lead to collapse of the banks seriously affected by the crisis, due to bank runs.
- Hoarding of more cash. Hyperinflation leads to transactions on a cash basis.
- Collapse of already distressed companies due to low business activity. Workers spend many working hours in queues.
- Bank invasions by angry mobs will be the order of the day.
- Increase in government expenditure in printing huge sums of money (notes) to catch-up with runaway inflation.
- Zimbabwe ceases to be a viable destination for foreign investors given high levels of uncertainty and disintermediation. Shortages of bank notes cripple operations in business and industry.

### New 500 and 1000 dollar notes

The introduction of these notes might lead to: -

- A negligible improvement in the situation given the current macroeconomic fundamentals that promotes speculation both in the commodity and currency markets.
- A further increase in inflation due to an increase money supply.

There might be need for even greater denominations to catch up with the inflation spiral that will be triggered by substantial cost of living adjustments being awarded to workers. There is likelihood that even these new notes could be expatriated to neighbouring countries as well by cross border traders.

### Traveller's Cheques

Most people don't seem to understand how they operate, thus they are not acceptable as a legal tender. This means that their ability to save the situation is scuttled. In rural areas their use is very limited by the size of most rural transactions. They are also likely to increase the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe's costs of production since they have a limited circulation period.

Businesses in the informal sector will collapse since it is cash driven sector. Flea market operators, whose premises are almost empty nowadays, are already experiencing this. Business has suddenly died a natural death. This is because traveller's cheques are being treated as ordinary cheques not as cash by banks.

The research paper is however, not exhaustive but just a stimulant to more technical economic researches on the current economic and financial crises in Zimbabwe. However, Zimbabwe's currency shortages require immediate attention. The research mainly relied on the observation method, which may not give conclusive policy prescriptions. More detailed

primary research methods may be used to investigate the underlying causes of the cash shortages. Statistical inference and models of financial crisis can be applied to make more precise forecasts of the impact of the new policy measures and the cash shortages.

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## COMMERCIAL IMPERATIVES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS ON THE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER GROUP: THE CASE OF *THE TIMES* AND *MASVINGO STAR*

By

**Peter Mandava<sup>1</sup>**

### **Abstract**

*The paper explores principles that led to the birth of Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust [ZMMT] in general and its subsidiary, the Community Newspaper Group [CNG]. The identity and performance of CNG's newspapers is examined. With special focus on **The Times** and **Masvingo Star**, the paper's thrust is CNG's transformation from being a rural public sphere to that of urban dwellers. Within the context of critical political economy of the media, and making references to forces that shaped the British working class press, the paper argues that, before its restructuring, the CNG had been an ailing group because of its weak capital base and managerial incompetence. Inadequate funding forced the CNG to operate with minimal provisions and a revised philosophy tilted in favor of urban readership that interests advertisers. Such commercial imperatives undermined the newspapers' endeavour to create a rural public sphere. Acceptance of business/commercial logic excluded rural folks in both coverage and distribution. The paper concludes that future rural press projects must have proper levels of initial capital, equipment and staffing so that there is no desperate craving for advertisers' revenue for basic sustenance. This raises important questions about the role of the media in society generally and community media specifically in facilitating development support communication in a country like Zimbabwe.*

### **Introduction**

Like most former colonies, at the attainment of independence, the Zimbabwean government formulated and implemented policies geared towards establishing what can be described as a pro-people media system. This was mainly pronounced with reference to print media as part of country's endeavor to consolidate the newly attained self rule status. The agenda was to decolonise the media and democratise the flow of information within the country and in relation to the international community. This led to the establishment the initial rural press project and subsequently, the creation of the Community Newspaper Group [CNG] in 1988. This paper explores how this noble media project fared in terms of performance with specific reference to *The Times* and *Masvingo Star* with some intermittent comments on the rest of the CNG titles.

### **The Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust**

The ZMMT [hereafter referred to as the Trust] was established by the government through a Notarial Deed of Donation and Trust in January 1981 as part of the government's larger

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project to localise both ownership and control of the nation's media. The policy thrust was for the Trust should to insulate the media from political manipulation and become mass-oriented and nationally accessible. The Trust, which was formed as a public entity to "safeguard the welfare of the people of Zimbabwe as a whole" was supposed to be a non-government, non-party and non-profit making [ZMMT's 1986 information brochure].

### **Zimbabwe's Media Policy at Independence**

At the attainment of independence, Zimbabwe's largely undocumented media policy was a pro-people and development oriented. In line with such policy aspirations there was a lot of talk about "taking newspapers to the people." For example, the then managing director of Zimbabwe Newspapers, Elias Rusike said, "it was the company's wish to see its newspapers getting to every village, every growth point and every town because Zimbabwe's population is predominantly in the rural areas." [*The Herald*, "Taking papers to the people" 03-08-1984].

He added:

Our policy in Zimbabwe Newspapers is to make sure that the people and the peasants in the rural areas are kept informed of what the Government is doing, what the leadership is doing and to inform them of what people like themselves are doing (Ibid.)

Such thinking was at the core of Zimbabwe's media policies in the early 1980s. It should be noted that just like in broadcasting, the government during that time dominated and still dominates the ownership and control of mainstream print media and the ZMMT was, and is, still at the center of the administration of the public print media.

### **Early Attempts at Rural Newspaper Project**

Initial efforts to establish community newspapers were made first by the government, through the then Ministries of Information and that of Local Government. The ZMMT began its own rural newspaper project in May 1983 with the launch of fortnightly *The Murehwa News* with a print run of 4 000 copies. The Canadian International Development Agency funded the procurement of assets while the Trust covered the cost of the editor's salary and other recurrent expenses (Saunders, 1991: 91). The *Mutoko News* was their next publication and plans were under way to expand the project to all the country's fifty-one districts (*The Herald*: 'District papers planned for 51 areas' 17-09-1983). The objective was to set up a rural public sphere and democratise the domestic information order hence initiate and support development.

The editorial thrust and philosophy of the planned rural newspaper empire was announced by M. A. Marere, the then executive secretary of ZMMT. He said:

The Mutoko rural press must be able to convey to the government and the people of Zimbabwe the views of Mutoko on national issues and issues that affect Mutoko. The press in any developing country has a major role to play in national development ... The press has the duty to inform the people of what the government is doing and to tell the government what the people want. Let **Mutoko News** do this for people in Mutoko. We are sure you will want to read this paper because it relates to you and your environment. The press should be used by the people of Mutoko, for the people of Mutoko (*Mutoko News* No. 1, 12 July 1983. [insert] 'A Message from Cde M. A. Marere.'

However, the project did not expand beyond the two newspapers because of financial viability problems. In any case, there was little likelihood of the *Murehwa News* attaining commercial viability and financial self-sustenance, as long as its production quality and management was maintained at subsistence level, and its cover price held down to keep it affordable. The advertising support attracted by the paper came irregularly, and in insufficient volumes to finance the paper (Saunders, 1991: 92). As a result, when the ZMMT withdrew its financial support in 1986, the *Murehwa News* folded, two years after its sister paper, *Mutoko News* had ceased publishing.

By 1985 ZMMT and the then Ministry of Information had already mooted another rural press project at provincial level. This was the genesis of CNG.

### **The Community Newspaper Group**

In line with the noted media policies of the 1980's, the government unveiled a proposal to set up a group of rural newspapers that would fulfil its long cherished dream of covering the whole country. At the core of the proposal was the establishment of rural newspapers in each of the country's eight provincial administrative capitals. The proposal, that was referred to as The Zimbabwe Rural Press Project, was supposed to be implemented in phases largely supported by donor funding and the ZMMT co-ordinating the project on behalf of the government. The project was funded from Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland through UNESCO (Lundby, 1997: 88).

The project was anchored on the following justification as stated in the project document:

The main development objective of the Government of Zimbabwe, as enunciated in the first five-year development Plan (1986 - 1990), is the development of a "domestic, egalitarian and socialist society in Zimbabwe". In pursuit of this long-term objective, the government has declared its commitment to the development of the rural areas of the country where 80% of the population live, to the provision of education to all sections of the population and to the raising of the standard of living of all, especially for those living in the rural areas of the country.... The establishment of rural newspapers is a vital element of the strategy for the development of effective communication in rural areas. Rural communication is seen as being crucial to the rural development process [UNESCO 1988: 5].

Stated more categorically, the role to be played by the conceived rural newspapers would be to:

1. Develop a permanent two-way flow of communication between the government and all sections of the society as well as between communities and among individuals within those communities
2. Provide active support for development projects
3. Provide suitable reading materials for new literates ( UNESCO 1988:5)

The project's objective of establishing rural newspapers in each of the country's eight provincial administrative capitals was realized between 1988 and 1992. Table 1 below sums up dimensions of the project at the time of its completion.

Name of Newspaper	Established by ZMMT	Year bought by ZMMT	Province covered	Frequency
Chaminuka News	1988	-----	Mashonaland East	Fortnightly
The Nehanda	1988	-----	Mashonaland Central	Fortnightly
Indonsakusa	1988	-----	Matabeleland North	Fortnightly
The Times	-----	1989	Midlands	Weekly
Ilanga	1991	-----	Matabeleland South	Monthly
Masvingo Star	-----	1991	Masvingo	Weekly
Manicaland News	1992	-----	Manicaland	Monthly
Mashonaland West Telegraph	1992	-----	Mashonaland West	Fortnightly

[Source: Lundby, K. 1997]

The rural press project had been fully complimented by the end of 1992 as all the eight planned newspapers were on the streets by the end of that year. Two of the eight newspapers, *The Times* and *Masvingo Star* were acquired while the rest were actually established.

### The Changed Identity of CNG

From 1993 the CNG was significantly different from what it was in 1988. The following is an exploration of forces that activated the organisation's mutation. As noted above, at its inception in 1988, the CNG was financially propped-up by donors. The shared understanding was that donors would support the CNG's take-off, and it would develop to be a self-sustaining business organisation between three and four years. However, CNG was operated as an information service to the community with no emphasis on business viability.

In fact, the donor support was withdrawn in 1993 thereby leaving CNG operating under the ZMMT's wings. According to official documents, CNG was loss making and became a drain to ZMMT because it required substantial financial support in the form of grants for it to remain operational. In a bid to bring in commercial viability, management of the group was revamped in 1996. These changes saw the recruitment of Senior Manager and Sales and Distribution Manager. This significantly increased operating costs but had little, if any, impact at all on revenue. In fact, the changes worsened ZMMT's financial strain. As a result, six of CNG's newspapers were collapsed into three titles and were published fortnightly from 1998 as a cost-cutting measure.

Table 2 below shows the resultant CNG's newspaper stable after the above-noted development.

**Table 2: Newspapers under the Community Newspapers Group by June 1993**

Name of Newspaper	Province covered	Frequency
Indonsakusa Ilanga	Matabeleland North & South	Fortnightly
Manialand Chaminuka News	Mashonaland East & Manicaland	Fortnightly
Nehanda Guadian-Telegraph	Mashonaland Central & West	Fortnightly
Masvingo Star	Masvingo	Weekly
The Times	Midlands	Weekly

[Source: Lundby, K. 1997]

The poly-dimensional implications of this development are discussed later in the paper. Since the performance of the CNG has something to do with the credit line of its parent, the ZMMT, it is important to provide the organization's income statement. Table 4 below is a synopsis of ZMMT's income statement of from 1997 to the year 2000 inclusively.

**Table 4: ZMMT's income statement [1997 - 2000]**

	2000	1999	1998	1997
	Z\$000	Z\$000	Z\$000	Z\$000
Dividends income-quoted	3 907	5 638	14 344	8 613
Unquoted	376	378	430	215
Interest income	6 764	8 973	9 990	2 722
Rent received	902	863	1 184	699
Sundry income	140	12	20	7
Disposal of assets	5 997	-	48	-
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>18 086</b>	<b>15 865</b>	<b>26 016</b>	<b>12 255</b>
Grants	11 360	8 531	3 865	4 448
Salaries	5 206	3 807	3 834	1 562
Other expenses	10 015	11 458	13 595	10 719
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>26 581</b>	<b>23 796</b>	<b>21 294</b>	<b>16 729</b>
<b>NET (DEFICIT) / SURPLUS</b>	<b>(8 494)</b>	<b>(7 931)</b>	<b>4 721</b>	<b>(4 473)</b>
<b>Grants / income</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>36%</b>
<b>Total expenses / total income</b>	<b>147%</b>	<b>150%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>137%</b>
<b>Employee costs / total expense</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>9%</b>

[Source: Organization's Financial Records - 1997 to 2000]

As reflected in Table 3 above, ZMMT incurred a net operating deficit of Z\$ 7 931 000 and Z\$8 498 000 in 1999 year 2000 and respectively. According to official records of the organisation, this resulted from a significant fall in dividend income from subsidiary companies and under performance of its operating agencies, which were funded by the Trust through grants. While dividend income fell by 70% between 1998 and 2000, grants paid to CNG and ZIANA for the same period increased by 267%.

Related to this, an analysis of ZMMT's balance sheet reveals another sad financial story. By the end of the year 2000, capital reserves of the organisation had been completely wiped out by operating losses. The net asset value of ZMMT was -Z\$78 000 thus denoting insolvency. Current liabilities exceeded current assets by over Z\$18 million.

Given such an unpleasant financial situation, the most appropriate question to ask is what went wrong. The depleted nature of ZMMT's financial base is often accounted for with direct reference to the kind and level of support the organisation has been giving to the under performing ZIANA and CNG. At this point it is worth noting that the financially unviable way of operation of these two organisations is because they were never meant to be profitable in the first place.

It is essentially because of this realization that the ZMMT has undergone corporate restructuring to the effect that the organisation is expanded, diversified and commercialised. Besides the information on the financial position of the ZMMT given above, it is equally important to do the same for the CNG itself and Table 5 below sums up the CNG's financial position from 1997 to 2000.

**Table 5: CNG's Financial Position**

	2000	1999	1998	1997
	Z\$000	Z\$000	Z\$000	Z\$000
Turnover	21 827	11 801	11 067	4 433
Total expenditure	30 960	15 504	13 135	6 149
Employee costs	24 006	9 287	5 387	2 347
Net profit / (Loss)	(18 669)	(11 843)	(2 068)	(1 715)
Capital employed	(5 288)	(1 883)	(1 429)	(413)
Total expenditure/Total income	141%	131%	119%	139%
Total salaries/ Total Expenses	78%	60%	41%	38%

**Source: Organization's financial records - 1997 to 2000**

From 1997 to 2000 operating costs of CNG exceeded total income by between 119% and 141%. As reflected in Table 5 above, employee costs contributed the largest part of the operating costs ranging from 38% to 78% of the total expenses. This was unconventional in light of the fact that in media economics the highest costs of any print media organisation are normally incurred in the procurement of newsprint and not the salary bill. According to the organization's financial documents, the CNG was technically insolvent. The documents also state that shareholders' funds have been wiped off to a debit of Z\$5.2 m in 2000. Current liabilities as at the end of 2000 exceeded current assets by Z\$8.8m. As a result, the CNG cannot pay its obligations without support from the Trust which is equally in financial dire straits.

The issue of how the CNG's individual titles have been performing needs to be explored. Table 6 below reveals the position of the CNG's individual titles for the period January to December 2000.

**TABLE 6: Financial position of CNG's individual titles Jan - Dec 2000(Z\$Million)**

	Head Office	The Times	Masvingo Star	Super Print <sup>1</sup>	Indonsak usa	Chaminu ka	Telegraph	Total
Sales	0.077	6.7	3.8	9.1	0.8	0.7	0.7	21.8
Cost of Sales	0.077	3.3	2.1	2.6	0.6	0.5	0.5	9.6
Gross profit	(0.000)	3.4	1.7	6.5	0.2	0.2	0.2	12.2
Total Expend	10.6	5.9	4.8	4.1	2.0	1.8	1.8	30.9
Operating Loss	(10.6)	(2.5)	(3.1)	1.5	(1.8)	(1.6)	(1.6)	(18.7)
Gross profit	-	50%	45%	71%	25%	29%	29%	56%
Expenses/Sales	-	88%	126%	71%	250%	257%	257%	141%

**Source: Organization's Financial Records - 1997 to 2000**

Table 5 above compiled from the organization's documents indicate that all the five community newspapers operated at a deep loss position in year 2000. It should be noted that the average gross profit margin for the six enterprises (including the printing press) of 56% could be referred to as reasonable as it compares well with the industry. However, operating expenses that average 141% of total revenue indicate a low revenue base. Head office expenses that constitute 34% are troubling since there is no production that takes place there. It was so because the head office had redundant posts that did not have direct impact on production such as sales and distribution management. The financial position of the CNG impacted negatively on the group's performance in a number of ways.

### **Current Rural Coverage**

Among other things, the area that is covered by any media organization's performance has something to do with the organization's financial strength and editorial will. With the noted financial constraints of the CNG, it was not surprising to discover that the organization's news catchment area drastically shrunk. There was a clear bias towards the urban and its immediate environ in both news coverage and the papers' distribution.

Taking the typical example of *The Times*, one notes that on average, at least 60% of the paper's stories cover Gweru urban and its vicinity that comprise Lower Gweru and Shurungwi. These two settlements are within 25km distance from the city of Gweru where the paper's

<sup>1</sup> Superprint is CNG's printing press for all its publications. It is not run commercially hence is also part of organization's financial problems.

main offices and printing press are situated. Other areas covered include Kwekwe, Redcliff and Gokwe urban. *The Times* had a sub-office in Kwekwe manned by one reporter and an advertising representative. *Masvingo Star* is housed in Masvingo town and has a similar sub-office in Chiredzi.

It is important to note that when the two newspapers carried stories from deep rural areas they normally use Zimbabwe Information Service copies or stringers. The problem with stringers is that the majority of them lack the most basic journalistic training hence believe that “news is bad news.” This wrong conceptualization of journalism is abundantly apparent in stories written by stringers. Such stories centered on the bizarre that revolve mainly around witchcraft, incest, murder, homosexuality, bestiality, famine, rape and others of similar editorial inclination.

The papers’ reporters rarely covered rural stories if there is no high profile government ritual taking place there. Normally, events in remote areas are covered when a senior government official goes there on an official tour, something that rarely happens unless there are national elections looming or in progress. This point is evidenced by one of the stories, ‘Governor makes historical visit to Gokwe remote area,’ (*The Times*, 3-9 March 2000).

This is in line with Okimbo’s comment that government and business leaders are more newsworthy than ordinary citizens and that journalists go after them. Not only do they make news by what they say, they make headlines by what they do not do (Okimbo, 1994: 315). One can safely conclude that *The Times* and *Masvingo Star*, just like the rest of CNG publications, fell into the traditional limitations of mainstream media of being both urban and official centered.

Why was it like that? The CNG had the following total staff complement. Head office had 9, *The Times* 13, *Masvingo Star* 10, and *Chaminuka* and *Telegraph* had 3 each. Out of 13 staff members employed by *The Times*, only four (4) worked in the editorial department constituting the editor, deputy editor and two reporters, one at the main office and the other at their Kwekwe sub-office. The advertising department had five staffers. *Masvingo Star* had four editorial staffers and an equal number of advertising personnel. With this low editorial staffing level little that could be expected in terms of coverage of the entire or larger part of the vast administrative provinces they were supposed to cover according to their policy at inception. This handicap was worsened by lack of transport. The CNG had one vehicle for each newspaper. Each newspaper’s vehicle was supposed to be used in the accomplishment of all journalistic, administrative, distribution and other assignments. Besides the vehicles being inadequate, they were said to be old hence both inefficient and unreliable.

It is worth mentioning that these problems are also typical of mainstream media and Ziana. *The Herald*, *Daily News* and Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, just to mention a few, have one reporter each per province while they have at least fifteen reporters to cover Harare and its vicinity. The immediate result is that there is undue emphasis on the organisations’ immediate environments and massive use of information subsidies from private sector’s public

relations departments together with the government diaries. This excludes a vast array of more newsworthy developments in rural areas where about 80% of the country's population reside.

In a way, the operations of mainstream media in Zimbabwe is similar to that of Kenyan English dailies, weeklies and magazines that are said to be very elitist in their content as they address issues at a level unlikely to be of interest to the ordinary peasant. "In fact, the weeklies and magazines are distributed in Nairobi only and any copies reaching the rural areas do so fortuitously" (Mboroki, 1997: 143).

With reference to the CNG, gravitation towards urban environments has been a result of a financial base that is too weak to support the recruitment of enough reporters and also the purchase of enough equipment for use by those reporters. Also, in media circles, there is an argument that rural folks are of little interest to advertisers hence investing in their substantial coverage constitutes an unnecessary expense.

In fact, rural communities generally have a low net worth. Their low buying power makes them unattractive to most advertisers. Advertising patterns are largely driven by the value of potential business to be transacted with the market segment covered. What counts is not, as is often thought, the sheer size of the audience, but the kind of audience it is, and whether the medium is able to find advertisers who want access to that audience (Williams, 1979: 19). Curran (1977) elaborately develops this point and argues that the British working class press was undermined by the changing economics of the newspaper business whereby the less politically inclined middle-class papers turned to advertisers, instead of readers, as a central source of revenue for sustenance.

It is argued that advertisers avoided the British radical press for economic reasons. Radical newspapers appealed largely to working class readers and in spite of the fact that the papers were widely read, advertisers did not perceive the readers to be a valuable market. To advertisers, reaching smaller numbers of upper or middle class readers seemed to be a better sales strategy than reaching large numbers of working class readers who did not have the necessary resources to buy many of the advertised goods and services (Croteau and Hoynes, 1997: 56). In line with this argument, the British working class can be analogized with the Zimbabwean rural populace.

In line with this, Curran says:

...attention needs to be given to ways in which advertising as a concealed subsidy system has shaped the mass media; and to ways in which the media have adapted to the marketing needs of advertisers in order to compete for those subsidies (Curran, 1981: 44)

Further developing this argument, Sinclair posits that advertisers increasingly have come to seek markets appropriate to their particular products and have so chosen their advertising media according to whether they can give access to the desired 'target' audiences (Sinclair, 1987: 72). He adds that this has had profound effects upon today's patterns of media

development thus largely accounting for the rise and fall of different communication media. A conclusion from these observations is that, “large advertisers do operate as a latterday licensing authority” [Golding and Murdock, 1996: 21]

These observations are central to the understanding of the forces that effected changes in the CNG. What has to be noted, however, is that while some media proclaim and implement changes to attain profitability, the CNG titles have effected numerous changes not for the same goal but to remain afloat in the first place. They have drifted from rural folks to concentrate on the urbanites, the “most wanted” market, to keep their noses above the water. Some of their tactics have been keeping low staffing levels, covering their geographical vicinity, collapsing two publications into one per province and reducing their papers’ print-run.

### **The Newspapers’ Distribution Network**

In the year 2000, the five newspapers published by the CNG had the following circulation: *The Times* 4000, *Masvingo Star* 3000, *Indonsakusa* 2000, *Chaminuka* 2000 and the *Telegraph* also has 2000 while as in 1991, the then six newspapers of CNG had a circulation of 6000 each (ZMMT and CNG Records, 1991). This significant fall is explicable in terms of cost cutting measures.

The shrinkage of the areas covered by newspapers under discussion has been, to a certain extent, directly proportional to the reduction of their distribution network. For example, *The Times* had the following distribution network, 25 selling points in the city of Gweru, Kwekwe 7, Lower Gweru 4, Redcliff 2, Chivhu 2, Nembudziya 1, Zhombe 1, Gokwe growth point 1, Shurugwi 2, Zvishavane 3, Mataga Growth point 1, Mberengwa 1 and Mvuma 4. In terms of rural - urban ratio of the paper’s selling points, rural areas had a total of 14 while urban areas have 39. This makes the ratio 1 : 2,7. This is a general trend in the newspapers group. Newspapers that covered two provinces were even more urban centric because of the vast areas they are supposed to cater for in terms of coverage and distribution.

As alluded to above, the CNG had very poor distribution infrastructure. The one vehicle each title had was grossly inadequate given that on average it took at least three days to deliver the newspaper to selling points throughout the province[s]. In light of the vastness of the provinces and poor state of Zimbabwe’s rural roads, the distribution was by any standard both expensive and irregular. Lack of regularity following logistical inefficiencies and inevitable delays in delivery, negatively impacts on core values of newspaper publishing industry, namely timeliness and reliability. Advertisers are not normally eager to support publications with such ‘notoriety.’ Also, irregularity undermines loyalty among readers.

Besides that, since the circulation of the newspapers is generally low, small numbers of newspapers delivered to remote areas (i.e. Nembudziya Growth Point in Gokwe North about 350km from *The Times* offices) make the organisation incur more costs than revenue. Moreover, no advertising revenue is drawn from there and very few copies are sold there. Distribution problems were worse with regard to the six newspapers that were collapsed into three.

The group's printing press, SuperPrint, is said to be obsolete and incessantly breaking down thereby making the publishing of the newspapers irregular. For example, *The Times* could not be published on September 25 1998 because of a breakdown of machinery. It was only printed five days later [*Zimbabwe Independent*, 'Community Newspaper Group faces collapse' 16-10-1998:].

### **Final Remarks on CNG**

If the rural newspaper project was established to develop a permanent two-way flow of information between the government and all sections of the society as well as between communities and among individuals within those communities; provide active support for development projects together with suitable reading materials for new literates as presented earlier on, then the project flopped. It failed because it was undercapitalized in the first place and devoid of a business approach. In an effort to chase the precious advertisers' dollar, the project derailed from its rural thrust thereby narrowing CNG's field of public discourse and representation.

The CNG's public cultural space shrunk considerably from what it was at the organization's inception thereby undermining its original mandate of providing a public sphere for the rural folks to the effect that they fully exercise their citizenship. Due to economic imperatives, the rural populace was slowly marginalised from the core concerns of the CNG to the inconsequential periphery. Such commercial dynamics are central to the concerns of critical political economy which, "sets out to show how different ways of financing and organising cultural production have traceable consequences for the range of discourses and representations in the public and for the audiences' access to them" (Golding and Murdoch, 1996: 11). Economic dynamics that impact on the range and diversity of public cultural expression, and its availability to different social groups constitute what one scholar referred to as "the conditions of a practice" that deserve our focus and scrutiny (Williams, 1980: 48).

### **ZMMT's Corporate Restructuring**

Corporate restructuring of ZMMT and the CNG that started in 2002 was based on the fact that the two were commercial failures although the latter was worse. Management failed to run the CNG project on a commercial basis and consistently incurred losses over years. ZIANA, which also fell under ZMMT endured similar administrative and financial failures. Something needed to be done. The CNG could not be left to fold and could neither be sold given the potential they have in terms of mobilizing the all-important rural populace. In any case, the current Zimbabwean government does not entertain any ideas leading to their desertion of rural publics given their pivotal importance in the outcome of the country's electoral processes. If anything, access to the rural populace is guarded jealously.

In light of the noted perennial problems of the ZMMT and related problems of the CNG, from 2002 the two organisations started being restructured in order to accord them corporate identities that could possibly revive their financial fortunes. Although ZMMT remained the ultimate holding Trust the process led to the creation of New Ziana [Pvt.] [Ltd.] with Ziana

News Agency (ZINA), Community Newspaper Publisher (CNP), and Ziana Radio and Television (ZiRT). These ZMMT's subsidiaries will be run as business units.

The [supposedly] commercially driven CNP is the successor of CNG. In spite of the CNP's business thrust, it is supposed to cater for the needs of rural communities in terms of their access to community newspapers. According to the project's papers, in case the project flops again, the government is tasked to finance the CNP's social obligation of bringing newspapers to rural communities.

In line with traditional thinking that people want to read about themselves, the CNP, which is already in operation, was tasked to have newspapers whose editorial content is sensitive to the news needs of local communities as a way of ensuring their relevancy to readers. According to the organization's papers, Zina News Agency is going to be the main news feeder, not only to the CNP, but also to New Ziana's other business units. The news agency will also supply news to international and regional news agencies as well as to other interested local media organisations.

### **Conclusion**

As argued above, it is now public knowledge that the CNG project failed. This was because of economic and administrative reasons. This conclusion is, to a great extent, in line with Saunders' observation that:

Although the ZMMT's original brief included reference to the opening up of the rural areas by promoting the establishment of locally-based media in the countryside, it was not a goal which could be realised by the Trust itself, given its shortage of capital and personnel, and nearly complete lack of experience in the field of rural press (Saunders, 1991: 91).

In fact, the CNG suffered the fate of its predecessor. The CNG was so fragile that it nearly collapsed in 1998 due to mass exodus of its employees when the Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe was launched. The CNG lost most of its key and experienced editorial staff including its editor in chief and chief executive, Wilf Mbanga.

Current attempts to revamp ZMMT and the CNG should seek ways of balancing two factors, that is, making the group commercially viable without compromising the proclaimed editorial stance of servicing the rural publics. Huge capital injection is needed.

If the problems of capital and business approach are not adequately addressed, the planned Community Newspaper Publisher will just be an old baby dogged by the same financial handicap that go deep to constrain operations in fundamental ways similar to those discussed above. That will be Zimbabwe's third Rural Press Project that dies from the same commercial and managerial ailments. Managerially, the government must learn to make appointments to organizations in which it has controlling stakes that are based more on merit than political correctness. Even a balance of the two would work. The current practice where editors are

hired and fired merely on political grounds breeds disaster because of obvious negative repercussions on quality of the media product. Also, the media organization's relationship with the private sector will be affected because the private sector's giants, with large sums of money for advertising, may not be comfortable in being associated with the political policies pursued by the ruling party and hailed in the media where the ruling party/government has a controlling stake.

The death of the rural press has massive implications given that at least 80% of the population are rural. The need to democratize access to information and enhance political participation cannot be over-emphasized hence everything should be done so that the majority of Zimbabwe's citizens, who are rural based, also have their own vibrant public sphere for them to fully practice their citizenship.

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## PURSUING GARABHA

By

Memory Chirere<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

*Garabha in Charles Mungoshi's novel Waiting for the Rain is as intriguing as he is central to the events and the ultimate meaning of this novel. In this essay a deliberately chronological "pursuit" of Garabha and an evaluation of his contribution to the story is to be undertaken in view of what has been established about him before: Is he necessarily Lucifer's opposite? Does he stand for specific ways of viewing the so called 'European modernity'? If he is any form of alternative to Lucifer, how meaningful is he? This is also going to be a 'reimagination' of Garabha, meaning that one is attempting a criticism that simulates possible creative visions that Mungoshi went through in creating Garabha. This essay is therefore an opportunity to take care of the fact that Mungoshi went through both critical and imaginative motions in the process of 'writing' Garabha.*

Garabha in Charles Mungoshi's novel Waiting for the Rain is as intriguing as he is central to the events and the ultimate meaning of this novel. In this essay a deliberately chronological "pursuit" of Garabha and an evaluation of his contribution to the story is to be undertaken in view of what has been established about him before: Is he necessarily Lucifer's opposite? Does he stand for specific ways of viewing the so called 'European modernity'? If he is any form of alternative to Lucifer, how meaningful is he? This is also going to be a 'reimagination' of Garabha, meaning that one is attempting a criticism that simulates possible creative visions that Mungoshi went through in creating Garabha. This essay is therefore an opportunity to take care of the fact that Mungoshi went through both critical and imaginative motions in the process of 'writing' Garabha.

Scholars have tended either to be overly charged, "scattering," and sometimes confining Garabha to high discourse or deciding to deal with and dismiss him easily in pursuit of what they think are more central issues to the novel. Just as an initial example, why would Emmanuel Chiwome (1998) see Garabha's life only as 'insipid,' or think that Garabha's drums only 'take him back into the past, insulate him against criticism' and that Garabha 'cannot meet contemporary goals'?(p12) Omoregie (1999) is actually casual if not condescending, referring to Garabha and his drums as 'symbolic vestiges of African culture.'(p1)

Garabha the son, the brother, the grandson, the artist and maybe, the spirit; lives within, moves across and is judged by a society that is equally challenged and driven by circumstances that Garabha himself has to "live" with. Therefore to "pursue" Garabha is to "peruse" a

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community of values and beliefs. These values are in conflict as they seek both to be relevant to the present through outdoing rival values.

Garabha first appears in the novel, midstream, rather belatedly on chapter twenty-three. He is almost an intruder to the story. Garabha strikes one, initially, as Mungoshi's after-thought-character who bangs in, theatre fashion, to help pick the story to a required crescendo. His entrance is described in a way that assumes that Garabha has always been around somewhere and has been long known to the reader: "With long swift strides Garabha passes through country that is waiting for rain." (p80)

One could say that Garabha enters the story at this point to "usurp" the attention a reader had begun to thread mainly around Lucifer. Garabha is "the other-one" usually employed by a good Shona storyteller to point at alternative forms of perceiving and knowing. As in folk-tale, the story is spurred on to a required crisis by entrance of such a seemingly peripheral character.

In the same vein it is important to note that Garabha "quits" the story at chapter thirty-nine, relatively long before the story itself ends. Garabha is clearly meant to appear like a passer-by or a wayfarer. This is also common in Shona traditions that such a nonentity comes by a rapoko-threshing exercise called jakwara,<sup>1</sup> throws in a blow or two, warns jestingly of other earth-quaking things to come and goes away to some destination in the direction of the setting sun.

But, Garabha could be "the story" itself. His entry lends the story a higher sense of drama. And when he finally wanders away, it is because he claims that waiting to watch Lucifer go will make him (Garabha) cry. And, as he walks away, singing a new song, he has "made up himself," the "major" plot travels quickly to a sadder anti-climax.

At chapter twenty-three, Garabha enters the story "with long swift strides through country that is waiting for rain." (p80) This phrase- wating for rain- is the title to this novel and there is some legitimacy in thinking that Garabha could be closely linked to the story's essentials. There is of course allusion to T.S. Eliot's Gerontionian drought and spiritual yearning in that phrase.

In that description of Garabha on the same page, there is also something of an "animal" to Garabha. "His sharp restless eyes" search the bush "not that he is really afraid" of it but because it is "just a habit." (p81) He listens too, the animal, to the nocturnal environment. The sky, the paths and Suka River, become, for Garabha, whole and Manyene transcends the cheap and physical Charurwi landscape of Garabha's schooled brother, Lucifer.

Is he a madman, a wizard, a thief, a lost hunter, you ask.

Garabha could be an Ancestor, wandering across, "the garden", albeit an old usurped one – a colonial creation. When he "kneels down" to drink from Suka, he drinks more than water. That exercise of drinking makes him "sharply aware of the river world.." and "for what

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<sup>1</sup> It is a Shona custom that if there is a bumper rapoko harvest the village does communal work, going round threshing each person's rapoko. On such an occasion there is no censorship and people can talk or sing on even taboo subjects.

seems a long time everything is suspended, every moment frozen.”(p82) You cannot fail to feel a spectral aura to Garabha in the night of his “coming”.

Garabha is a boy too, as “the irregular chik-chik-chik-chik of some insect... cuts into him with the irrational fear of childhood when everything out there in night was a monster out for your life.”(p82) To those who have known veld countryside intimately, Garabha is an easy passage into childhood with its nights full of possibility.

The actual act of walking across colonially created and devastated land that is waiting for rain, from another angle, makes Garabha a desperate apparition. For as long as this space (Manyene/Rhodesia) is in that state, Garabha is like Old Hamlet “condemned for a certain term to walk the night.”(Rowse,1984,p23) Therefore Garabha symbolizes the colonized, and dispossessed. He stands for the quest for a “golden” time and place when values were not up-side down and territory was not mish meshed and demarcated.

Afterwards, present living man’s world comes to Garabha from “further up the village.” Human voices, dog barking and “the unmistakable rumble of a drum.”(p83) At this point Garabha dwarfs you because he hears and knows that the drum players are “amateurs” who think it is (only) “the hands that play a drum”. That bad drum playing, “unimaginative” and monotonous, which “neither drops nor rises where it should”(p83), drives Garabha, in anger, to the source of the sound to correct it. He goes, impulsively, to teach, to take over and to fill the gap in that artistically challenged circle.

Garabha is a virtuoso of folk music.

Generally literature is awash with such characters. There is Musaemura Zimunya’s Hakuna in a short story called “Mbira player” whose visions of past and present weave with his mbira playing so much so that he plays both the mbira and the dynamics of his real physical life. L. Hughes’s Jimboy in Not without Laughter uses the guitar to sooth the post-slave souls of the people around him making them accept both the sorrows and joys of life. Such characters represent forms of genuine genius which however has capacity to destroy the carrier. Artist characters are generally a “type” full of philosophic – prophetic vision and thus evoking nostalgic yearnings.

At chapter twenty-four, the morning after a beer-drinking-dance party, Garabha is dispossessed and deflated. The “spirit” leaves and the man realizes that outside the realm of drum playing, he is a fool (rombe). Indeed, people always pester him:

When are you going to marry and settle down? Why don’t you go to the city like other men your age and get a job? Why don’t you do this? Why don’t you do that? Look at so- and so who has done this.(p85)

In the Shona society to which Garabha belongs, for one to get to his (Garabha's) age without getting married is considered being deviant. To the Shona, "Garabha is not a person." His deviant status makes him unworthy the normal status of a grown up. It is ironic that this is the same man who beats the drum that beckons the society to "the way." Every time that Garabha reflects on his marital status, he feels an overwhelming embarrassment despite his defiance. "All he wants to do is quickly disappear into the bush which asks no questions but simply wait."(p85)

M. Zimunya(1982) argues that Garabha is as vulnerable, in that regard, as a child and he is "a primitive version of l'etranger, and lonely and anxious".(p71) For R. Zhuwarara,(2001) Garabha is "honest enough to acknowledge his weaknesses to himself" and is also a "paradoxical figure".<sup>6</sup> But, at least, Garabha "feels" that all his life he is waiting for something big that is coming, something that will completely change his life".(p57) However, for him, both are crippling.(p85) His energy, he would rather disperse in drink and (loose) women. He is, at that level, an escapist who would only live for the moment in night long drunkenness and short time non-committed sexual intercourse. It seems to work only temporarily but not when he is sober, alone, or when he is at a family gathering.

One imagines what Garabha could have been if only he were as clear and faithfully vicious in all other spheres of life as with drum playing. Here is a highly talented and perceptive man who is rendered pathetic by his 'failure' to do what is considered normal like marrying and having children. The Shonas, in their wisdom, crafted a proverb: One cannot be good at everything.

Often as Garabha plays the drum he looks at a dancing old man and splits him into two: the physical old man in a flapping trousers (that torn trousers tells a story of poverty and deprivation) and the spiritually rich and resistant old man with "ecstatic" eyes looking heavenward saying "No."(p85) The two (lives) images of the dancing old man stay with Garabha long after the drum playing. This twoness of things is a motif in Waiting for the Rain. The land of Manyene, for example, is dry but it is a reservoir of volumes of history. The Mandengu family itself has more underlying and firmer spiritual challenges. And as M. Vambe(2004) points out, the story of Samambwa, just like the ngozi in that family, threatens to go beyond the Mandengu family, becoming the story of the black-Rhodesian story. Therefore Garabha's drum playing is necessarily a way of seeing, pursuing and perusing ambivalence in the past and present in a text whose over-riding present tense is a metaphor for endlessness.

Charles Mungoshi(2002) himself admits, in a recent article that Garabha's drum-playing is central to the actual conception and subsequent writing of the story itself, Waiting for the Rain:

Then one day I went to my local beerhall (masese) and there I watched that jerusarema drum expert (now the national news signal) and the people – his group and the sense, the feeling of being family, and all of them, each with his or her problems and the drummer trying to assuage these with his unifying drum, and how the drum has been inherited from the past and how these long-gone ones are present now with us in the drum and it was like a prayer joining people past and present and

it can only be in a present continuous tense-urgent, very urgent, no time to dither seemed to be the message of that drum.(p31-2)

And much more important, Mungoshi(2002) lets out (a much more serious) cat out of the bag:

I had meant the chapter in which Garabha plays the drum to open Waiting for the Rain but I felt that would be like pre-empting the story. Anyway, I had found out that this story was as urgent as the message of the drum and the only urgent thing is the present moment.”(p32)

Unfortunately Garabha cannot put into words and action his visions outside the language of the drum. In fact, it is not seen how Garabha wants his people to transform and transcend the drum, dance and beer party.

R. Zhuwarara,(2001) who deeply appreciates Garabha’s role as weaving “communion not only between people but also between the past and present” even bemoans, the idea that “neither the escapist and barely articulated vision of Lucifer nor... the determined old man and the artistic offerings of Garabha (drum playing) can do much to alleviate the social malaise generated... by the colonial situation” and that it is clear that Garabha and the old man “need to possess a knowledge of the local in the context of the global political and economic forces pitted against African people”. R. Zhuwarara continues and states that the old man and Garabha’s “Spirit of resistance to cultural colonization is largely based only on instinct and knowledge of the self”(p58) and does not get up to how to deal with colonial modernity.

In the same chapter, (twenty-four), Garabha is indeed Betty’s Brother and the scene of their meeting has, arguably, no parallel in Zimbabwean literature. What we always see in Zimbabwean literature is the meeting of lovers and their subsequent romantic communing. Here, trouble smitten brother and sister meet at daybreak and reach out to each other in a communion that is both child-like and spectral. It is a rare exchange and exhibition of closeness between brother and sister that might, to the unwary reader, border on the hazily incestuous because of the deep empathy and camaraderie Garabha and Betty have for each other. Viewed clearly, these two are only a loving brother meeting an equally loving sister after a long time. In fact Mungoshi(2002) himself states that the novel Waiting for the Rain started as a short story based on Betty and Garabha:

I had started off a short story on one of the characters, Betty, and her unwanted pregnancy and her very understanding brother, Garabha. It was all in the once upon a time tense. There was a girl called Betty, etc, etc. When I brought the other characters the story kept on expanding and before I knew I had over 100 pages of script on A4 on my hands.(p31-2)

For Mungoshi, the Garabha-Betty relationship is initial and immediate to the sense of the then “short story”. Garabha is “understanding” and he knows what Betty craves for and cherishes specifically the necklace that he offers her. Betty lights up, like any girl, at receiving bright jewellery:

Betty holds the necklace in both hands for a long time, looking at it. It is heavier than she thought and she is pleased. She holds it up in one hand, its whole length stretched and then slowly lets it tumble, the beads knocking against each other in a sound that is somewhere between wool and metal- she lets it tumble in coils in her hand, savouring the light-heavy beady weight.(p88)

In a way, Garabha knows that Betty would wish to receive goodies and pampering from a loving boyfriend, but, as her current break up with Kureya suggests, Betty cannot find long-standing boyfriends. Garabha is sympathetic towards Betty logically because he is not successful himself in love affairs. For Garabha, there is the case of Nora, for instance, who thinks that Garabha is “not rich enough to marry her... not rich enough and lazy.”(p90)

Garabha also relates his and Betty’s misfortunes in the marital subject to the sense of entrapment, physical and spiritual of the family homestead. Walking behind Betty, from the well to the homestead, Garabha battles with a storm of anger and he wants Betty and himself too (by implication) to break free:

Garabha immediately stops his laughing. He sees tortured muscles of her (Betty’s) neck and he suddenly wants to shout at her to stop suffering, to run away from this place called home where she will only die without a thank you from anybody.(p90)

Directly translated, it means Garabha wants Betty to fall in love, get married, have her home, have self authority in order to find meaning in life. Further pursued, it means that Garabha wishes the same for himself. However, for reasons he can’t explain, things do not work for him. He is therefore, ironically, afraid of a possibility of marriage itself. Garabha perceives his and Betty’s plight as having one source: the unresolved spiritual debts of the Mandengu family. He half-believes that his plight is spiritual. It is clear that Garabha, Lucifer and Betty’s constant restlessness comes out of feeling and seeing that they are a people smitten partly by the invisible.

In chapter twenty-five, Garabha arrives home after one of his usual long absences. He is clearly the Old man’s friend and confidante. Although Garabha and the old man can be informal with each other, they seem to do much more than that. They actually keep certain kinds of silences between each other, “not hurrying for words.”(p92) It immediately strikes the reader that whilst Garabha is a drum payer, the Old man is a maker of drums. These two skills form very complementary industries. The Old man creates space (with drum) for Garabha’s genius to perform. The Old man is therefore the first genius in that relationship. And as the drum plays, Garabha goes into a transfigurational trance and repeats (to himself/us) family history as told by the Old man. That way, the idiom of a people’s story that lives on is enacted.

But looking at the Old man, the wood artist with the adze who smells of shavings, Garabha the seer-drum –player has a transfigural vision. He sees the Old man’s real, old, tired and ready for- burial- body image with his “tired soil coloured face filled with cracks and hollows.”(p92) Garabha does not want to see and think about that but he cannot help it. He

realizes, gradually and realistically that “He (the Old man) won’t be here with us for long.”(p92) The kindred vision to this is the one Garabha once had of a pool filling up, gradually but surely, with water and a solitary ant desperately trying to escape but inevitably drowned (in it) and

....you realize you cannot help the ant because it is beyond your reach and no matter how you wish and wish and wish you know your wish faces something you will never, never understand. Afterwards you watch the ant wash, legs thrashing in the air, ceasing the struggle and you stand up and go away.(p92)

That passage captures the idea of one’s helplessness in the face of forces that are large and monstrous. At one level, Garabha could be seeing inside his own obvious but strangely inextricable plight of wandering, wifelessness and childlessness. At another, this is a dramatic idiom of the Mandengu family (and the black Rhodesian family) being assaulted physically and spiritually by immense forces of settler colonialism. Sadly, for now (the black Rhodesia family) the ant struggles to extricate itself in vain from a pool whose length and depth the ant cannot describe.

The pathetic vulnerability in the passage echoes directly (because Garabha is looking at the old man) the historic defeat of the old man’s generation by the settler forces in a series of real battles of the late 1890s. It echoes, the equally vicious divides in the black Rhodesian nationalist movements in the 1960 and 70s.

Garabha sees-dreams reality in symbols and comes up with mental pictures that are whole, contrary to the mere drum-playing role one might prefer to immortalize about him. The complexities often associated with Waiting for the Rain are arguably, centred on Garabha’s vision and his unusual insights into what is often thought to be abstract.

After the ant vision, Garabha immediately realizes that only “the drum” can counter the helplessness and vulnerability. Once more, we are invited to realize that the drum stands for multiple forms of resistance and “seeing.” Resistance here is not physical. It is not surprising, therefore, that the old man sees Garabha as the last meaningful and trustworthy man in the Mandengu line. In fact, there is some warm reverence for Garabha in the old man because, as the old man proudly says, “Whoever saw the strange animal that this body becomes when he’s got the drum between his knees?”(p93)

It is in the same chapter that Garabha has opportunity to say that he doesn’t “like” the radio “at all.” The old man, in affirmation says “strange things are to come” and that the radio “only talks but never listens.”(p93) In that line are the other colonial things- sugar, tea and bread. Garabha and the old man’s dislike of these colonial things have been often over-killed. The two characters know that the radio, sugar, tea and bread are symbols of inevitable change. However, Garabha and the Old man’s worry is how to embrace these things and conveniently maintain one’s essence.

This is an interesting, but often sidelined debate in African literature as highlighted by Okot Bitek’s Song of Lawino and others. Lawino erroneously supposes that Clementine is grossly wrong to embrace the white man’s things. But Garabha and the Old man’s attack on sugar, for

instance, is not a call to retreat from it but a reminder that those Africans who quickly embrace it, fail, sadly, to realize that sugar should serve them and not the reverse. The old man appreciates the radio as a communicative gadget, but, implicit in his revulsion, is the monologue symbol of the system that brings and represents the radio. At a symbolic level, the struggle is declared between the African drum and the radio only as far as they represent the separate and conflicting perspectives of their makers. Symbols here become unequivocal and important.

In chapter twenty-six, Garabha uses a bantering tone with Mandisa, his mother's mother. This is as Shona custom requires. Mandisa is a talkative but socially disadvantaged old lady but Garabha listens to her quietly. Mandisa clearly enjoys Garabha's mischievous and open talk and gives him ready audience. Mandisa enjoys, (considering her circumstances), this one chance to speak to someone in an uninterrupted way.

Mandisa, doesn't scold Garabha but sees through him and teases him in order to teach. This is different from Lucifer, who, despite his long absence, remains aloof. Mandisa can only refer to Lucifer as "him". Garabha is what the Shona call "Muzukuru Wambuya" (grandmother's grandson). This is evident in Garabha's availability and good-natured talk. Garabha and Mandisa's contact does not give Garabha what is material, but the social-spiritual capital therein can be very rewarding.

In chapter twenty-seven, Garabha goes into the kitchen hut to greet and see his mother. Arguably, this is the most tense moment for Garabha. The mother is not happy with the son's joblessness, wandering, wifelessness and childlessness. She refers Garabha to these issues directly and forcefully. Garabha anticipates this and he is actually in the habit of way-laying her.

With the help of either his own mood or the old man's medicine which he consumes in chapter twenty-five, Garabha experiences various but not conflicting ways of seeing his mother. First, "she is nasty", in her anger. She is actually a monster and Shona custom has it that she be, especially when she is wronged by any of her children. At the sacrilege level, Garabha has not the courage to look his mother in the face. Defiant as he is, Garabha is still "son" and therefore, as custom dictates, subservient.

Garabha goes through fear and embarrassment as her mother demands that he goes and settle in a proper job, at the place where Lucifer last worked.

Realizing that he should not give in, Garabha sympathizes with his mother, instead. In this version, Garabha views his mother as an unknown helpless woman. To Garabha, she becomes synonymous with any woman/person of her generation who believes that the direction to the whiteman's town is the only salvation. She is therefore, to Garabha, now vulnerable and insignificant in her struggle to convince Garabha:

She opens her mouth, nothing comes out. And then, right there in Garabha's eyes, she begins to get smaller, to shrink, to crumble- Garabha is afraid she is going to disappear altogether! He

cannot believe it! His mother is about to disappear and yet he feels nothing! It is as if he were watching a scene between some other Garabha and some other mother.(p104)

Later, Garabha smiles instead of heeding and asks her to ‘stop suffering for me.’ There is in Garabha’s command the sad but overpowering allusion to Christ of “who is my mother and who are my brothers?(Mathew12 Verse48-50) The very image of a son playing into and consequently caught up in a role too complex to be understood by his all flesh mother, is painted here. This is an impasse and both mother and son know. Subservient as he is, Garabha has a limits of what he can take, though. He is both “son” and “rival” and he plays both, interchangeably.

Garabha’s mother cries, finally, with no sobs though Garabha feels he has “defeated” her specifically about the job seeking notions. Garabha feels that he has gone past the threshold and even sees in his mother, now, all other mothers who are:

Harsh and spiteful, over worried about their children- something with what they call love, always taking out on their children what they receive from their husbands.(p105)

In this silent but final disagreement with her, Garabha does not intend to be brutal. This time it is him who looks at her and in her newly acquired defeat, she “looks into the fire” and changes to a different subject. Although the authorial voice does not judge, one senses that Garabha possesses an organic, self-made criticism of the lure that the white world and culture has had on his people. However, Garabha’s uneasiness is evidence that Garabha is not clear himself if he can really explain his own antagonism against modernity.

In chapter twenty-eight, Garabha comes face to face with Lucifer, his learned brother. Garabha tries to be as natural as possible at first but his brother’s lack of camaraderie, the environment – books, bed, cigarette, radio, feminine looking pyjamas and the talk about jobs and the city, deflates Garabha. It is precisely at that moment of confronting the unfamiliar in Lucifer (and Lucifer’s town things) when Garabha feels that there “isn’t anything to touch” in Lucifer’s hut. Garabha feels “false” and finally, feels an “itch” in his guts just where the navel is” and that marks his retreat.(p117)

Chapter twenty-eight persuades one to identify with Garabha, pointing at serious problems in Lucifer’s socialization. Kinship ties are challenged as Lucifer fails to place Garabha in the space of elder brother. Immediately one remembers, with horrific regret, Garabha rushing home in, chapter twenty-three, to “precede” Lucifer. He is now rebuffed and kept at arm’s length by his own blood brother.

Later in chapter twenty-nine, Garabha makes a description of Lucifer’s aloofness. A description maybe too intellectual to be made by a character thought only to be intuitive and base: “It is as if he (Lucifer” were inside an invisible wall and you can’t get him”(p110) That statement ably captures what scholars of imperialism and its effects have laboured to bring home in their often-charged books and dissertations.

As if Lucifer's rebuff is not enough, Tongoona orders Garabha away to "where your real father and mother are." (p111) After just losing a brother (at least, symbolically) Garabha is verbally disinherited by his own father in front of his grandfather. Only the Old man intervenes in the ensuing altercation and stops that. The Old man subsequently silences his own son (Tongoona) for silencing his son (Garabha). The sad drama here is a perfect picture of rupture and discontinuity.

Tongoona thinks he is with Lucifer but the latter is going away. Garabha wants to be with everybody but he has a very yawning social debt to pay before he can be acceptable. The closest Garabha can come to the social circle is the old man who is, ironically, gradually dying. The family, the patriarchal tree, is threatening to splinter physically. Garabha who is wifeless, childless and maddeningly mobile, inherits, at the end of the chapter, the family story from the old man.

"But who will he tell it to?" we ask.

It turns out that the old man narrates his story of resisting white settlerism and it gives (to Garabha) arguably, much more than anything we have seen anyone give to someone else in the whole novel so far:

*When the old man talks, Garabha feels, the ears are not to hear with. His skin vibrates and he feels deep silence settling, within him. The same silence that he feels when he is playing the drum and the people dance to his command. It is the sense of silent power. Power...A different kind of power that strangles him.. yet at the same time making him feel that anything he turns his hand to, he will accomplish.(p117)*

However, Garabha realizes, suddenly that this is only cultural heritage. He has to do much more. For once, Garabha asks himself: "How long will a man go on playing a drum?" (p118) That is, arguably, the most important question Garabha ever asks himself in this novel and he reminds one of the dragon maker and dancer, Aldrick, of *The Dragon can't Dance*. Aldrick wakes up one morning, after a breathtaking carnival, sees the squalor of his individuality and commands himself: "I must lean to feel". (Cortney, 1991, p460)

It is W. Cartey (1991) who sees in Aldrick (as what Garabha is beginning to see in himself) a man who "stumbles on a new way of seeing" (p460) in order to achieve "a new vision".

In chapter thirty-two, Garabha goes into family history as he plays the drum at Lucifer's good-bye party. The drumming and the renarration are concurrent and the thin divide between reminiscence and participation is invisible and irrelevant. For Garabha, history and the present are not scientific periods that are separate and frozen. These are zones that are phenomenal in the way they transpose into each other.

When Garabha finally walks away in chapter thirty-nine he has failed to impress Lucifer with his drum playing. He realizes, later, that Lucifer had slipped out of the party. Garabha

has nothing to offer Lucifer, it seems, much as Lucifer has nothing to offer Garabha. Even worse, Garabha cannot wait to see Lucifer go because as he says, he might cry.

It is however in Garabha's newly self-crafted last song that he is beginning to demonstrate a quest for a new beginning and roots that make life as equally meaningful and successful as his drum playing. Indeed, as the old man reminisces, "with a heart that can make such poetry... the boy is home is in order."(p165)

In conclusion it is important to point out that although Garabha basically plays the worthless man in this novel, he is more important than that. He ultimately stands for more ways than one of viewing the Mandengu/Rhodesia question. It is by asking why Garabha behaves the way he does and by seeking forces that make Garabha worthless that we can begin to see that he is a potentially important window into understanding both the challenges and complexities that face the Mandengu/black Rhodesian family.

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## THE HYPERINFLATION CRISIS IN THE URBAN RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES MARKET OF ZIMBABWE (2000 –2005): SOME STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS

By

Alois Rewai Matongo<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

*This paper presents results of a research, carried out in the urban residential accommodation sector, between August 2004 and February 2005. The research, carried out in Zimbabwe's foremost metropolitan cities of Harare, Bulawayo, Mutare and Gweru, sought to establish perceptions of key stakeholder organizations in the sector on the nature and dynamics of the factors behind the residential properties hyperinflation crisis bedeviling the sector and the most lasting solution to the problem. Factors perceived by stakeholder organizations to be most responsible for this crisis of wildly rising prices and rentals of urban residential houses are speculative activities of Zimbabweans living and working abroad and profiteering tendencies of some real estate agents and high net worth individuals. Price and rent control, controlled auction market and strict implementation of the one-person-one-house policy, among others, were perceived as the most lasting solutions to the crisis.*

### Introduction

Zimbabwe's urban dwellers have, since the start of the new millennium, grappled with the phenomenon of wildly rising prices and rentals of residential properties in the main urban centers. The phenomenon, that economic commentators have termed residential properties prices and rentals hyperinflation, has spawned a number of serious social and economic problems for the urban communities, most notable of these being overcrowding, unplanned house development, mushrooming of slums and the general fall in the standard of living of city dwellers especially the vulnerable groups of women, children, the sick and the disabled.

In the face of the clear threat posed by this problem to the quality of life of urban workers, it is disheartening to note that practically no known research has been conducted to establish the nature and dynamics of the factors behind the crisis with a view to influence the development of a rational policy instrument to address the crisis. It is this scenario that prompted the writer to embark on the research.

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## Background

At the time of attainment of national independence in 1980 white citizens of Zimbabwe, on the one hand, owned most of the residential houses in low-density suburbs of towns and cities since the policies of the so-called separate development, a proxy for racial discrimination or apartheid, did not allow blacks to own properties in these areas. Municipal Councils, on the other hand, owned most of the other houses in the high-density suburbs especially those strategically located near commercial and industrial districts of the municipalities. Councils, in turn, leased the houses out, on concessionary terms, to poorly remunerated workers in order to guarantee uninterrupted supply of cheap labour for commerce and industry. The euphoria generated by the attainment of independence saw the outright condemnation of the practice of leasehold of houses to lowly paid workers by the local authorities as too patronizing and exploitative and, consequently, Government encouraged local authorities to sell the houses to the sitting tenants, sometimes very cheaply. Government itself and such parastatals as the National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ), Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA) and even mining concern, Ziscosteel, also joined the race of selling houses to sitting tenants. As soon as the tenants got title deeds for their new properties they joined the real estate market as potential sellers and buyers. Many of these new entrants to the market did not know the risks of such a market and, as a result, a number of them have lost their houses to powerful and unscrupulous players who are in the market for a quick buck. These speculators have created a huge asset bubble in the residential properties market that has seen prices and rentals of properties shoot through the roof well and truly beyond the reach of the majority of the workers. Prices of houses in the metropolitan cities of Zimbabwe have skyrocketed so much that people are resorting to very bizarre strategies to cope with the crisis that has ensued.

Houses do not have an organized market like other assets such as shares, foreign currency, livestock, etc. What has generally happened is that a seller or lessor approaches an estate agent who recommends a price or rental for the property. Efforts to secure a buyer or lessee are made by the estate agent. For this service the estate agent gets a commission that is generally calculated as a percentage of the purchase price or rent. From 1980 up to about the late 1990s prices and rentals of houses rose so slowly that urban dwellers never thought that they could get to a situation in which they could fail to buy or rent a house in town especially those in high-density suburbs. This was mainly due to the fact that the Rent Board, a government body, exercised a certain amount of control over rental charges and, to a certain extent, sale/purchase prices as well. Since the start of the new millennium the Rent Board has been more conspicuous by its silence than anything else. Since December 2003, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) seems to have taken over the mantle of controlling purchase prices or rentals of houses but only through its generalized fight against inflation. Watchdog organizations such as the Consumer Council of Zimbabwe (CCZ), the Zimbabwe Congress of Trades Union (ZCTU), the Zimbabwe Federation of Trades Union (ZFTU) and, more recently, the Zimbabwe Tenants and Lodgers Association (ZTLA) seem to have generated more heat than substance in their lobbying and advocacy endeavours to achieve house prices and rentals that are within the reach of their constituents.

From the above account it is clear that the stakeholders who play a leading role in influencing prices and rentals of houses in the urban houses market are the regulatory authorities, the estate agents and the watchdog organizations. At the moment it is a sellers market with the estate agents and sellers calling the shots. It is against this background that the author of this paper decided to undertake a research into the matter in an effort to establish the perceptions of the key stakeholders on critical aspects of the crisis and, hopefully, contribute ideas in the search for a solution to this gigantic problem.

### **Literature Review and Theoretical Underpinnings of the Study**

Since no formal research known to the author of this paper has been carried out the literature review focused on documentary evidence of the existence of the crisis, its possible causes as well as its impact on the lives of urban dwellers. Such evidence was mainly obtained from local print media reports in the form of newspaper and journal articles. A review of international literature on the subject was also carried out to enhance a deeper understanding and appreciation of universal perceptions of the phenomenon.

The Zimbabwe Independent (July 23, 2004) notes:

In Harare prime low-density properties fetch monthly rentals of up to \$10 million while those in the high-density areas are being rented out for up to 2 million dollars.<sup>1</sup>

It is necessary to point out that these figures had appreciated by a factor of at least three times at the time of conclusion of this paper (September 2005). Under these circumstances it is not uncommon to see many workers with highly respected jobs such as teachers, nurses, university lecturers and many others residing in what can only be described as slums.

The Zimbabwe Independent (ibid) notes again:

In 2003 the Real Estate Institute of Zimbabwe announced a format whereby rents would go up every quarter.<sup>2</sup>

The practice, that has since become a benchmark in the industry, has endured up to the time of writing the report, and shows no sign of abating. At the start of the of quarterly presentation of monetary policy review statements (MPRS), by the RBZ, in December 2003, the new RBZ Governor labeled inflation “enemy number one” of the country and promised to leave no stone unturned in the search for a solution to the crisis. It is, therefore, surprising to note that after almost two years of confronting “enemy number one” the RBZ has not landed a single blow on the sector that has sustained the highest rate of inflation in the country. Arguments may be advanced that The Homelink Housing Development Scheme is a big blow to the residential properties hyperinflation. This supply-based strategy can only bear fruit, if successful, in the long term and any strategy that is based on long term prospects in a volatile economy like Zimbabwe’s may be destined for doom as conditions are changing too rapidly for any reliable forecasting to be done. There is need for short-term residential properties hyperinflation stabilization programmes to ensure that house prices and rentals are manageable to the workers to guarantee improved productivity. The RBZ’s silence over the residential properties hyperinflation has fueled all kinds of rumours pointing to the fact that the sector may be too hot a potato to handle even for its tough talking Governor. With a backlog estimated at 4

million housing units (The Zimbabwe Independent: *ibid*) the prospects of containing the hyperinflation are very grim indeed.

University and college students are among those worst affected by the crisis as The Standard (13 February 2005) notes:

A survey by this newspaper during the past two weeks showed that most students staying off the campuses were living in appalling conditions and at times ran out of food.

As a result, some of them were involved in deviant activities in order to earn a living, especially under the current economic hardships.

Owners of homes in suburbs near universities such as Mt Pleasant in Harare, Senga in Gweru and Selbourne Park in Bulawayo regularly “review” monthly rentals upwards, often “ripping off” desperate students.<sup>3</sup>

The Standard (*ibid*) quotes a former Student Representative Council (SRC) President of Midlands State University (MSU), Tatenda Chinoda (alias John Bemba) as saying:

About 5000 MSU students live packed like “sardines” in small rooms and cottages in Senga, Gweru East, Kopje, Windsor Park and Daylesford. .... Prostitution is now rife at this college. This is caused by lack of accommodation on the campus.<sup>4</sup>

A cursory comparison of prices and rentals of houses and flats in the Classified Advertisements sections of The Herald issues of 2000 and 2005 shows bewildering rises in prices and rentals of residential houses as shown in Table 1 and 2 below.

*Table 1: House Price Changes for three Harare Suburbs (2000–2005)*

Suburb	Density Status	Key House Attribute	Date of Advertisement	Price in Zim. \$	% Price Change (Nov. 2000 – Sept. 2005)
Zengeza ^ ^	HD ^ ^	4 bed-roomed ^ ^	• 3 Nov. 2000 • 31 Jan. 2005 • 29 Sept. 2005	• \$700 000 • \$120 million • \$900 million	128 471%
Borrowdale ^ ^	LD ^ ^	4 bed-roomed ^ ^	• 3 Nov. 2000 • 31 Jan. 2005 • 29 Sept. 2005	• \$3.5 million • \$1.8 billion • \$15 billion	416 567%
Mabelreign ^ ^	MD ^ ^	3 bed-roomed ^ ^	• 3 Nov. 2000 • 31 Jan. 2005 • 29 Sept. 2005	• \$1.8 million • \$270 million • \$2.65 billion	147 122%

**Table 2:** House Rentals Changes for three Harare Suburbs (2000 to 2005)

Suburb	Density Status	Key House Attribute	Date of Advertisement	Rental p.m. in Zim. \$	% Rental Change (Nov. 2000 – Sept. 2005)
Dzivaresekwa ^ ^	HD ^ ^	4 bed-roomed ^ ^	• 3 Nov. 2000 • 31 Jan. 2005 • 29 Sept. 2005	•\$3 500 • \$600 000 • \$6 million	171329%
Waterfalls ^ ^	MD ^ ^	3 bed-roomed ^ ^	• 3 Nov. 2000 • 31 Jan. 2005 • 29 Sept. 2005	•\$ 10 000 • \$2 million • \$8.5 million	84 900%
Mt Pleasant ^ ^	LD ^ ^	4 bed-roomed ^ ^	• 3 Nov. 2000 • 31 Jan. 2005 • 29 Sept. 2005	•\$25 000 • \$6 million • \$12 million	47 900%

**Key to Tables 1 & 2:** HD = High-Density, LD = Low-Density, MD = Medium-Density

**Source:** The Herald Classified Advertisements – 3 November 2000, 31 January 2005 & 29 September 2005.

Assuming that the facts in the two tables above are representative of the residential properties market in Harare (I see no reason to doubt this) one can conclude, from Table 1 above, that between November 2000 and September 2005 prices of houses in high-density areas rose by about 128 471%, those in medium-density areas by 147 122% and those in low-density areas by 416 567%. One can also conclude, from Table 2 that between November 2000 and September 2005 rentals of houses in high-density suburbs in Harare rose by 171 329% whilst those in medium-density suburbs rose by 84 900% and those in low-density areas rose by 47 900%. These increases are incredible and this tempted the author to compile a similar table to determine the rates of increase, during the same period, of remuneration of a selection of employees of government, an employer notoriously known for underpaying its employees (Table 3 below).

**Table 3:** Salary Changes of a Selection of Government Workers (2000 –2005) 127200

Worker	Year	Basic Salary		% Change
		pm	pa	
Office Orderly	• 2000 • 2005	• \$ 4 895 • \$ 913 748	• \$ 58 740 • \$ 10 964 976	18 567%
Clerk	• 2000 • 2005	• \$ 13 304 • \$ 1 337 828	• \$ 159 648 • \$ 16 053 936	9 956%
Nurse	• 2000 • 2005	• \$ 18 004 • \$ 2 546 350	• \$ 216 048 • \$ 30 556 200	14 043%
Tertiary College Lecturer	• 2000 • 2005	• \$ 34 740 • \$ 4 325 692	• \$ 416 880 • \$ 51 908 304	12 352%

**Source:** Assorted Salary Advice Slips

The mismatch between the increases in remuneration, on the one hand, and prices and rentals of houses, on the other hand, between 2000 and 2005 clearly shows that there is no way incomes of workers can ever be able to absorb the ever galloping rentals and purchase prices of houses in the urban areas. Mortgage lending is out of the question as *businessdigest* (Zimbabwe Independent September 30, 2005) notes:

The hope of buying a house through mortgage lending is now a pipe dream for the minimum wage earner as prices of property, particularly houses, continue to rise.

While houses in the high-density are now costing an average of \$1 billion, mortgage lenders are giving loans worth \$20 million at an interest of more than 60% per annum for someone who earns a monthly salary of \$5 million. The majority of workers in Zimbabwe, whose desire is to own a house, at least in the high densities, earn far less than \$5 million a month.<sup>1</sup>

It is, therefore, not surprising that more and more households are now resorting to single rooms, plastic shacks or wooden cabins as their accommodation.

As this author was compiling this paper a new stakeholder group, the Zimbabwe Tenants and Lodgers Association (ZTLA), came into being with the following threat, from its Chairman, a Mr. Nelson Mandizvidza, as quoted in *The Financial Gazette* (January 6 – 12, 2005):

The Zimbabwe Tenants and Lodgers Association (ZTLA) has threatened to boycott paying any form of rentals until a statute regulating the charges is in place, setting the stage for a potential showdown with property owners.

The rentals are not going to be decided by property owners but by the ministry involved together with relevant human rights groups. If rentals are not gazetted, the lodgers shall declare not to pay rentals until they are regularized and gazetted.<sup>1</sup>

ZTLA chairman alleged that some property owners were "... increasing their rentals monthly and ... charging in foreign currency" (*The Financial Gazette*: *ibid*)

Another disconcerting dimension of the crisis has been the increasing incidence of cases of fraudulent activities mainly perpetrated by unregistered estate agents, unscrupulous house owners, some property developers and some dishonest lawyers. Cases of property developers selling one stand or house to more than one buyer are quite prevalent in the sector. Some of the better known of these cases are the Bern Win, Metof Investments and Cowdray Park Schemes of Mutare, Harare and Bulawayo cities respectively. In the Cowdray Park Scheme *The Property Gazette* (*The Financial Gazette*, November 25 – December 1 2004 ) described the saga as follows:

Residents will have to fork out more money to have their stands properly serviced, though they had already paid Alpha Construction for this purpose

Worse still, scores could lose their "stands" or cash because the contractor had sold more properties than those available and in some cases allocated a single stand to several buyers.

More than 100 houses encroached onto the next stand or sewer lines. But most important, the town clerk said, Alpha had not recruited buyers from the municipal housing waiting list as agreed.

A representative of the Deeds Office said the issuing of more than one title deed for a house was rare, adding any extra deeds would have to be cancelled. But compensation was unlikely for the cancelled deeds, unless the owners went to court, which would be an additional expense.<sup>1</sup>

In the Metof case the Property & Development (May 2001) journal had this to say:

The scale of the alleged Metof scam has highlighted the great risk that the general public has when they get involved in the purchase of undeveloped land or proposed residential developments where building has not commenced. It is alleged that Metof Investments have been offering for sale agricultural plots and urban residential stands in various centers including Ruwa, Gweru, Kadoma and Norton. These stands do not appear to be owned by the company, nor has the company put in place the necessary town planning requirements for subdivision, obtained survey diagrams of the stands nor commenced with their servicing. Indeed, in the case of Ruwa property all they had achieved was to sign an agreement of sale, in terms of which it was already in default. The company appears to have collected in excess of \$60 million in what it referred to as “bookings”.<sup>2</sup>

A number of causes of the crisis have been put forward by some of the stakeholders in the industry. Zimbabwe Top Companies Survey (Supplement to The Financial Gazette November 17, 2004) notes some of the causes as follows:

Property prices, especially residential properties, had been on a roll the previous year buoyed by a depreciating currency, negative real interest rates and inflationary increases in prices of building materials.<sup>3</sup>

As way back as 1997 Gulliver Consolidated Limited, a major player in the construction industry, had remarked in their financial statements that

...the group is concerned that the expected rise in the inflation rate will put an upward pressure on interest rates, thereby hindering future investment in the construction industry.<sup>4</sup>

The relentless growth in demand for residential housing in most urban areas is also cited in the Top Companies Survey of October 15, 1998:

Despite the current shortage of mortgage funds, demand for building materials, particularly cement and bricks, continues to rise although developers are now facing stiff rises in costs due to the devaluation of the dollar, as well as increased interest rates and inflation.<sup>5</sup>

In 1999 the captains of the construction industry again warned that the suspension of wholesale mortgage lending by building societies due to high interest rates the previous year had “...resulted

in a slowdown in residential property development with very little new construction available in urban centers ... Prospects for recovery of the sector, which has also been hit by escalating building costs, remain bleak.”<sup>6</sup>

In 2001 Top Companies Survey remarked again:

There was a dearth of activity in the construction and cement-producing sector despite the sudden interest in residential property by the growing army of Zimbabweans trooping to the United Kingdom and other countries in search of better fortunes.

The subdued construction activity led to a critical shortage of new residential property...<sup>7</sup>

The residential properties inflation or properties asset bubble, as it is commonly referred to in investment parlance, has occurred at various times in different countries and Zimbabwe’s regulatory authorities can learn a few lessons from these. When asked,

“Is there any real estate that is good investment?” Casey (1980), himself an international speculator, answered

I like land in some Caribbean countries – especially in the Bahamas. There are several reasons:

- All the speculation has been washed out of the market. Many pieces of land – even whole islands – are now going for 10 to 30 percent of their 1968 highs...<sup>8</sup>

Although Casey was commenting on the USA and Caribbean real estate markets the principle he was alluding to has become a universal benchmark for the real estate industry: Once speculators or the so-called investors enter the properties market, or any other market for that matter, prices will always rise. This is particularly so when the supply of the asset is static or is going down as what happened to residential houses after Operation Murambatsvina in Zimbabwe in May 2005.

Another principle that has been established from international properties inflation is that the risk of a market crash or asset bubble burst following a steep rise in property prices is generally heightened. Many market participants have fallen victim to the belief that

... as the population grows, “people will have to live somewhere” and therefore land, [and likewise, house] values should continue rising with the population. The fallacy, however, is that people don’t require a great deal of room to live; the space people “need” is far more a function of their wealth than of their numbers. And during depressions, their numbers stop increasing while their wealth takes a nose-dive.<sup>9</sup>

David Berson (AFP 2004), chief economist for mortgage finance group, Fannie Mae, wrote in a recent commentary,

...the risk of regional price declines is higher ... as so many purchases are by speculators rather than residents.<sup>10</sup>

It has also been established that cheap mortgage finance plays a crucial role in instigating property hyperinflation as AFP (ibid) notes again:

Economists say super-low interest rates have fueled the rise in home prices, making it easy to borrow money for real estate investments. But like many other hot investments, real estate could go cold quickly and send shockwaves through the economy.<sup>1111</sup> AFP (ibid)

The foregoing review paints a not-so-pleasant picture of the residential properties market in the urban areas of Zimbabwe. A crisis of monumental proportions is raging on in the accommodation sector of the urban centers. The victims of this crisis are the vulnerable groups namely the poor, the sick, women, children and the unemployed. There is need for an all-stakeholder initiative to address the problem. Stakeholders featuring, directly or indirectly, in the above review are regulatory authorities, watchdog organizations, real estate agents, conveyancers and building societies. I chose to focus on the first three as I felt that their activities had a greater likelihood of bringing sanity to the sector in the short-term than the others.

The literature review also helped the researcher identify the variables for inclusion in the questionnaire for determination of perceptions of the stakeholders on the crisis and these included interest rates, cost of construction material, speculation and foreign currency-related matters, among others.

### **The Problem**

The purpose of this study was to seek the perceptions of key stakeholder organizations in the residential properties market on the existence of a hyperinflation crisis in the urban residential properties sector, the factors fueling it and the most lasting solution thereof. In a nutshell the study sought answers, from key stakeholder organizations, to the questions:

1. Does hyperinflation exist in the residential properties market and if it does what is its extent?
2. What are the factors driving the crisis?
3. What is the most lasting solution to the problem?

### **Method**

#### **Research Subjects**

Participants in the research comprised of five (5) randomly selected strategic level employees of stakeholder organizations as shown below:

*Regulatory Organizations:* { Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ), Rent Board, Municipal Housing Departments }

*Watchdog Organizations:* { Consumer Council of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe Congress of

Trades Union (ZCTU), Zimbabwe Federation of Trades Union (ZFTU)}

*Real Estate Industry:* {Real Estate Institute of Zimbabwe (REIZ) and 11 estate agents.}

A total of 91 executives of stakeholder organizations, therefore, participated in the survey. Table 4 below gives distribution and response details.

**Table 4:** Questionnaire Distribution and Response Rates

Stakeholder Group	Organizations	Questionnaires Distributed	Questionnaires Received	Response Rate
Regulatory Authorities	• RBZ	5	5	100%
	• Rent Board	5	4	80%
	• Municipalities	20	16	80%
Real Estate Agents & REIZ	• 11 Estate Agents	55	45	82%
	• REIZ	5	5	100%
Watchdog Organizations	• CCZ	10	4	40%
	• ZCTU	10	8	80%
	• ZFTU	10	4	40%
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>120</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>76%</b>

*Source:* Completed questionnaires

### Research Instruments

The main instrument used in the research is the closed-question questionnaire customized to each stakeholder group's needs although each solicited perceptions on the same aspects of the crisis. Unstructured interviews were also used to complement the questionnaire.

### Procedure

The questionnaire was initially administered by e-mail but due to poor response rate the researcher and MBA student assistants had to personally administer the instrument. An overall response rate of 76% was thus achieved (see Table 4 above).

The procedure was chosen mainly for its high potential to solicit ready response from the busy executives of stakeholder organizations. Its biggest weakness is its likelihood of limiting respondents' choice. With this consciousness in mind the researcher had an "other specify" part in those questions that warranted it although not many responded to it.

### Results of Survey

The survey has unraveled some fascinating insights into the perceptions of key players in the housing sectors of Zimbabwe's metropolitan cities. Table 5 below summarizes perceptions of key stakeholder organizations.

**Table 5: Organizational Perceptions of Residential Properties Hyperinflation**

Question/ Statement	ORGANISATIONAL PERCEPTIONS AND PERCENTAGE SUPPORT LEVEL						
	RBZ	Rent Board	Municipal Housing & Comm. Services Dep'ts	Real Estate Industry	CCZ	ZCTU	ZCTU
Hyperinflation exists in the housing sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Yes 100%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Yes 100%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Yes 100%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Yes 100%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Yes 100%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Yes 100%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Yes 100%</li> </ul>
What is the factor most responsible for hyperinflation crisis?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Zimbabweans living abroad 100%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Real estate agents 50%</li> <li>● Zimbabweans living abroad 25%</li> <li>● Forreigners 25%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Zimbabweans living abroad 100%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Zimbabweans living abroad 80%</li> <li>● Demand for houses far exceeding supply 20%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Zimbabweans living abroad 50%</li> <li>● Rising cost of building materials 50%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Zimbabweans living abroad 100%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Zimbabweans living abroad 100%</li> </ul>
What is most lasting solution to the crisis?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Price and Rent controls 80%</li> <li>● One person-one-house policy 20%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Price and Rent controls 100%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Price and Rent controls 50%</li> <li>● Govt. building houses 25%</li> <li>● One person-one-house policy 25%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Controlled Auction Market 40%</li> <li>● Closure of some real estate agents 40%</li> <li>● Govt. building more houses 20%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Price and rent controls 50%</li> <li>● One-person-one house policy 50%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Price and rent controls 50%</li> <li>● One-person-one house policy 38%</li> <li>● Ban foreigners from market 12%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Price and rent controls 100%</li> </ul>

*Source: Survey results*

All stakeholder organizations agree that a crisis of hyperinflation exists in the residential properties markets of Zimbabwe's metropolitan cities. Perceptions on factors most responsible for the crisis varied more among and within stakeholder groups and individual organizations respectively. The factor that featured most prominently is speculative behavior of Zimbabweans living abroad with a 100% support level from the following organizations: RBZ, municipal housing departments, ZCTU and ZFTU. Other factors raised are activities of real estate agents, activities of foreigners, demand far outstripping supply of housing stock and rising cost of building materials.

On the most lasting solution to the crisis, price and rent control has the highest support level with respondents from the Rent Board and ZFTU giving it 100% support. Other solutions suggested are strict implementation of a one-person-one-house policy, controlled auction market, construction of more houses by Government, closure of some real estate agents and banning foreigners from participating in the residential properties market.

### **Analysis of Results**

Analysis of results will focus on convergence and divergence of responses of stakeholder groups and individual organizations.

### **Convergence of Responses**

All respondents agree that a crisis of monumental proportions, in the form of hyperinflation, exists in the metropolitan cities of Zimbabwe. This is important, as acknowledgement of the existence of a problem, by key players in the sector, is the most crucial step in finding its solution.

Respondents also agree that the crisis is unhealthy as it is promoting the concentration of ownership of a vital national resource into the hands of a few wealthy players including Zimbabwean citizens living abroad who are engaging in speculative activities with little or no consideration for the lives of the vulnerable groups such as minimum wage workers, the elderly, the widows, the sick and children.

Respondents also overwhelmingly selected the speculative behaviour of Zimbabweans living in the diasporas as the factor most responsible for the crisis. All organizations surveyed ranked the factor top with 4 organizations out of 7 giving it a 100% support level (RBZ, municipal housing departments, ZCTU and ZFTU). This scenario poses serious challenges to the regulatory authorities. Diasporans are absentee landlords and tend to be insensitive to the problems that local people may be facing. A disturbing trend noted with houses being let out by diasporans to local tenants is the high turnover of tenants from such houses mainly because of frequent and massive rises in rentals. Such houses end up being taken up by companies or nongovernmental organizations.

On the most lasting solution, all organizations, with the exception of the real estate agents, ranked price and rent control highest with the Rent Board and ZFTU giving the solution option a 100% level of support. One-person-one-house policy implementation is also strongly

supported with 4 organizations out of 7 ranking it second only to price and rent control. The logistics of implementing rent and price control measures in a sector that has degenerated to this extent may not be that easy to handle for regulatory authorities but there is no doubt that the situation in this sector can no longer be left to rectify itself. Urban housing is a strategic facility that requires careful regulation to ensure that workers are not turned into squatters in their own backyard. Productivities of workers with no stable and affordable accommodation are known to deteriorate substantially to the detriment of the economy at large. The urban housing sector now resembles a jungle in which survival of the fittest is the overriding principle. Speculators who are just after the “quick buck” have infiltrated the sector. There is need for government and local authorities to draw up a strategy of flushing out the “sharks” from the residential properties market just as government did in the financial sector. The government’s one-farm-one-owner policy could be transplanted to the sector to act as the first step in the resolution of the crisis.

### **Divergence of Responses**

The most notable cases of divergence in response to the factor perceived as most responsible for the crisis came from the Rent Board and the Real Estate Industry. The former ranked real estate agents as the factor most responsible for the crisis. The Rent Board attributes this to three factors namely lack of strong control measures, a fall in ethical standards due to a proliferation of unregistered estate agents and the profiteering motive.

Estate agents, on their part, differed from other organizations, by ranking “demand far exceeding supply of houses” as one of the contributory factors. Whilst this may hold water, the demand for houses in the sector is, unfortunately, not just for residential purposes only. An overwhelming portion of that demand is emanating from the speculative motive and this is the portion that is the main driver of house prices and rentals in urban centers. And, by the way, demand is not just a wish but a combination of a wish and financial ability. There are people who are known to be leasing houses not because they want to stay in them but because they want to sublet these in smaller units to desperate home seekers. People are also buying houses to resell these at higher prices to realize a profit.

In the most lasting solution to the crisis the most divergent responses are:

- Closure of some real estate agents;
- Banning foreigners from residential properties market and
- Government should build more houses.

It is interesting that the solution of closure of some real estate agents is coming from the real estate industry itself. The legitimate players in the industry know that many of their siblings are operating clandestinely and reaping where they did not sow. There are dozens of these unregistered real estate agents operating illegally in the industry. A number of these indulge in unethical and, sometimes, criminal activities that tarnish the image of the industry. Regulatory authorities are urged to work with the legitimate members to flush the imposters out of the industry. Banning foreigners from the residential properties market was suggested by the ZCTU and received a 12% support level in that organization. One can read anger, in the labour umbrella

body, in this response. The sentiment, however, demands respect as the people feeling the brunt of this crisis most belong to this constituency.

Finally the response that Government should build more houses, not surprisingly, came from municipal housing departments (25% support level) and the real estate industry (20% support level). The former obviously want to recover the landlord status they shortsightedly surrendered just after Independence in 1980. The later are clearly shedding crocodile tears as, once Government builds new houses for minimum wage workers, real estate agents are likely to dangle carrots to entice the new owners into selling the new houses, once more, to the sharks.

### **Conclusion**

The study has shown that key players in the urban housing sector agree that a colossal crisis of hyperinflation exists in the urban residential properties market of Zimbabwe's metropolitan cities. However, due mainly to absence of serious dialogue, cooperation and collaboration among the key players, there is limited convergence in their perceptions of the contributory factors and the most lasting solutions to the crisis. Under the current situation the powerful players, the estate agents and the speculators, are doing as they wish without care that their actions were exacerbating the crisis. There is need for the establishment of a joint advisory body to carry out research into the sector so as to supply policy makers with sound information to draw up rational policies to address the crisis and avert a cataclysm.

### **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> Gono threatens to tame estate agents. (2004, July 23). The Zimbabwe Independent, p.2.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Accommodation shortage haunts university students. (2005, February 13). The Standard, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>6</sup> Lodgers want rent law. (2005, January 6-12). The Financial Gazette p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Alpha saga shifts against buyers. (2004, Nov. 25 – Dec. 1). Property Gazette, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Cons in real estate. (2001, May). Property & Development, pp 13-21.

<sup>9</sup> Newly-borns struggle to find their feet (2004, Nov. 17) Top Companies 2004 – Supplement to The Financial Gazette, p. 74

<sup>10</sup> Gulliver's annual report makes sad reading (1997, Oct. 23) Top Companies Survey – Supplement to The Financial Gazette, p. 61

- <sup>11</sup> Economic woes leave construction sector largely undented (1998, Oct. 15) Top Companies Survey – Supplement to The Financial Gazette, p. 97.
- <sup>12</sup> Construction sector feels the squeeze of mortgage freeze (1999, Oct. 21) Top Companies Survey – Supplement to The Financial Gazette, p. 83.
- <sup>13</sup> Building firms fail to cash in on exiled Zimbabweans (2001, Oct. 18) Zimbabwe Top Companies – Supplement to The Financial Gazette, p. 35.
- <sup>14</sup> Casey Douglas R. (1980), *Crisis Investing*, New York: Harper & Row Publishers, p.140
- <sup>15</sup> Casey Douglas R. (ibid).
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- Top Companies Survey – Supplement to The Financial Gazette (Oct. 23 1997). *Gulliver's annual report makes sad reading*, p. 61.

## THE DYNAMIC SPECIFICATION OF THE INFLATION MODEL IN ZIMBABWE

By

Tafirenyika Sunde<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

*In order to estimate the inflation function in Zimbabwe we used cointegration and error-correction mechanism (a methodology popularized by Hendry et al (1989)). This approach has received extensive empirical support. Right now the approach seems to have generally settled the long-standing problem over the instability of the inflation model (function). Using the above technique, we managed to come up with a stable inflation model for Zimbabwe. This study also established that one must go beyond a simple monetary account of the inflation process even if inflation will always have a monetary dimension. Other factors that were found to be significant in explaining inflation in Zimbabwe are: real output, budget deficit, exchange rate depreciation and interest rates. The results that we got fitted very well all the theoretical priors, and they also concur with the studies done elsewhere for both the developed and the developing countries.*

### Introduction

In Zimbabwe inflation throughout the 1980s was relatively low, averaging around 13 percent. Relatively low inflation levels were against the background of a system of administered price controls and generally over-regulated business environment that led to generally depressed economic activity. The liberalisation and deregulation of the domestic economic environment, following the introduction of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in 1991, increased the role of market forces in the allocation of resources. Prices became more indicative of the fundamental developments in the economy with the removal of price controls. Against this background, and in an environment of limited competition due to a monopolistic production structure, an upward surge in inflation emerged.

After the introduction of the ESAP in 1991, Zimbabwe has seen episodes of high inflation. The policy makers excessively used tight monetary policy to combat inflation, but they failed to reduce it to the desired levels of less than 10%. This suggests that inflation may not always be and everywhere a monetary phenomenon as suggested by Friedman (1969). The preceding

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statement therefore suggests that monetary growth may not be the only cause of inflation in Zimbabwe. So a wider portfolio of policies which captures all the possible causes of inflation is needed if inflation is to be put at bay.

### **Why Study Inflation in Zimbabwe.**

Inflation has adverse consequences on economies some of which are uncertainty, distortion of the distribution of resources and the disabling of the economy's capacity to generate domestic savings as real incomes are eroded (ESAP Highlights, 1995). In this way inflation acts as tax on companies, households, and individuals, impacting negatively on low and fixed incomes such as those of minimum wages earners and pensioners. Inflation, particularly when unanticipated, transfers wealth from savers to borrowers as the value of monetary assets is eroded. Similarly, inflation redistributes income if wages and interest earned by holders of fixed financial assets rise at a slower rate than the rate of increase in inflation while the cost of buying goods and services rises with inflation. Unanticipated inflation also hinders effective operation of the credit markets, because the risk of borrowing and lending rises with every increase in the rate of inflation (Seigel, 1982).

Inflation, by increasing the risks and costs of holding and using money, erodes the usefulness of money and undermines the monetisation of a developing economy. It therefore, adversely affects the growth and output generating capacity of the economy.

Inflation erodes the value of financial savings and therefore acts as a deterrent to holding money especially over longer periods. Investors end up diverting financial assets into very short-term investments or into fixed assets such as land and buildings as hedges against inflation. Increasing prices thus undermine the important intermediary role of financial institutions of mobilising deposits from savers and making them available as loans and advances to productive investors.

By reducing the flow of savings that can be channeled to those investments that are too large to be financed from own resources, inflation denies the economy access to financial resources vital for productive investments which an economy's growth potential depends on. Inflation, unless arrested, can have extensive adverse consequences on the economies that include low investment, reduced general availability of goods and services, and low employment generation. This may result in stagflation-a situation of rising inflation and falling economic growth (Seigel, 1982).

Other consequences of high inflation are high nominal interest rates arising from the need to encourage savings by maintaining positive real rates of interest. Failure to raise nominal rates in response to the rise of inflation would lead to negative real interest rates that encourage dissaving and increased consumption. It is against this background that nominal interest rates have remained high in Zimbabwe. High nominal interest rates, however, have adverse consequences on the cost of borrowing to industry and on investment and general economic growth.

Inflation also has adverse consequences on the stability of the exchange rate and, in turn, exports competitiveness and foreign investment inflows. Environments of high inflation levels

often require continuous exchange rate devaluation as the authorities strive to maintain export competitiveness and stem capital flight. Imports, however, become more expensive as depreciation of the local currency takes place and this increases inputs costs to industry, consequently making domestically produced goods more expensive on export markets. To maintain competitiveness, further devaluation often becomes necessary, which generates a new round of inflation through higher production costs.

This, however, leads to ever rising rates of inflation as one round of inflation leads into the next, trapping the economy in a vicious inflation spiral. The worst evils of inflation then emerge as the ever-rising and accelerated growth in inflation translates into hyperinflation as experienced in most Latin American economies in the 1970-80s with inflation rates rising as high as 70 percent per annum. By the year 2000, Zimbabwe's inflation rate stood at 55.9 percent.

The impact of the 1992 drought and its adverse consequences on agricultural output and agro-based industries also affected the supply of domestic goods, government's revenue base, and consequently government expenditures. This saw the government increasing its borrowing from the domestic bank sources in order to import foodstuffs; and this resulted in adverse consequences on money supply growth and inflation (RBZ Publications, 1995).

It is against this background that it becomes important to establish the arguments of inflation, so that appropriate measures to cure it can be taken. The knowledge that emanates from a study of the determinants of inflation is indispensable in designing effective stabilisation policies.

### **Organization of the paper**

The rest of the paper is organized as follows:

Chapter 2 reviews the literature relevant for this study; Chapter 3 looks at the methodology used by the researcher in analyzing inflation in Zimbabwe. Chapter 4 analyses the results obtained from the estimation, and Chapter 5 concludes the study with policy recommendations.

### **Literature Review**

There are various theories that explain the inflation phenomenon, viz: demand-pull approaches (the monetarist, and the Keynesian), the cost-push approach, the structuralist approach and the rational expectations approach. It is not my intention to go into the details of these theoretical approaches because that will make the paper unnecessarily long. The research will therefore only review relevant empirical literature. A lot of official empirical literature on the inflation phenomenon exists in both the developed and developing nations, though little specifically on Zimbabwe. Below are some of the representative studies in the area.

Khan (1980) attempted to verify the efficacy of monetary policy to the problem of inflation, by looking at seven Latin American Countries and four Asian countries. He assumed that monetary growth causes inflation. He also went on to assert that money holders expect the authorities to keep monetary growth in line with the growth in nominal money demand; and that the inflationary process is monetary in character and hence monetary policy was considered as the only instrument for controlling inflation.

Khan went on to say that non-monetary factors such as wage changes, import price and exchange rate fluctuations can be independently important in affecting prices and inflation can often be controlled by suitable fiscal, exchange rate and incomes policies. Since Khan's study left out the latter variables this makes his study incomplete. Using a single equation regression model, Khan found out that inflation is a monetary phenomenon in all the countries that he studied. A major weakness of Khan's study is that it focused exclusively on the relationship between inflation and the growth of the money supply, an approach that would be strictly valid only for a closed economy or one with a freely floating exchange rate.<sup>1</sup>

Moser (1995) developed an error-correction model of the inflationary process for Nigeria. Moser estimated the long run (co integrating relationship) and the short run (error correction model) models of inflation. The results of Moser's analysis confirm the basic findings of earlier studies<sup>2</sup>, namely, that monetary expansion, driven mainly by expansionary fiscal policies, explains to a large degree the inflationary process in Nigeria. Other important factors according to Moser are the devaluation of the Naira and agro-climatic conditions. The main advantage of the method of estimation used by Moser is that it tests for the stationarity of the variables and therefore eradicates the problem of the existence of spurious relationships among variables.<sup>3</sup>

Chhibber *et al* (1989) studied the inflation dynamics in Zimbabwe for the period 1969 to 1986. They used the method of Two Stage Least Squares to make their estimations. Their study identified unit labour costs and interest rates in addition to exchange rates, foreign prices, monetary growth, and real income growth as factors explaining inflation in Zimbabwe. This study was carried out for an economic environment different from the one Zimbabwe is experiencing at the moment. During the period before 1980 the Zimbabwean economy was characterised by economic sanctions and after independence in 1980 it was characterised by price controls, foreign exchange controls, rising subsidies and many other government interventions which introduced imperfections in the market. These controls caused the relationship between prices, monetary growth, and exchange rates movements to weaken. In such an economy, monetary policy alone was not effective, unless if it was adulterated with fiscal policy.

The current study is going to make use of quarterly data instead of annual data that was used in the study on Zimbabwe that has been reviewed. This makes us have a satisfactory number of observations since this study only focuses on the 1991-2000 period.

### **Model of Inflation for Zimbabwe**

The preceding review of the empirical literature gives some insight into how best the dynamics of inflation in Zimbabwe can be modelled. Thus, from the review in the previous chapter the long-run model of inflation for Zimbabwe can be specified in the traditional way as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> A freely floating exchange rate does not affect real economic variables.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example Darrat (1985), Ekpo (1992), and World Bank (1993).

<sup>3</sup> Regressions involving time series data include the possibility of obtaining dubious results in the sense that results look good but on further probing they look suspect. Conventional regression techniques assumed econometric data to be stationary while, in reality, most of it is non-stationary. So the error correction and cointegration techniques take account of the non-stationarity of data.

$$CPI = F(M, Y, R, E, BD, RW) \quad (1)$$

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Where:

CPI is the consumer price index,  
M is money supply  
Y is real output,  
R is the nominal rate of interest,  
E is the exchange rate,  
BD is the budget deficit, and  
RW is the real wage.

The sign below each explanatory variable shows the theoretical or expected relationship that exists between the dependent variable and the respective explanatory variable.

### Modeling strategy

The modeling strategy adopted in this study is the general to specific method made popular by Hendry (1986) and his colleagues at the London School of Economics and the University of Oxford. The first step is to specify an unrestricted autoregressive distributed lag (ADL) model which makes the dependent variable (Zimbabwe CPI) a function of its lagged values and the current and lagged values of the independent variables contained in equation (1). The long-run model is presented in the following autoregressive distributed lag (ADL) form: (2)

Where  $\lambda$  is the lag operator,  $A, B, C, D, E, F, G$  and  $H$  are vectors of coefficients to be estimated and  $\epsilon_t$  is an error term. As will be seen later, these variables were generated so that they can be used in the stationarity and cointegration tests.<sup>1</sup>

The second step is to identify the time series characteristics of the variables in the ADL model. That involves testing for the stationarity of variables using the Augmented Dickey Fuller (ADF) test (Engle and Granger 1987).

Once the order of integration is established for each variable in the model, it is possible to move on to the next step of the approach, which is to find out if there is a cointegrating relationship between the dependent variable and any of the independent variables in the model. In intuitive terms, the first step here involves estimating the regression with variables in their levels. This is the long-run relationship of the variables. However, in order to test for cointegration between the dependent variable and any independent variable, the two variables must be integrated of the same order. For economic variables to have meaningful long-run relationships, it is necessary that such variables move together in the long run; that is, the variables must be cointegrated. A sufficient condition for this is that there should be linear

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<sup>1</sup> Following common practice (Hendry, 1989; Adam, 1992), the variables in the model were converted into logarithms before econometric techniques were applied to test for stationarity; order of integration and cointegration, and the ECM was specified and estimated. In the rest of the paper, therefore, the logs of variables appearing in upper case above appear in lower case.

combinations of these variables that are stationary<sup>2</sup>. Step one of the two-step technique tests for the stationarity of the residuals generated from the estimated long-run regression. If these residuals are stationary, the variables are cointegrated. Once the existence of a cointegrating relationship has been confirmed, the next step would be to generate an error correction model (ECM).

The interpretation and use of the results from the two-step technique are often confusing. What needs to be noted is that the ECM starts from the recognition that the variables in the model under investigation are non-stationary; in particular that they are integrated of the same order.<sup>3</sup> The stationarity of the residuals from step one of the technique means that the variables move together in the long run such that there exists a meaningful economic relationship among them. This relationship is summarised in the ECM with the error correction term capturing the long-run relationship between the variables in the model. It should be noted that the standard errors and therefore the t-statistics of the coefficients in the regression in step one of the technique are meaningless: we do not know the distribution of the parameters in that regression since the variables therein are non-stationary. As such, no logical inference can be drawn using these coefficients since we can not tell apriori about whether such coefficients are significant or not.

### Empirical Analysis

The major objective of this study is to establish whether financial reforms have led to changes in the factors that affect inflation in Zimbabwe. In this section the estimates based on the cointegration technique are discussed. The empirical analysis is based on the results obtained from the use of PCGIVE 8.0 an iterative econometric modelling system. In estimating the inflation function, dynamic structures are important and shed light on how equilibrium is attained. This is addressed through the two-stage error correction model as suggested by Hendry (1986), Granger (1986) and Engle and Granger (1987). The first stage concerns testing for the order of integration of all the lagged variables, that is, **cpi**, **m2**, **y**, **rus**, **r**, and **rw**, in the model. The budget deficit (**BD**) will be used in levels because there are also some negative figures in this series; and logs of negative figures do not make sense. Using the ADF test it was established that the variables were not stationary in levels while the first differences were. The hypothesis for a unit root in **cpi**, **m2**, **y**, **r**, **BD**, **rus**, and **rw** was strongly rejected meaning that all variables are integrated of the same order one [I (1)]. This means that the level terms had to be differenced once to induce stationarity.

From some experiments using the Zimbabwean dollar over South African Rand exchange rate, we found out that this rate was insignificant in explaining the inflation phenomenon in Zimbabwe. We also established that the M2 definition of money statistically performed better than the M1 and M3 definitions.

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<sup>2</sup> See Deadman et.al (1993)

<sup>3</sup> A variable is said to be integrated of order one if it requires to be differenced once to become stationary (Granger et.al, 1987).

The coefficients of the long run model are presented in table 1 and the results of the error correction model are presented in table 2. Only the coefficients of the long run model are presented because the long run model results do not make sense due to the presence of spurious relationships among variables.

**Table 1. The Long-run model coefficients Dependent variable is cpi**

Variable	Coefficient
Constant	15.644
<b>m2(-1)</b>	0.009
<b>y (-1)</b>	-0.072
<b>Eus (-1)</b>	0.865
<b>r(-1)</b>	1.079
<b>BD (-1)</b>	0.003
<b>rw (-1)</b>	0.003

The residuals from the above regression are stationary. This means that a cointegrating relationship exists among the variables that were included in this model. It is the existence of such a relationship that allows us to come up with an ECM. Again using the general-to-specific modeling strategy described above, the lag structure in the above results was found most appropriate after considering different formulations. The results of the short- run error correction model are summarized in table 2 below.

**Table 2: The short-run E.C.M. Model Results Dependent variable is  $\Delta$ CPI**

Variable	Coefficient	Std Error	t-statistic	Probability
Constant	20.101	24.693	0.814	0.4240
$\Delta$ <b>m2(-1)</b>	0.088	0.001	10.863	0.0001
$\Delta$ <b>y (-1)</b>	-0.051	0.003	-3.380	0.0073
$\Delta$ <b>eus(-1)</b>	0.364	0.912	2.728	0.0041
$\Delta$ <b>BD(-1)</b>	0.011	0.632	2.744	0.0531
$\Delta$ <b>r (-1)</b>	0.4015	0.233	3.718	0.0001
$\Delta$ <b>rw (-1)</b>	0.0058	0.011	0.536	0.5974
$\Delta$ <b>cpi<sub>t-1</sub>(-1)</b>	0.6354	0.010	2.998	0.0023
<b>res (-1)</b>	-0.8466	0.059	-4.642	0.0001

$R^2$  (adjusted) = 0.7365

F (6,23) = 1118.9 [0.0000]

DW = 2.08

RSS = 0.623897

The above results show that all the independent variables (with a lag of one quarter except the real wage and the constant are significant explanatory variables of the movement in the aggregate consumer price index (CPI)). The error correction term (**res (-1)**) is also significant at the 5 percent level. Thus, the general price level adjusts at the rate of 85 percent of the gap between its long-run level and the current level in each period. In other words the short-run changes in the price level have significant positive effects on CPI and that about 85 percent of the discrepancy between the actual and the long run, or equilibrium, value of CPI is eliminated or corrected each quarter.

An important thing to note from the results in Table 2 is the relative importance of the various coefficients in the model. About 64 percent of the previous period's inflation is transmitted into the current period's inflation. This can be interpreted as reflecting strong "backward-looking" expectations in the Zimbabwean economy. Thus, economic agents anticipate the future level of inflation to be close to what it was the last period. The Zimbabwean dollar over US dollar exchange rate also accounts for about 36 percent of every 1 percent change in aggregate **cpi**. The study also found out that about 40 percent of every one percent change in aggregate **cpi** is accounted for by the interest rate. Although **y** and **m2** are significant explanatory variables their elasticities as given by their coefficients are relatively very low (around 5 percent and 9 percent respectively). Another important thing to note is that although the **rw** variable has the correct sign it is insignificant. The **BD** is also significant at 10 percent level and this authenticates that budget deficits are inflationary.

Given the relative inadequacy of the data and the relatively small sample the results are quite satisfactory since from the results it is clear that the error correction equation fits the data very well as suggested by  $R^2$  adjusted for the degrees of freedom and the small residual sum of squares (RSS). The F test which is significant at both 1 percent and 5 percent levels shows that the model is of a good fit. These diagnostic tests also rejected the presence of serial autocorrelation in the data even if variables are lagged three times. Individually the lags of one were found significant at 5 percent level of significance. However, collectively the lags were found insignificant. We also tested for the stability of the model using the Chow test. This test gives information about the important attributes of a good model. The study, therefore, established that there was no parameter shift meaning also that there was no behavioral break in the period under study.

The error correction term, which has the correct negative sign, shows that in Zimbabwe there is elimination of the discrepancy between the long run and short-run inflation rates whenever equilibrium is disturbed in the short-run. This suggests that inflation do adjust towards its long run value. All in all given the limitations of secondary data and the use of interpolated output and real wage figures the error correction model performed well in an econometric sense.

### **Conclusion and Policy Implications**

This analysis of the determinants of the inflationary process has potentially important implications for economic management in Zimbabwe. This is a major issue in 2000 when Zimbabwe wants to reduce the inflation levels, which have adamantly remained high throughout the ESAP 1 and the Zimbabwe Programme of Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST)<sup>7</sup> eras. The reduction

of inflation, especially, during the Millennium Economic Recovery Program (MERP)<sup>8</sup> era would ensure a stable macroeconomic environment; and such an environment is conducive to foreign investors. From the results it is clearly necessary to go beyond a simple monetary account of the inflationary process in Zimbabwe, even if inflation will always have a monetary dimension.

From the results the following variables are important in explaining the inflation phenomenon in Zimbabwe: money supply growth, real output growth, exchange rate depreciation, budget deficit and nominal deposit rates. The following table, which is derived from the results, summarises the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables and also categorises the explanatory variables that were used in the estimation process.

**Table 3 Variable, sign of coefficient, and category.**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Sign of coefficient</b>	<b>Category</b>
Money supply	Positive	Monetary
Output growth	Negative	Structural
Exchange rate depreciation	Positive	Structural/Cost-push
Deposit rates	Positive	Monetary
Budget deficits	Positive	Structural
Real wages	Positive	Cost-push

Since only the real wages were insignificant in the ECM this means that monetary, cost-push and structural variables are all important in explaining the inflationary process in Zimbabwe. We can therefore safely say that financial reforms have changed the inflation phenomenon in Zimbabwe since we now have additional variables like budget deficit and interest rates being significant explanatory variables of the inflationary process. So we need a policy mix in Zimbabwe rather than only invoking monetary policy, which has failed to give the desired results.

Money supply growth whose elasticity is less than one just like all the other significant variables in this study should be closely monitored if inflation is to be reduced to the desired levels. Government budget deficit has been found significant in this study. This implies that if we want to reduce inflation by using tight monetary policy we also have to put in place fiscal policy aimed at reducing the magnitude of our fiscal deficit.

<sup>7</sup> The Zimbabwe Programme of Economic and Social Transformation was supposed to be implemented between 1995 and 2000. However, it failed to take off due to lack of support from the Bretton Woods institutions and other multilateral donors and financiers.

<sup>8</sup> MERP was introduced in the year 2000.

It is also important to note that for a given level of overall output production in the economy there is a desired level of money stock which is consistent with low and stable inflation conditions, the additional money created becomes inconsistent with economic activity and, therefore, becomes inflationary. It is therefore important for the policy makers to determine this level of money supply that is consistent with the current level of output production if our economy is to suppress the emergence of inflationary pressures.

The Z\$/US\$ exchange rate which was found to be significant, also, has important policy implications. The speed of adjustment of the exchange rate in the short-run towards its long-run equilibrium allows for some flexibility in the exchange rate policy. Devaluation of the exchange could be used as a tool to enhance competitiveness, and domestic monetary measures could be used to contain the short-run inflationary pressures that could result. In addition, the Lucas critique would argue that a policy of continuous devaluation would lead agents to adjust their behaviour to take account of the repeated devaluation, limiting the effectiveness of the policy.

The opposite policy of exchange rate appreciation to achieve inflation lower than in the USA could only be achieved at the cost of reduced short-run competitiveness for domestic producers. This would make the task of export diversification even more difficult.

Output should also be monitored closely if we are to successfully reduce the inflationary pressures. An increase in output (aggregate supply) without a corresponding increase in aggregate demand lowers the price and vice versa. For the economy to increase output it should create a conducive investment environment and a sound investment policy. With the introduction of ESAP the pricing system was decontrolled and firms can now charge prices that are consistent with the level of output. However, as a result of the monopolistic productive sector and the prevalence of drought episodes, output has remained very low and prices high.

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## JOURNEY TO WORK: MODAL SPLIT IN THE CITY OF GWERU, ZIMBABWE

By

Steve Jerie<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

*The thrust of urban planners today is to develop methods of travel for adaptation to their environments. This is meant to match the high population growth rates in developing countries. Transportation congestion is a problem faced many cities today. Routes and facilities tend to be overloaded, trips tend to be long and services provided for public transport become inconsistent and inconvenient. This study examines the factors that influence modes of travel used by the commuters in Gweru as a first step towards isolating the causes of transport problems. This way the needs of different socio-economic groups can be understood. An attempt is also made in this study to use simple travel models in determining modal split. These models are adapted in the context of the study area.*

### Introduction

One of the least understood phrases of traffic analysis is that of modal choice (Bruton, 1992; Lioukas, 1982). Most scholars have suggested that if the most efficient and economical balance between the public and private sectors of any transportation network is to be achieved, it is vital to understand the factors which motivate this choice. The journey between home and workplace represents a very important component of all travel in an urban area. In the earliest stages of economic development, home and workplace were often synonymous and a journey to work did not exist. However, with economic development, commuting distances began to increase.

The increase in commuting has been a result of large scale increase of commerce and industry and this has necessitated separation of workplaces and places of residence (Mbara, 1994; Monroe and Maziarz, 1985). This development has therefore involved workers in a certain amount of travel. Improvements in transportation technology have also facilitated the separation of workplace and place of residence. The improvements in transport have been witnessed in the greater mobility of workers today than in the past. A phenomenon known as 'the journey to work' has resulted from this mobility.

### The Concept of Modal Split

Modal choice incorporates the concept of modal split, which according to Bruton (1992) is the proportionate division of the total number of choices between different methods or modes of travel. It can be expressed numerically as a fraction, a ratio or as a percentage of the total number of trips. Modal choice is influenced by a number of variables that range from traffic engineering and landuse variables to the sociological and environmental factors. It is, however,

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important to isolate the most sensitive factors that influence modal choice and then incorporate them into a mathematical model. Many scholars have underlined the importance of time in modal choice (Lioukas, 1982; Bruton, 1992; Kunaka, 1996; Mutizwa- Mangiza, 1993). Transport costs also become important to the traveller when examined in the context of income. Accordingly, Mogridge (1989) notes that costs of running a car or expenditure on car purchase is determined by the level of each household's disposable income. Car ownership therefore becomes sensitive to income, price of fuel, degree of urbanization and the extent of the road network.

In the European suburbs of Harare in the 1970s, low densities of population were a notable feature. This meant that the motorcar was the commonest form of travel to work as no public transport could be provided for such low densities. European incomes outside the primary sector were on average six times higher than those of Africans. Europeans could therefore afford to purchase cars for use in the journey to work. In Zimbabwe, the period after 1980 saw a marked change in modal choice. Following the legalisation of emergency taxi use in November 1982, modal choice by households based on all trips, was wider. Modal choice in Harare, for example could be made from the Zimbabwe United Passenger Company (ZUPCO) buses, emergency taxis, metered taxis, motor cycles and bicycles (Maunder and Jobbins, 1988).

It is widely acknowledged by scholars that rapid rates of urbanization put a strain on transport services. In Zimbabwe the rapid growth of urban settlements has not been matched by improvements in the provision of adequate transport services. The low standards of living of the majority of people have meant that most people cannot afford to have private cars. Most people therefore depend on public transport when commuting between places. The public transport itself is characterised by inefficiency, poor maintenance, discomfort and unaffordability especially to the poor.

Bruton (1992) noted that of the factors influencing modal choice, most cannot be quantified accurately and reliably. Such factors include comfort and convenience. The individual traveller only considers the potential substitution between alternative modes in his relevant choice if his usual choice becomes less attractive in terms of relevant characteristics of the alternative.

### **Data Collection and Design of Survey**

In this study 322 questionnaires were administered to households in Gweru chosen using a random number table on a grid of 1:5000 survey maps. These were directed at people who travel to work at any time of the day. Sampling was thus directed at both captive public transport users who do not have access to a car for the particular trip under study and choice transport users who are in a position to choose whether to use a car or public transport for a particular journey. The questionnaire was designed to collect information on personal characteristics (i.e. socio – economic and demographic structure), modes of transport used, workplaces, routes used to workplaces, travel times, travel costs and the inconvenience factors related to commuting. Traffic censuses were also undertaken. Secondary data sources included bus timetables and transport related publications.

### Modes of Transport Used

Travel patterns of Gweru residents can be depicted in two ways. Firstly, this is on the basis of share by each mode to 14 workplaces (Table 1). Modes are also broken down on the basis of private and public transport in the collated work places as shown in Table 2. A large split of the travellers (45.3%) use public transport in the form of commuter omnibuses, 17% use buses whereas 37.3% use private transport (motor vehicles, cycles or foot).

A number of different forms of transport are used in Gweru to ferry commuters from one place another. In the journey to work, the common types used include conventional buses, bicycles, private cars and some foot to work. Commuter omnibuses dominate public transport because of their dominance in numbers. However, a sizeable number prefer conventional buses because of their lower cost. The bus companies providing public transport in Gweru include Musengi, Murwisi, T and H, Tombs, Zijena and the Zimbabwe United Passenger Company (ZUPCO).

**Table 1: Modal Split on Routes To Fourteen Workplaces**

Work Places	No.	%	Car	Commuter	Bus	Foot	Cycle
CBD	133	41.3	28	69	26	7	3
Heavy Industrial Sites	76	23.6	11	30	15	13	7
Light Industrial Sites	20	6.2	6	8	2	2	1
Hospital	16	5	3	7	-	5	1
Low Density Areas	12	3.7	4	6	1	1	-
High Density Areas	21	6.5	5	8	4	2	2
Midlands State University	12	3.7	4	6	1	1	-
Thornhill Air Base	5	1.6	2	2	2	-	-
Zimbabwe Military Academy	3	0.9	2	1	2	-	-
Guinea Fowl	2	0.6	1	1	1	-	-
Portland Cement	4	1.2	2	-	-	-	-
All Colleges	4	1.2	2	2	2	-	-
National Railways	5	1.6	2	2	1	-	-
Outside Gweru	9	2.8	3	4	2	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>14</b>

**Table 2: Collated Modal Choice of All Respondents**

<b>Work Places</b>	<b>Car %</b>	<b>Commuter %</b>	<b>Bus %</b>	<b>Foot %</b>	<b>Cycle %</b>
<b>CBD</b>	37.3	47.3	46.4	22.6	21.4
<b>Industrial Areas</b>	22.7	26.0	30.4	48.4	57.1
<b>Residential Areas</b>	12.0	9.6	8.9	9.7	14.3
<b>University and Colleges</b>	5.3	5.5	5.4	3.2	0
<b>Other Areas</b>	22.7	11.6	8.9	16.1	1.0

Commuter omnibuses dominate public transport as a mode of travel used especially by commuters heading for the CBD and the industrial areas. Most commuters also use the conventional buses to travel to work, but the problem with these is that they are too few to accommodate all the workers. Table 3 shows the bus companies that provide public transport in Gweru.

**Table 3: Bus Companies Providing Public Transport Services in Gweru**

<b>Bus Company</b>	<b>Fleet Size</b>
Murwisi	1
Musengi	3
T and H	6
Tombs	4
Zijena	2
ZUPCO	2

**Source: Ministry of Transport and Research Findings (2004)**

A total of 18 buses service the whole of Gweru urban. This is a small number when the commuting population of the city is taken into consideration. Out of the 18 buses only one ZUPCO bus is providing a very erratic service on the Senga- MSU route, but the situation is better on the Mkoba route, which is serviced by more ZUPCO buses.

### Time Related Characteristics as Factors in Modal Split

In modern modal split models relative travel times between competing modes influence modal choice. The measure of travel ratio is expressed as a ratio of travel time to work by public transport divided by the door-to-door travel time by private car. The formula used for calculating the travel time ratio is:

$$\text{Travel Time Ratio (TTR)} = (x_1+x_2+x_3+x_4+x_5)/(x_6+x_7+x_8)$$

Where  $X_1$  = time spent in public transport vehicle

$X_2$  = time spent changing between public transport vehicles

$X_3$  = time spent waiting for public transport

$X_4$  = time spent to public transport at origin

$X_5$  = time spent walking from public transport vehicle at destination

$X_6$  = time spent driving car

$X_7$  = time spent parking vehicle at destination

$X_8$  = time spent walking from parked car at destination

There is a difference between commuter omnibus users and conventional bus users in terms of travel times, travel time ratios and percentages of total travellers using a particular mode on a route. An example is the case of Mkoba peak hour travellers who work in the city centre. The bus user has a total travel time of 36 minutes to the Midlands State University. The travel time for a kombi on the same route is 15 minutes and the car user takes just 8 minutes. The travel time ratios and travel times are illustrated in Table 4.

**Table 4: Travel Times and Travel Time Ratios on the Mkoba-City-MSU Route**

	<b>Bus</b>	<b>Commuter Omnibus</b>	<b>Private Car</b>
<b>Travel Time in minutes</b>	36	15	8
<b>Travel Time Ratio</b>	4.5	1.9	-
<b>Percentage using mode</b>	12	59	29

The modes associated with a shorter travel time (cars and commuter omnibuses) tend to be favoured over those with longer travel times.

Though the travel time provides a useful measure of the impact of time on modal choice, it may be difficult at times to justify it on a separate intuitive basis. This can be illustrated using 3 commuter users from South Downs to the Midlands State University (Table 5).

**Table 5: Relative Travel Time Ratios and Travel Time Differences of Three Commuters on the South Downs – City – MSU Route**

	<b>Respondent 182 (A)</b>	<b>Respondent 30(B)</b>	<b>Respondent 86 (C)</b>
Time by Kombi(mins)	36	38	20
Time by Private Car (mins)	18	30	10
Travel Time Ratio	2	1.3	2
Travel Time Difference (mins)	18	8	10

From the table, if it is the ratio of travel time that is important for people to decide what to do, then the car is almost equally preferable for individuals A and C, but less preferable for B, other things being equal. When travel time differences are considered to be important, the car is almost equally preferable for B and C, but more preferable for A. However, despite the limitations which may be imposed by the travel time ratio, it can always be a useful statistic in predicting travel behaviour.

### **Economic Status of the Traveller as a Factor in Modal Choice**

The economics of any journey is a prime consideration to the Gweru commuter. The measure used to explain and predict the impact of travel cost on modal choice is that of relative travel cost ratio. This measure is expressed as the out of pocket travel cost by public transport divided by the out -of -pocket cost by car;

$$\text{Travel Cost Ratio (TCR)} = X_9 / (X_{10} + X_{11} + 0.5X_{12}) / X_{13}$$

Where:

$X_9$  = fare by public transport

$X_{10}$  = cost of petrol

$X_{11}$  = cost of oil

$X_{12}$  = cost of parking

$X_{13}$  = average car occupancy

Other costs of running a vehicle such as road tax and insurance are ignored since most drivers do not consider these when making a particular journey. In the case of Gweru average travel cost ratios were computed for the most common journeys to work i.e. the journey to work in the C.B.D. and the journey to work in another suburb/industry via the C. B. D. The results of these computations are shown in Tables 6 and 7.

**Table 6 Travel Cost Ratios on the Suburb – City Route**

<b>Mode of Transport</b>	<b>Bus</b>	<b>Kombi</b>	<b>Private Car</b>
Travel Cost Z\$	800	1200	6500
Travel Cost Ratio	0.12	0.19	-
Percentage Using Mode	23	44	33

**Table 7: Travel Cost Ratios on the Suburb-City-Suburb Trip**

<b>Mode of Transport</b>	<b>Bus</b>	<b>Kombi</b>	<b>Private Car</b>
Travel Cost Z\$	1000	2400	10 000
Travel Cost Ratio	0.1	0.24	-
Percentage Using Mode	47	36	17

The travel costs by car are generally higher than those of public transport as the ratios are for a greater part less than one. When travel cost ratio decreases it means traveling costs by car may be higher hence an increasing proportion turn to public transport. A typical example is whereby the routes which had 50% (e.g. the Mkoba – City route) of commuters turning to public transport were the ones which had the value per route whilst the South Downs – City Route had the lowest percentage (12.5%) of commuters turning to public transport. Travel costs by car to South Downs were thus deemed not too high and less commuters turned to public transport.

Travel costs in Gweru influence the route taken to work. Longer routes are more expensive as it takes more time to reach the intended destinations. However, it has been argued by Konafani (1983) that if the individual is faced by a number of alternative routes for a journey and if these routes are identical in every respect except travel time, then it is safe to assume that the individual will choose the one with the shortest travel time and a deterministic choice of mode is made. In the case of Gweru, if the traveller's response to differences in travel costs is related to his/ her income then route use can be predicted as follows:

$$V_i = -0.2t_i = 1.0c_i$$

Where

B

$v_i$  = Choice of function  
 $t_i$  = Travel time in hours  
 $c_i$  = Travel cost  
B = annual income in thousand dollars

The rate of substitution between cost and time is:

$$\frac{dc}{dt} = -0.2 B$$

The marginal rate of substitution between cost and time is the rate at which an individual is willing to exchange money for time. This marginal cost is proportional to income. Value of time per hour is 20% annual income in thousands of dollars. A person with an income of \$20 000 000 annually values time at \$4 000 per hour and one earning \$50 000 000 values time at \$10 000 per hour. An individual is therefore bound to choose the route, which bears the least cost in travel.

### **Socio- Economic Factors Influencing Modal Choice**

The apparent influence of travel costs of public transport for the work trip combined with the relationship between income and car ownership, can indicate that the economic class of the traveller may influence modal choice.

The choice between modes can often be characterized as a trade off between expensive, but less convenient means and inexpensive, but less convenient means. In Gweru, 23.9% own cars and this is contrasted with 67.7% who use cars to work. It was also established that (setting aside breakdowns and fuel shortages) all car owners used their cars in the journey to work. Table 8 shows the modal split among the non -car owners.

**Table 8 Modes of Transport used by Non Car Owners (September- October 2004)**

<b>Monthly Income Z\$</b>	<b>Car %</b>	<b>Bus %</b>	<b>Commuter %</b>
500 000 and less	1.1	2.3	2.6
501 000 – 1000 000	5.3	1.8	4.0
1001 000 – 1500000	3.4	4.3	8.8
1501000 – 2000000	4.7	7.8	16.5
2001000 and above	2.0	8.0	27.4
Total	16.5	24.2	59.3

The general picture is that there are more commuter users per income group as the income levels increase. For example there are 8.8% commuter users and 4.3% bus users in the \$1 001 000 - \$ 1 500 000 category. These proportions increase to 16.5 and 7.8% in the \$1 501 000- \$2 000 000 categories respectively.

### **Inconvenience Factors Related To Public Transport**

The inconvenience of public transport usage both from the service and vehicle viewpoints has been widely considered by many as a contributory factor in the declining preference of public transport usage. Analysis of the inconvenience factors was based on the captive audience

for public transport. This group, being forced to use public transport daily would be more critical and would have first hand, long term assessment of the inconvenience of public transport in Gweru.

The inconvenience factors included service level factors, such as waiting times at bus stops, distance of bus stop relative to the residence, effect of transfer during work trip and congestion on roads leading to workplace. Results indicated the waiting times for the bus and pick up for the commuter being the most inconvenient factors (Table 9).

**Table 9: Inconvenience Factors Related To Public Transport ( % Commuters)**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Conventional Bus</b>	<b>Commuter Omnibus</b>	<b>Total Commuters</b>
Long waiting times	30	16	46
Long in-vehicle time	20	12	32
Pick-up point too far	4	10	14
Involves transfer	4	4	8

For the bus users, waiting times were too long and this affected people in the lower income groups who deemed using the bus as a saving over the more costly commuter. In-vehicle time for the bus users also ranked second and constituted a very large proportion of the time for the whole journey. As an inconvenience factor, bus users ranked transfer time third just as did commuter users. The results, however, varied from CBD and other non-CBD workers since CBD trips do not generally involve transfer.

As far as the commuter users were concerned the greatest inconvenience involved the longer distances to the main pick up points in the suburbs or the city. This complaint was registered mainly by the residents of Mkoba suburb which houses the majority of Gweru's working population.

The difference in emphasis placed on the length of wait at the commuter pick up point by employees from the CBD and the industrial areas near Mkoba high density area can possibly be accounted for by considering the psychological effect of the waiting times. The CBD oriented trips are shorter than non-CBD trips and an equal waiting time for both journeys makes a greater psychological impact on those persons making the shorter trip. It becomes apparent to them that the waiting time is a large proportion of their travel time. In Gweru, the combined waiting and walking time took up to 40% of the total time of trips to the CBD and 25% of the time to the industrial areas.

Survey results indicated that that 46% of the car users preferred to use private transport because the journey by public transport involved longer waiting time. Travel time data analysis

indicated that work trips were involving longer waiting times for buses than for commuter omnibuses. The average value of waiting time difference between buses and commuters was at least 31 minutes even for those who knew bus time tables well. From the results relating to the preference of the use of the car for the work trip, travelling time ranked second indicating its relative importance. Travel times by car were perceived to be shorter than for commuters and the buses. However, it would be doubtful that if an actual time difference perceived would have made as great an impact on the traveller's modal choice if a measure competitive time was available to all. A number of persons who had been using cars for the journey to work over a long time would not have any real measure of the public transport travel time and the psychological impression of a slower, less efficient public transport is held by many. This may be a reason for the high rating given to this particular factor.

When asked why car owners would prefer not to use the car in the journey to work, the factor given the highest rating of 36% was that of increasing running costs (fuel, oil, parts etc). This reflects the current opinion of motoring conditions in Zimbabwe's urban areas. Lack of suitable parking has gained prominence as a factor (20%) especially among CBD workers.

### **Conclusion**

Modal choice in Gweru is influenced by a number of factors including the characteristics of the traveller (incomes and car ownership) characteristics of the transportation system, which include travel time ratios, travel costs and behavioural factors ie human perception about particular modes of travel. Under habitat conditions typified by the journeys to and from work, the individual Gweru traveller only considers potential substitution between alternative modes in his/ her usual choice becomes less attractive in terms of the relevant characteristics of the alternative than it was previously. The potential substitution is related to the objective of understanding the relationship between cost and time so as to directly value savings in travel time.

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## DETERMINANTS OF LOW BIRTH WEIGHT: A STUDY OF BIRTHS IN THE MIDLANDS PROVINCE OF ZIMBABWE

By

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### Abstract

*The study examined relationships between maternal risk factors and incidence of low birth weight using maternity registers for two hospitals in the Midlands Province in Zimbabwe over a four-year period. Only full term births were included in the analysis. A low birth weight incidence rate of (9.8%) was found among the 7 251 index births included in the study. Logistic regression analysis showed that extremes in maternal age (too young or too old), high parity and rural residence were positively associated with low birth weight. Low birth weight incidence rate varied only marginally over the four-year period.*

### Introduction

Birth weight is a measure of an infant's maturity and is used as a measure of an infant's relative probability of survival (Hale 1990). WHO regards an infant whose birth weight is less than 2.5kg as a high-risk infant. In developing countries 17% of all births have low birth weight (Ewbank and Gribble 1993:124). Zimbabwe has a low birth weight incidence rate of 12% and an infant mortality rate of 53 per 1000 (CSO 1995:219). Low birth weight accounts for half the number of deaths in the perinatal period (Ministry of Health 1995).

As a predictor of an infant's health status, birth weight has the advantage that it is a summary indicator of the aggregate effect of numerous socio-demographic risk factors for infant survival (Eberstein and Parker 1984; Venkatacharya and Teklu 1986; Kalan 1993). Maternal demographic characteristics in association with other social characteristics result in variation in birth weight patterns between social groups (Frenzen and Hogan 1982; Curtis et al. 1993).

In Zimbabwe successive Demographic and Health Surveys have shown that high-risk fertility behaviour is prevalent (CSO 1995). High-risk fertility behaviour is associated with poor pregnancy outcomes and high levels of infant and child morbidity and mortality. Identification of maternal risk factors associated with low birth weight is essential for planning purposes so that appropriate intervention measures can be implemented. This study examined variation in infant birth weight by maternal age, parity, infant's sex, year of birth, residence and hospital type proxying for socioeconomic status.

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### **Methodology**

The baseline statistics for this study were compiled from maternity registers of two hospitals in the Midlands Province, namely, Gokwe District Hospital and Birchneough Hospital in Gweru. Gokwe District Hospital services surrounding rural areas the bulk of whose population derives a livelihood from agricultural activities. The maternity registrants are generally not covered by health insurance being mainly from low-income groups. By contrast, Birchneough Hospital services patients covered by health insurance with booking done through a doctor who subsequently supervises the birth.

The sample was made up of a total of 7 251 postpartum women drawn from maternity registers at Gokwe and Birchneough Hospitals for the years 1991 to 1994. Gokwe Hospital was selected because with an incidence rate of 11%, low birth weight in the district is a chronic problem (Ministry of Health 1995; CSO 1995). Birchneough Hospital was chosen for its urban location in order to compare pregnancy outcomes of women serviced by different health delivery services. The rationale for choosing the time reference period was based on the premise that the years selected covered an eventful period in the country. There was limited economic growth due to the introduction of ESAP (October 1990) and the devastating 1991/1992 drought. It was against this background that the impact of period effects on infants' birth weight was investigated.

The women's ages ranged from 13 to 58 years. Parities ranged from 0 to 14. To test digit preference in age reporting Whipple's Index was used. Employing the assumption of rectangularity in a 5-year age range the method yielded an index of 99.99. Since an index of 100 shows no preference for digits 0 and 5, the sample's age distribution showed no digit preference for 0 and 5 (Shryock and Siegel 1976). To be included in the sample, a woman had to meet the following criteria: (1) she must have had a singleton full term live birth for which a gestation period, weight and infant's sex was recorded and (2) a delivery case record showing maternal parity, age and usual place of residence at the birth of the index child. Using infants' birth weights a dichotomous dependent variable was created. Babies who weighed below 2 500 grams were classified as being of low birth weight while those who weighed 2 500 grams or more were classified as having normal birth weight.

The independent variables that were analyzed as predictors of infant birth weight were maternal age, parity, residence, infant's sex, year of birth and hospital type proxying for socioeconomic status. Five maternal age categories were used namely <20, 20-24, 25-29, 30-34 and 35+. Parity was divided into 4 categories: 1, 2-3 and 4-5 and 6+. Data used in the study covered a four year period. All predictor variables were entered in categorical form.

### **Analysis**

Logistic regression analysis was used. The analysis makes use of the Wald statistic and the odds ratio. High figures for the Wald statistic indicate the importance of the independent variable in explaining variation in the dependent variable. The odds ratios shown in the tables indicate the change in the odds of an infant being born with a low birth weight due to

membership in a particular demographic subgroup compared to a reference group. An odds ratio of 1.0 indicates that the probability of low birth weight is higher for infants born to mothers in that particular demographic subgroup compared to the reference group. An odds ratio less than 1.0 indicates a lower rate of low birth weight among infants born to women in that particular subgroup relative to women in the reference group in the sample. The analysis was based on 2 models.

### Model 1: Main Effects

All predictor variables were entered in the model except the period variable. In other words, the model controls for maternal age, parity, residence, socioeconomic status and infant's sex but does not control for period effects.

### Model 2: Period Effects

In Addition to variables entered in Model 1, the period variable was entered in the model in order to control for period effects. If coefficients do not vary between Models 1 and 2, it would suggest that irrespective of year maternal characteristics like age group, parity, residence and socioeconomic status are associated with infant's low birth weight. If, however, there are no noticeable differences between the coefficients, then the effect of these variables is confounded by period effects. Larger coefficients in Model 2 would suggest that the effect of the predictor variables on birth weight is overstated when period effects are not controlled for (Gribble 1993).

## Results and Discussion

### Model 1: Logistic Regression Coefficients and Odds Ratios of Low Birth Weight (Main Effects)

Variable	B	S.E	WALD	df	Sig	Odds Ratio
<b>Age</b>			83.0944	4	.0000	
<b>Age &lt;20</b>	.170	.1424	18.7662	1	.0000	1.8533
<b>Age 20-24</b>	-.0460	.1339	.1181	1	.7311	.9550
<b>Age 30-34</b>	-.2394	.1775	1.8200	1	.1773	.7871
<b>Age 35+</b>	.8349	.1721	23.5342	1	.0000	2.3045
<b>Parity</b>			26.7888	1	.0000	
<b>Parity 1</b>	.601	.1050	11.7724	1	.0006	1.4335
<b>Parity 4-5</b>	-.3070	.1517	4.1181	1	.0424	.7350
<b>Parity 6+</b>	.2792	.1776	2.4719	1	.1159	1.3231
<b>Hospital(Gokwe)</b>	.4751	.1227	15.0191	1	.0001	1.6087
<b>Sex (female)</b>	.2757	.0751	13.4809	1	.0002	1.3175
<b>Constant</b>	-2.9929	.1497	399.5917	1	.0000	

Source: Logistic Regression Output

With a Wald statistic of 83.09 maternal age is the most important predictor of low birth weight. The relationship between age of mother and low birth weight was found to be curvilinear. Babies born to mothers aged 35 years and older were 1.3 times more likely to have low birth weight compared to babies born to women aged 25-29 years (reference group). The odds of having low birth weight for babies born to teenage mothers were 85% greater than those for babies born to mothers aged 25-29. By contrast the odds of low birth weight for babies born to women aged 20-24 and 30-34 are not statistically significant indicating no difference in the likelihood of low birth weight between each of the two groups on the one hand and the reference group on the other

Parity with a Wald statistic of 26.78 was also found to be an important predictor of low birth weight. The odds of low birth weight were high among first and higher order births (6 children and above). First births were 43% more likely to have low birth weight than the reference group (parity 2-3). The association between sex and the odds of low birth weight was positive and significant at 1% level. Female babies were 32% more likely to have low birth weight relative to male babies. The relationship between hospital type and the odds of low birth weight was also positive and significant at 1%. An odds ratio of 1.61 means that a baby born at Gokwe Hospital was 61% more likely to have low birth weight relative to a baby born at Birchneough Hospital.

### Model 2: Logistic Regression Coefficients and Odds of Low Birth Weight (Controlling for Period Effects)

Variable	B	S.E.	WALD	df	Sig	Odds Ratio
Age			82.9882	4	.0000	
Age <20	.6320	.1422	19.7526	1	.0000	1.8814
Age 20-24	-.0390	.1340	.0847	1	.7710	.9617
Age 30-34	-.2396	.1777	1.8190	1	.1774	.7869
Age 35+	.8226	.1724	22.7594	1	.0000	2.2765
Parity			27.8423	1	.0000	
Parity1	.3729	.1049	12.6369	1	.0004	1.4519
Parity 4-5	-.2722	.1533	3.1520	1	.0758	.7617
Parity 6+	.3372	.1800	3.5110	1	.0610	1.4010
Hospital(Gokwe)	.5151	.1242	17.2142	1	.0000	1.6739
Sex (female)	.2782	.0751	13.7018	1	.0002	1.3207
Year			5.3892	1	.1459	
1991	.1109	.1082	1.0551	1	.3055	1.1173
1992	.2142	.0976	4.8189	1	.0281	1.2389
1993	.0292	.1127	.0673	1	.7954	1.0296
Constant	-3.1464	.1689	346.857	1	.0000	

### Comparison of Model 1 and Model 2

	MODEL 1	df	MODEL 2	df
<b>-2 Log likelihood</b>	4946.109*	7241	4940.744*	7238
<b>Model Chi-square</b>	245.681*	9	251.046*	12
<b>Improvement</b>	245.681*	9	251.046*	12

\* significant at less than 1%

**Source: Logistic Regression Output**

After adding the period variable, only the parameter estimate for 1992 was found to be statistically significant from zero ( $p < .05$ ). In addition, the relationship between higher parity (6 children and above) was found to be statistically significant at 10% whereas in model.1 the relationship was not significant. Otherwise the model remained unchanged in terms of statistical significance of the change in the log likelihood ratio, the statistical significance of the parameter estimates and the direction of the effects. This suggests that maternal age; parity, residence and socioeconomic status have an effect on infant's birth weight whether or not period effects are controlled for. The years 1991 and 1992 only marginally raised the odds of low birth weight compared to 1994.

### Conclusion

The number of variables that affect low birth weight included in this study is not exhaustive. Most of the variables were used as proxies for biodemographic, socioeconomic and environmental factors that affect birth weight. The study found that of the 7 251 index births, 9.8% had birth weight below 2500 grams. The low birth weight rate would have been higher if the study had included preterm births. The CSO (1995) gives the national low birth weight incidence rate of 12.1%. Because of the causal link between birth weight and infant mortality such a high incidence of low birth weight is a cause for concern. Many environmentally and socially based determinants of low birth weight can be mediated through characteristics of the mother before or during pregnancy by systematically and selectively working on the chain of events from risk to outcome (Ministry of Health 1995). Women must be given alternatives to child bearing through education, employment, social and economic empowerment. Information contained in hospital maternity records showed that these records are a prolific source of demographic data with immense analytical potential. But currently in Zimbabwe such records do not contain information on maternal attributes such as religion, education level, employment status and income, which could have increased the number of variables to be analyzed.

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## THE DYNAMICS OF AFRICAN LITERATURE AND ITS CRITICISM: PERSPECTIVES FROM ZIMBABWE

By

Wiseman Magwa<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

*This paper argues that Africans should view their literature as an autonomous entity separate from all other literatures of the world. The author argues for a perspective of literature and its criticism that is African in nature. The article discusses how African literature both oral and written has over the years received negative criticism from Euro-centric literary critics. Western critics, it is further argued, habitually view African literary works using European eyes to the extent that some even consider African literature as an overseas department of European literature (Palmer, 1979; Povey, 1972, 1971). Charges against African literature range from technical and thematic inadequacies as if African literary works have been written to be consumed by natives of Europe. Regrettably, some Africans, have unwittingly accepted these criticisms and adopted the use of foreign theoretical tools to understand and analyse literature found on the African continent. The paper concludes by discouraging African scholars from gazing westwards for signals of approval that their statements and views about literature conform to the canons of European literature. Africans should establish their own tools of analysing literature that are relevant and appropriate to needs and interests of the African people.*

### Introduction

Literature is not only a question of the primary texts of study, specific novels, poems, dramas and essays but it is also the criticism that goes with it. Criticism of literature has existed almost as long as the word literature itself, but despite this seemingly long historical background, critics fail to reach a consensus on what is good literature and the proper procedures of analysing it (Dutton, 1984). This is because any attempt to analyse and criticise a piece of literary art carries with it value judgements. The whole body of critical appreciation, interpretations, theories, and commentaries often carries within itself “an entire set of ideological assumptions about society and relations between human beings (Ngugi, 1997:23)”

The varied values, range from those of Africans, Europeans, Indians, Asians, and many other races of the world. Theories of literature and criticism are therefore not neutral entities, because literature is about the effect of wealth, power and values on the quality of human lives and relations.

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At present, there are many theories of analysing literature that have been brought to us by scholars from all over the world. These are among others; Formalism, Structuralism, Psychoanalysis, Feminism, Marxism and modernism just to mention a few. However, it is sad to note that of all these theories of understanding and analysing literature, none is African. As a result, most of these theories end up being irrelevant to the needs of the African literary critic, because the founding critics had a worldview that had Europe at the centre.

### **The Euro-centric Literary Base**

Systematic studies of literature in Europe began with the writings of Plato (427 - 348 BC), Aristotle (394 -322 BC) and Horace (65 - 8 BC). These are the founders of classical literary criticism in Europe. According to Plato, the great philosopher, everything that existed on this planet was an imperfect copy of the ideal object. Literature was therefore, a third hand of distortions of truth and valueless was indeed potentially misleading. As a philosopher, Plato was mainly interested in the content of literature and its effects on the audience. His approach to literature was strictly authoritarian, thus any forms of literature that undermined the state were not accepted. Emphasis was on the content of literature without regard to its form and technical qualities (Dorsh, 1965). Aristotle wrote the most influential book on literary criticism, called *Poetics*, and his literary approach was rather different from that of Plato in that he put emphasis on form as opposed to content. He argued that literature should be considered in terms of the form in which it is embodied. Dutton (1984), asserts that the Italian poet, Horace (65-8 BC), like Aristotle also valued form at the expense of content. Horace outlined elements that constitute the form of literature as plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle and song. Of these, plot was singled out as the most important.

Analysis of literature in Europe continued to be carried out by people like Philip Sidney (1554 - 1586), John Dryden (1631 - 1700), Alexander Pope (1688 - 1744), Joseph Addison (1672 - 1719), Samuel Johnson (1709 - 1784), Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772 - 1834), Mathew Arnold (1822 - 1888), and T. S. Eliot (1888 - 1965). However, towards the twentieth century, it became rather difficult to write a historical outline of literary criticism as an account of individual contributions. It became almost unacceptable to single out individuals as representative of particular approaches in analysing literature (Dutton, 1984). The adoption of literary criticism as a university subject in Europe led to an increase in critical activity and marked diversity of approaches in the field of literature. Modern criticism of literature had theories that represented schools of thought such as formalism, structuralism, psychoanalysis and Marxism just to mention a few.

### **The denigration of African literature by Euro-centric literary critics**

Because of the above-mentioned historic tradition of literary criticism, European scholars and some of their African disciples continued to view African literature using European viewpoints. Euro-centric literary critics always view African literature as an appendage of European literature ( Amuta, 1989 ) The African novel for example, is said to be thin in its plot, poor in characterisation, poor in the handling of time and unrealistic in dialogue. There are many other unfounded allegations against works of art written by Africans. Novels and plays by

African writers, for example, are often being faulted for being too short and being too didactic as if African literature is intended to be a replica of European literature ( Ngugi, 1997 ).

Colonialist criticism of literature was always based on the colonial ideology, which was characterised by supremacist arrogance predicated on racial prejudice (Amuta, 1989). The African who wrote in English was seen as a European brother but indeed a “junior brother” (Achebe, 1975: 3). Whatever the African wrote was considered to be a result of the influence they got from their European masters of the likes of Shakespeare. European critics of African literature conceive African cultures as static aspects of a society’s material and spiritual achievement and characteristics at a particular stage in the process of social development. Thus conceived, the physical symbols of culture are seen exclusively in terms of museum pieces, archival remains and survivals of animistic social existence to be recovered in long abandoned caves and the ruins of great walls.

Euro-centric critics do not concede the autonomy of African literature. They do not grant it the elementary right to have its own rules and standards but insist rather on viewing it as an overseas department of European literature. Roscoe (1971) bluntly comments on African literature saying that if an African writes in English, his work must be considered as belonging to English literature as a whole and can be scrutinised accordingly. Such type of criticism refuses to draw a distinction between European literature and non – European literature in order to justify the application of European literary standards on African works written in the English language.

Some African literary critics, such as Eustace Palmer, due to lack of a theory of their own have blindly grabbed European tools of analysis and started using them on African literary works. These tools of analysing literature have in most cases been applied indiscriminately to works of literature written by African authors. This led Africans themselves to denigrate works by fellow Africans on the grounds that those works failed to fit nicely into European literary sign- posts. African literature as a result continues to receive a negative image from both European and African literary critics and this will continue for a very long period of time. Amuta (1989) says some critics got so obsessed with colonial education and ended up believing that, “the African novel grew out of the Western novel and writers like Achebe, Laye and Ekwensi were much more influenced by Conrad, Hardy, Dickens, Kafka and George Elliot than by the African oral tale” (Palmer, 1979:5) It becomes very clear that no objective evaluation of African writers and their works is to be arrived at by critics whose cultural biases and aesthetic values are motivated from outside. Eurocentric critics usually seek for ancestry, equivalents and precedents of stylistic trends in African literature in the Euro–American literary tradition, thus it becomes easy to see African works as deriving from British and American literature.

### **Towards a theory of African aesthetics**

It is evident from the foregoing discussion that Africans, for a very long time have been using European literary tools to analyse their literature. However, it is sad to note that most of these tools of analysis seem to be irrelevant and inappropriate to African literature. Freud’s theory for instance says literature should put emphasis on sex to reveal the Oedipus and the Electra complexes (i.e. the desire by men to have sex with their daughters and the desire by women

to have sex with their sons respectively). One wonders whether this is the general feeling among Africans. The question is: Is it true that African men are obsessed with this desire to have sex with their mothers or daughters? If the answer is no, then one wonders how this theory could be an appropriate tool to analyse and understand African literature. It follows therefore that European tools of literary criticism cannot adequately explain African literature hence, there is need for Africans to have their own ways of interpreting their world.

African literary critics should stop looking for foreign literary patterns in works of literature written by African authors. Critics from the continent should investigate and formulate critical canons and procedures that are adequate for analysing African experiences. The literary culture of African people must be decolonised and liberated. Liberation in this sense means ending all foreign domination and a total rejection of foreign literary tools on native literature.

The approach being advocated for is Afrocentrism that is simply defined as an effort by African people to be re-located historically, economically, socially, politically and philosophically. This approach was popularised by Molefi Kete Asante (1991) who argues that Afro-centrism seeks to re-locate the African person as an agent in human history in an effort to eliminate the illusion of the fringes. The approach intends to destroy the notion that Africans are objects in the 'western project of domination'. The central concern is to advance the position of African people in the world by affirming their identity and contributions and by unmasking the biases and limitations of Western culture. The goal is not to replace white history with black history or white mathematics with black mathematics, but rather to promote a more plausible view of the arts, humanities, social sciences and physical sciences. These should be seen not as products of white culture only but of human culture in plural form.

An Afro-centric approach calls for a much more inclusive valuation of human diversity, rejecting the exclusive, imperialistic and dehumanising aspects of Euro-centric claims to universalism in cultural and intellectual life. Africans in this approach would want to re-establish Africa and its descendants as centres of value, without in any way demeaning other people and their historic contribution to world civilisation. Placing Africa at the centre of a people's worldview does not mean isolation since "culture contact is the oxygen of any civilisation" (Ngugi, 1997:23). Civilisations that withdraw into themselves end up being suffocated in their self-enclosure. The literature of other peoples is therefore important in helping Africans to understand other peoples and their cultures and also in understanding themselves.

Chinweizu et al (1980) assert that African literature must be viewed as an autonomous entity, separate from all other literatures. The constituency of African literature is very different from that of the Europeans and people should stop judging African literature using European standards. If Africans use European standards to analyse their literature, then they are indeed accepting the fallacy that African literature is an appendage of European literature and that African culture is the same as that of Europeans. Genuine African literature should be defined as literature written for an African audience, by an African preferably using an African language. Zimbabwean literature for example would be that literature produced mostly in the indigenous languages of all the ethnic groups that make up Zimbabwe. These works

can either be oral or written. For a literary work to qualify as African literature, the following considerations should be made:

- The primary audience for whom the work is done should be African
- The cultural and national consciousness expressed in the work should be African
- The language used should be African (Chinweizu et al, 1980)

However, even if the language used in a literary work is not African, the most important thing to consider is the audience for whom the work is done. The cultural and national consciousness expressed in the work in question should always be African. What this simply means is that if Africans like Chenjerai Hove, Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, Shimmer Chinodya and many others write using English, it does not follow that their works belong to English literature and can be analysed using European tools. The fact that they are writing in English does not make them Europeans nor does that make their works belong to English literature. Likewise, British writers, I am persuaded to believe will always write for a British audience even if the setting is Africa. Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, for example, is set in Africa but still remains a British novel because of the author's nationality (British by naturalisation).

African literature should always fight against foreign domination in economics, politics and culture. Literature therefore cannot escape from the class power structures that shape our everyday life. Thus there is always a relationship between writing and politics. Every writer is a politician and the only difference is the direction of politics. What the writer can only choose is the side to be in the battlefield, the side of the people or the side of those social forces and classes that try to keep the people down. What he or she cannot do is to remain neutral. Therefore every writer is a writer in politics. The only question is what politics and whose politics? (Ngugi, 1997).

Literature should be used as a tool to reject the culture of the colonizer, his religious and education systems. African people should create their own songs, dances, poems and narratives. Criticism of literature must stress the primacy of society as the basis of human existence. Literature should help Africans to fight the economic and value systems that promote neo-colonialism in the continent. There is therefore need to shake off the yoke of Euro-centricity which history has pressed upon the shoulders of Africa. Africans need a dialectical theory of literature that should pay attention to the complex relationship between literature and society. It is, according to Amuta (1989), only from a dialectical position that one can comprehend the objective world and the universal laws for development.

A dialectical theory of literature primarily underlines the inescapable relationship between history and works of art. Agriculture, politics, education, commerce and industry will determine what the African writer is going to write because the values, criteria and standards by which literature is measured are in themselves matrixes in the system of values of a given society.

The ideology of a new and more functionally relevant approach to African literature should be relevant to the socio-economic, cultural, political and ideological contradictions which define the life and historical experiences of the African people (Amuta, 1989). The new theory or approach

to African literature and its criticism is expected to be dialectical in nature. A dialectical theory of literature pays attention to the complex relationship between literature and society. It is only from a dialectical position that one can comprehend the objective world and the universal laws for its development. This then makes Afro-centrism to be the relevant ideology for a new perspective of African literature, because it offers a scientific theory of society that rejects exploitation and inequality. Pan-Africanism or Negritude can be used as natural anchors for all theories of African literature that have a desire for freedom. These two ideologies can be used as theoretical launch pads in the struggle to fight for a total understanding of African literature.

Motivation and inspiration of African literary critics should emanate from the ideas of historic African figures such as Leopold Senghor, W. E. B. Dubois, Marcus Garvey, Edward Blyden, Kwame Nkurumah and Julius Nyerere. Criticism of African literature should not be based entirely on the European ideas of people like Plato, Aristotle, Richards, and other capitalist literary conduits. These European literary critics are the ones who portrayed a false conception of the African society. They always viewed Africa as a static and undialectical society, with undifferentiated socio-cultural continuum, which has remained oblivious to the passage of time. Such a naïve understanding of African literature is what contemporary African scholars, who are conscious of their identity, refer to as museum concept of literature and culture (ibid).

It is therefore advisable for literary critics in Africa to engage in a dialectical literary criticism in order for them to shake off the yoke of Eurocentricity which history has placed upon the shoulders of Africa. Genuine decolonisation of African literature does not simply mean symbolic use of African languages in literature. Mere exclusive use of African languages as the medium of communication in literature does not constitute mental decolonisation. The process of liberating African literature and its criticism is in itself a struggle against imperialism and neo-colonialism. Literature by sons and daughters of Africa is expected to help Africans to fight the economic and political systems that promote neo-colonialism on the African continent, and elsewhere. Literary theory and practice must form part of the anti-imperialist struggle, thus demystifying literary criticism and reintegrating it into the social experience and practice of which literature itself is very much a part (ibid).

### **Conclusion**

A Zimbabwean perspective of African literature should revolve around the social, political and economic experiences that constitute African history and tradition. It is this combination of history and culture that becomes the primary condition for the existence and understanding of contemporary African literature. The primary responsibility of literary art is to fight against oppression and struggle for freedom because genuine literature can only survive in a free state.

The approach should place emphasis on content, context and form. The context of a literary work involves the totality of a people's history with its main thrust on the economic and cultural independence not in terms of erection of flags and singing of national anthems, but in terms of the total transfer of the means of production and distribution of resources into the hands of the masses of Africa (Amuta, 1989; Ngugi 1987). Scholars in Africa and even those in the diaspora should be encouraged by all means possible to use literature to re-establish an authentic

history of the African people. A truly anti-imperialist theory of African literature can only be derived from a radical society whose members do not have perennial feelings of nostalgia about Europe and its wealth.

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## The Essential Elements in Conducting Successful Guidance and Counseling at Secondary School Level: A Review

By

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### Abstract

*This article reviews literature on essential elements in conducting successful guidance and counselling at Secondary school level in Zimbabwe. These elements include; the role of the school counsellor, goals of counselling, qualities of a good counsellor, the knowledge and skills of the counsellor, availability of resources, supervision, workshops and seminars. These factors are crucial for effective implementation of Guidance and Counselling programmes in schools. The paper explores the contribution of each factor to the success of guidance and counselling and acknowledges ideas given by various authorities. Literature reviewed has been drawn from developed and developing countries.*

### Introduction

Guidance and Counselling is a discipline which is fundamental in the development of any institution. A number of authorities, for example, Makinde(1984), Nelson-Jones(1995); Mcleod(1998); Hough(1994) have researched and written on Guidance and counselling. The discipline is essential at any level of human development since it equips students with knowledge and skills critical for growth. At any stage of development, learners encounter a number of social, personal, educational, economical and psychological crises and they need assistance in resolving them. This transformative process aims at attaining a positive change in individuals involved. However, the success of Guidance and Counselling is dependant on a number of factors which include: the skills and knowledge of the counsellor, clear articulation of goals of the guidance and counselling process, qualities of a good counsellor, availability of resources, supervision, workshops and seminars. This article examines the importance of each aspect in conducting the guidance and counselling programme.

### Background

Zimbabwe, like many other developing countries such as Botswana, Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia and Swaziland, has realized the need to offer Guidance and Counselling programmes in Secondary Schools. In Zimbabwe, Guidance and Counselling as a discipline, has always

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been offered in Secondary schools but with varying terminology. At one time it was referred to as Education for living and others referred to it as career guidance.

The government introduced Guidance and Counselling in Secondary schools to assist learners in their development. According to Policy circular minute number 4 of 1990, Guidance and Counselling programs are supposed to be implemented in all Secondary schools. The Nziramasanga report of (1999) recommended that Guidance and Counselling be offered at all levels in the education system, that is, pre-school, primary, secondary and tertiary level. This is mainly because the discipline equips learners with knowledge and skills necessary for growth. Pupils in Secondary schools are at a critical stage of development which is the adolescence stage. The adolescence stage is a transitional stage from childhood to adulthood. This period is characterized by accelerated growth and development as manifested in weight, height and other body changes. Mwamwenda (1995) mentions that adolescents go through physiological changes and become more mature physically and sexually. The individual has to constantly adjust to the changes as one develops into adulthood.

Milner (1974) argues that the adolescence stage is the most difficult stage in human development. This is so because adolescents undergo identity development during this period. They have a lot of questions about themselves. They begin to ask who they are, what they look like, what they would like to be, what they would like to become and even how society perceives them? Erikson in his theory of personality development, argues that at this stage, individuals face a crisis in identity formation. The crisis according to Erikson is identity versus role confusion. Erikson in Cole and Cole (2001) explains that at this stage adolescents either establish a sense of personal identity or they become confused about who they are and what they want to do in life. Adolescents meet a lot of challenges as they try to establish who they are, hence Hall referred to this period as a period of storm and stress (Cole and Cole 2001). Hall goes on to say that this is reflected in the adolescents' conflicts with their parents, their widely fluctuating moods, their innovativeness and their risky behaviour. Adolescents engage in exploration and experimentation and yet they lack the knowledge, experience and maturity to avoid the risks that confront them. This is why the guidance and counselling programmes are necessary at this stage.

Teachers and parents should understand the nature of the unique problems of adolescents if they are to help them make a smooth transition to adulthood. When the needs of this age are not adequately provided for, the problem of indecision, uncertainty, ambiguity, conflict, instability, unpredictability, perhaps leading to delinquency, alcoholism and career muddle may surface (Makinde 1984). It becomes imperative then for educational institutions to establish guidance and counselling programmes. These are meant to assist students overcome the challenges they experience as they develop. Pupils in secondary schools need help on personal, social, educational and vocational issues. Students need to be helped to develop into mature, well-functioning and competent members of society. It is imperative for this paper to explore essential elements in conducting guidance and counselling in Secondary schools.

## **Essential Elements In Guidance and Counselling**

### **Goals of Guidance and Counselling**

The goals of Guidance and Counselling programmes should be well articulated to help implementers. CACC, GUIDE p.12 outlines the Aims of General School guidance as follows;

- To orient students to realise that life and their own existence are meaningful;
- To help students assess and understand themselves;
- To orient students to respect human dignity of others and to have compassion for others;
- To help students make morally, independent choices and act responsibly;
- To help students live according to one's own set of values.

The school guidance accords pupils the opportunity to explore and understand the demands of life. Students are assisted to learn more about themselves, acquire life-management skills, social competence and learn to cope with change.

Sutton (1987) observes that counselling goals are highly dependent on the individual and are selected primarily by the student but negotiated with the counsellor. George (1981) outlines the major goals in counselling as:

1. facilitating behaviour change;
2. improving the client's ability to establish and maintain relationships;
3. enhancing the client's effectiveness and ability to cope;
4. promoting the decision-making process;
5. facilitating client potential and development.

Counsellors are supposed to bring about a change in behaviour which enables the clients to live more productive and satisfying lives. Generally, counselling is concerned with helping people feel better or cope with immediate problems, (Rogers, 1965). Counselling makes people become responsible for making the most of their lives, assume responsibility with confidence and empower themselves for the future (Coleman, Butcher and Carson, 1980). Counselling services empower students with knowledge and skills necessary for healthy development. Schools provide such programmes to help students function at higher levels of personal competence (Gibson and Mitchell, 1986). According to Mapfumo (1981) some of the aims for guidance and counseling in Zimbabwe include;

1. To help pupils develop a positive self-concept;
2. To help pupils acquire useful social and communication skills;
3. To help pupils acquire knowledge about the availability of jobs;
4. To help pupils become aware of the relationship between subjects at school and future employment;
5. To help pupils appreciate the value of the education they are receiving;
6. To help pupils acquire efficient study habits and develop a healthy attitude to school work in order to reduce the wastage and failure rate in schools.

Guidance and counseling programmes are primarily concerned with character development and ensuring that pupils behave in acceptable manner. The discipline is divided into three main areas, which are the social – personal guidance, the educational guidance and the vocational guidance. Educational guidance enables learners to appreciate education as an instrument of constructive social change. The focus is on helping learners attain learning competencies that contribute to their passing. Vocational guidance or career guidance is primarily concerned with providing occupational information to learners. This type of guidance is crucial at Secondary School level since learners will be working towards future employment. The personal – social guidance focuses mainly on issues that promote the development of a positive self-concept. Learners need counseling on aspects that lead to emotional disturbances and behaviour problems.

The guidance and counseling goals are important in that they stipulate the fundamental aspects to be accomplished. It is therefore imperative for the guidance counsellor to translate these goals into workable units that are short term. According to Mapfumo (1981), the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture realizes the diversities of school environments, hence is not prescriptive and rigid on the way the programme is to be implemented. The guidance teacher should therefore aim to address the problems which are peculiar to that particular school. The uniqueness of each school environment is reflected in the policy document for each school. It is however vital for the guidance counselor to operate within the expected framework for effective implementation of the programme. If goals are not clearly enunciated, teachers may have problems of working towards the attainment of such goals. The Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture should therefore ensure that guidance counselors are aware of what they are expected to achieve at each given time.

### **The Role of the School Counsellor**

In schools, the individuals entrusted with the major responsibility of helping students deal with their personal, social, educational, vocational or career problems are school counsellors (Lindhard, Dlamini, Barnard, 1985). Counsellors help students make appropriate choices and decisions for their future and are therefore involved with the critical processes of student development and transition. Career education informs students on the world of work and they gain knowledge about career expectations. Nelson-Jones (1995) views career education as an umbrella term used to cover a variety of interventions aimed at helping children, mainly at secondary school level to become more occupationally literate. Information on jobs and roles include the skills and tasks, tools and equipment, training and formal education, placement and advancement opportunities for various occupations. Job and role awareness ensures that students will make occupational choices based on true and complete rather than false or inadequate information.

Counsellors also play a vital role in the guidance and counselling of students in personal and social issues. Mwamwenda (1995) states that there are times when children experience problems that are personal in nature such as feelings of loneliness, indecision, inadequacy, rejection, self-hate and dislike, inferiority complex and others. The work of the counsellors is to assist pupils to grapple with these negative aspects of behaviour and transform them into

a positive perspective, thus contributing to the child's positive self-concept. Counselling can be an effective way to help pupils deal with anxiety and depression.

The guidance counsellor plays a significant role in the implementation of guidance and counseling programmes in schools. The counsellor is the one who equips students with knowledge and skills on various aspects of their curriculum. The counsellor ensures that learners gain insights on vocational, educational and personal – social guidance. However, the role of the counsellor should be well articulated to the guidance counsellor so that one is aware of his/her responsibility and expectations. Appropriate intervention strategies can only be employed if the guidance counsellor is aware of his/her role. The guidance counsellor needs adequate support from all stakeholders and interested parties for him/her to carry out his/her duties effectively. Resources such as time, text books, and materials, should be abundant to enable learners to benefit from the programme.

However, in Zimbabwean Secondary Schools, the guidance counsellor is a teacher who has his/her core business as teaching. The guidance teacher takes guidance and counselling as an additional work load. Although, Mapfumo (1981) states that this guidance teacher is expected to have a relatively reduced working load since he/she takes guidance and counselling, one feels that this is a serious impediment on the success of the programme. The guidance counsellor should be exempted from teaching and concentrate more on guidance and counseling of pupils. Counselling is a more personal activity since it is directed at the individual and hence requires much time. Learners experience problems such as poor performance, bereavement, HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, smoking, rejection, broken homes and would need more time with the counsellor for productive results.

The other problem is that guidance and counseling is allocated one period per week. This period maybe thirty or forty minutes depending on the type of school. This is the time which the guidance teacher is expected to guide learners on various issues concerning their development. Guidance is group based and deliberations may focus on such topics as sexual maturation, growing up, relationships, study skills, examinations and occupations. Information given is meant to empower students with knowledge and skills on various aspects. The time allocated for guidance and counseling on the timetable is inadequate. The programme is useful to learners and one feels that one period per week is not enough. There is need to allocate more time for guidance and counselling on the time-table. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education Sport and Culture needs to continuously reflect on this issue and see how best it could be addressed. One would suggest the engagement of full time counsellors in schools as a permanent solution to the problems being experienced. Although this suggestion has some monetary implications, one feels that this is the only way of utilizing the services of a school counsellor profitably. Learners would totally benefit from such an arrangement.

### **Qualities of a Good Counsellor**

Nelson-Jones (1995) points out that effective counselling occurs when there is a good helping relationship and constructive exchanges between the counsellor and the clients. A good helping relationship involves counsellors who possess central desirable qualities namely,

genuineness, non-possessive warmth and empathy. Makinde (1984), Nelson-Jones (1995), Mcleod (2000) refer to these central qualities as core conditions of effective counselling.

According to George (1981), the most fundamental element in the development of the helping relationship is the counsellor's genuineness or congruence. Genuineness is a condition in which the counsellor relates, spontaneously, honestly and openly to the client and reveals himself as a human being (Rogers, 1965). Brammer and Shostrom (1977), and Makinde (1984) concur when they state that the effective counsellor reveals himself as a total being and does not indulge in defensive manoeuvres to maintain a position of false authority and security. Counsellors who are genuine do not hide behind a mask. Genuine counsellors are open with their feelings, reactions, thoughts and attitudes and this allows the client to feel safe and secure.

The other important quality is non-possessive warmth or respect for the client. Rogers 1957 in George (1981:152) refers to this quality as "unconditionality of regard." By this, Rogers is suggesting the importance of the counsellor's being able to genuinely accept the client as a person of worth and dignity. The counsellor is supposed to accept the client unconditionally without passing judgments about the client's attitudes, values and behaviours. The last quality necessary for counselling is empathy. Truax and Carkhuff (1976) in Brammer and Shostrom (1977) refer to empathy as the ability to give a person seeking help a deep sense of being understood. Effective counsellors understand students' problems as if they were their own Rogers (1961) in George (1981) observes that the more the student perceives the counsellor as genuine, empathetic and having an unconditional positive regard for him, the more the student will move away from a static, unfeeling, fixed impersonal type of functioning and the more he will move towards a way of functioning which is marked by fluid, changing, acceptant and experiencing differential personal feeling.

In Zimbabwe, the Ministry of Education Sport and Culture puts emphasis on selection of school counsellors who exhibit the desirable qualities identified above. Mapfumo (1981) identifies some characteristics for ideal counsellors as;

- [i] Keen self-awareness
- [ii] Ability to analyse own feelings
- [iii] Ability to serve as a model and influence others [iv] A thorough sense of selflessness

School counsellors are expected to possess appropriate qualities such as genuineness, non-possessive warmth, empathy for them to carryout their duties effectively. They are supposed to relate to learners honestly and openly so that learners develop trust in them. The school counsellor should have respect for his/her learners and uphold the principles of confidentiality. Learners would open up in an environment they feel safe and secure.

One can only assume that school counsellors are aware of these qualities. However, some of the qualities are learnt through training. Without much exposure in the area of guidance and counselling one may be limited on the importance of these qualities. It is therefore important for counsellors to be trained in this area so that they acquire the relevant skills which enable them to be effective and efficient in their operations.

**The Skills and knowledge of the Counsellor**

In addition to the above core-conditions or personal relationship skills, counsellors need to acquire counselling skills or technical qualifications which can be broadly grouped as communication, diagnostic, motivational and management skills (Gibson and Mitchell, 1986; Rice and Smith, 1993). Effective counsellors make use of both verbal and non-verbal communication skills (Rice and Smith, 1993). Non-verbal communication involves the use of facial expressions, body posture and related physical movement. An effective counsellor exhibits non-verbal communication skills by using attending behaviours. Gibson and Mitchell (1986:316) point out that attending behaviours send such messages to the client as, "I am interested in you and your concerns; I respect you and I am going to give you my undivided attention." A troubled student will reveal his problem to a counsellor who listens attentively.

Furthermore, effective verbal communication also involves the art of questioning. This is the primary tool that counsellors use to obtain information. An effective counsellor, therefore, questions the student effectively so that he understands and diagnoses the problem accurately. The effective counsellor asks both open and closed questions at appropriate points during the interview to keep the discussion moving (Connect: Manual Part 1: Certificate in Child Counselling, 1977). Through effective questioning, the counsellor can clarify and validate issues effectively. In addition to that, the effective counsellor identifies central issues and critical points of the student's problem through effective questioning (Ivey and Smek-Downing, 1980).

Counsellors need to be trained for them to have relevant knowledge and skills in counselling. Previously in Zimbabwe teachers received no training in guidance and counselling. A study by Murwira (1995) in Zimbabwe on implementation of Guidance and Counselling programmes revealed that some teachers found some topics difficult to teach like friendship, courtship, drugs, HIV/AIDS because of limited resources and limited knowledge on the topic. Teachers in that study indicated that they lacked the teaching skill to deal with the subject. Murwira in that study, noted that no teachers were qualified to teach Guidance and Counselling. Only 8 of the 17 teachers that he interviewed had in-service training in the subject area. That study revealed that Home Economics teachers were nominated by their heads to teach the subject since they had less teaching loads compared to their counterparts in other subjects.

It is only recently that Universities have taken it upon themselves to offer degrees in guidance and counselling. This positive development is aimed at producing graduands who are knowledgeable in counselling. It is hoped that the competent graduands would take up the counselling posts in schools and help learners in meeting their various challenges. It is imperative therefore for the guidance counsellor to receive training in Guidance and Counselling.

**Availability of Resources**

Literature has revealed that successful implementation of educational programmes depends on availability of resources and facilities. Studies by Hawes (1979); Chivore (1991); Nyagura and Reece (1989) and others have indicated that implementation of educational programmes is adversely affected by unavailability of resources. These resources include materials like

syllabuses, exercise books, teaching and learning aids, facilities and equipment. Provision of these materials contribute substantially to the success of programmes. Another barrier to effective implementation of programmes identified by Gachuhi (1999) in United Nations Children's Educational Fund report 2003 is time. Gachuhi, (1999) in his studies on HIV/AIDS education in Lesotho and Botswana observed that the programmes were not successful because of not having specific time allocation in the timetable. Provision of materials, equipment, time is essential if programmes are to be implemented in a productive way.

In counselling, if teachers fail to get books, syllabus, furniture and a room for the helping relationship then accomplishment of objectives is affected. Several investigations that focused on resources such as furniture and counselling rooms revealed that counselling is dependent upon proper furniture and comfortable rooms. Studies that were conducted by Haase and DiMattia (1976) quoted by George (1981) revealed that room size affect the counselling process. Another study conducted by Chaikin, Derlega, Miller (1976) in Goorge (1981) revealed that client self disclosure is significantly more intimate in a soft room environment than in a hard one. Client preference for seating arrangements was investigated by Brockmann and Moller (1973). They reported that subjects who were submissive and dependent tended to prefer greater distance between chairs and those who were dominant, self-assured and independent preferred the closer seating arrangements (George 1981).

In Zimbabwe, the implementation of educational programmes is being adversely affected by shortage of resources and guidance and counselling is no exception. The Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture could be aware of the ideal rooms, furniture and materials for counselling but fails to purchase because of lack of finance. It is hoped that Guidance teachers improvise and create conducive environments for their counselling sessions.

The success of guidance and counselling programmes depends on availability of resources. It is important then for schools to have the necessary resources as these facilitate the helping process.

### **The importance of supervision**

According to Chivore (1994), supervision involves assessment of proper implementation of policy, correction of identified weaknesses, direction and redirection of defects of the attainment of stated aims, objectives and goals of an education system at a given level. It is a way of monitoring the programme in action so that improvement can be made. During implementation of educational programmes, supervision is important because it leads to improvement of designed materials.

In Zimbabwe, studies by Chivore (1994) revealed that supervision of primary school teachers was inadequate. Chivore found that 65,9% of the teachers in his study were supervised between nil and once per year by their heads. 70,9% of the teachers were not supervised by education officers in the whole year. Similarly, studies by Lewin and Bajah (1991) indicated that a good number of teachers had not been supervised teaching Environmental and Agricultural Science. In that study, supervision by Education Officers (E.Os) and District Education Officers (D.E.Os) was found to be inadequate.

In Zimbabwe, research studies have indicated that supervision of educational programmes was inadequate. This affects the implementation of programmes and guidance and counselling is included. D.E.O.s, and E.O.s fail to monitor progress in schools because of transport problems. These are the external examiners who control the standards in schools. If they fail to visit schools then it is a serious impediment which need urgent attention. The monitoring and assessment systems need to be revitalized for the sustenance of educational programmes. Without enough supervision one wonders how teachers can be expected to be effective during curriculum implementation.

### **The usefulness of workshops and seminars**

Hawes (1979) considers seminars and workshops useful in improving teacher's skills. In Zimbabwe, studies by Nyagura and Reece (1989) reveal that professional support to teachers through seminars and workshops is inadequate. This concurred with the findings by Jaji (1990) who also observes that most seminars and workshops were poorly organised. Teachers find workshops and seminars valuable if they are properly organised. If teachers are exposed to seminars and workshops, they acquire relevant knowledge and skills which make them effective in conducting their work.

In Zimbabwe workshops and seminars have been used to train teachers in guidance and counselling. Teachers have acquired some skills and knowledge in this area through these training sessions. There is however need to improve on the organisation and technicalities of such workshops for teachers to benefit. Workshops and seminars are essential for capacity building.

### **Recommendations**

Based on literature reviewed a number of pertinent recommendations can be made concerning effective implementation of guidance and counselling programmes in schools. Some of these recommendations include:

1. More time should be allocated for guidance and counselling programmes on the timetable if meaningful learning is to take place. Learners could have two or three periods per week per class.
2. Full time qualified counsellors are needed in schools rather than engaging teachers who have other duties and responsibilities to attend to.
3. To enhance effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling programmes, the Ministry should ensure that schools have adequate resources such as books, furniture, suitable accommodation and other materials.
4. There is need for the Ministry to improve on organisation of workshops and seminars so that teachers benefit.
5. There is need for constant monitoring and assessment of guidance and counselling programmes by E.O.'s and D.E.O.s to ensure effective implementation of the programme. D.E.O.s and E.O.s should visit schools regularly to assist in the running of educational programmes.

### **Conclusion**

What has emerged from the literature reviewed is that factors such as: skills and knowledge of the counsellor, goals of counselling, qualities of the counsellor, availability of resources,

supervision, seminars and workshops are crucial for effective implementation of guidance and counselling programmes in schools. Counsellors play an important role in assisting students deal with their personal, social, educational, vocational and career problems. However for them to perform their work confidently they need to be trained and become knowledgeable. They should have relevant skills and knowledge in counselling so that they perform their roles effectively. Counsellors are expected to bring about change in behaviour which enables the students to live more productive and satisfying lives. It is essential for the counsellor to possess desirable qualities such as genuineness, non-possessive warmth, and empathy as these are core to effective counselling. Each aspect plays a critical role in the establishment and maintenance of the therapeutic climate and must be exhibited by effective counsellors. Persons who lack these qualities experience problems in achieving the counselling goals. Studies reviewed have shown that effective implementation of guidance and counselling programmes in Secondary Schools is hampered by lack of resources, inadequate supervision, poorly organized workshops and seminars. If these programmes are meant to benefit students then there is need for these problems to be addressed.

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## AN EVALUATION OF CONSTRAINTS IN THE ADOPTION OF E-COMMERCE MODEL

By

Alfred Mafuka<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

*The Internet use is growing at a dramatic pace and is significantly impacting on customer and business market behaviours. As a result, bigger and smaller firms worldwide have started developing and using Internet strategies to enhance competitiveness on the marketplace. However, the evolution of the Internet, and the adoption of a strategic direction focusing on Internet strategies have not been defined on the part of Zimbabwean companies. In this paper, the authors examine the critical constraints in the adoption of the Internet as a business tool. First, a theoretical framework for the Internet as marketing tool is specified. Second, results of the survey that was conducted in order to identify the critical constraints in the adoption of the Internet as a business tool are presented. The research design is purposive. The study found that the adoption of the Internet as a business tool is affected by several factors that include limited financial resources, low computer penetration, lack of technical expertise, limited credit availability and slow service. Finally, propositions are provided for the development and adoption of Internet strategies in Zimbabwe.*

### Introduction

It is widely accepted that information communication technology (ICT) has a profound effect on the way people conduct business and how organizations market their offerings today. Conventional channels of marketing are gradually being dissolved or assimilated into the global network fuelled by the Internet, (Ranchhold, 2004). Today, the e before words like commerce, business, marketing, etc indicates a philosophy that must be followed by companies and organizations that want to enhance and keep their competitiveness.

### Background to the Study and Research Question

Zimbabwe is one of the countries lying in the 4<sup>th</sup> quadrant of the CID/CIMD matrix (See fig.1) because of its less developed infrastructure and institutional marketing systems. The country had only 450 000 telephone lines by end of 2005, with only 4% of the population having access to these lines. Only Tel One offers the International gateway, with 4 megabytes down to South Africa and 10 megabytes up to USA.

The Zimbabwean government has tried hard to improve the conditions that enhance the adoption of e-commerce. First was the liberalization of the telecommunication sector and companies such as TeleAccess, Telecel, Africom and Econet were granted licences to operate.

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Secondly, import duty for computers and peripherals was reduced from 15% to 5% in order to promote increased ownership through lower prices (E-Readiness Survey Report, 2005). Consequently, Internet use increased by 400% between 2001 and 2002 (UNCTAD, 2003). The number of large Internet service providers increased and includes names such as Mweb, Ecoweb, Africa-on-Line, ZarNet, Zimbabwe-On-Line and Telco.

Despite these efforts by Government, the response by both private and public companies has been slower than in other developing countries. Therefore, the research question in this study has been: *“what are the constraints in the adoption of the Internet as a business model in Zimbabwe and how can these be minimised?”*

### **Literature Review**

E-commerce refers to conducting business electronically. The technology of e-commerce includes a variety of systems from fax to intranets, extranets and Internet (Baourakis, et al 2002)

Advances in computer and communication technologies have ushered a new Internet economy, a “revolutionary” development (Sheth et al, 2001) that has prompted calls for a new paradigm shift in the field. E-commerce is generating huge revenue for modern firms (Modahl, 2000) and has the ability to transform purely domestic firms into multinational ones. Modahl’s assertion is supported by Kan (2000) who details that the worldwide internet revenue (from B2B and B2C) in 1998 totalled US\$74 billion, US\$ 1 trillion in 2003 and the figure was expected to double in 2005. This is because the Internet reduces costs of doing business through disintermediation as well as its far reach, that is, its ability to transcend economic, socio-cultural, political and physical boundaries.

Countries around the world (both developed and developing) are embracing the Internet in an attempt to gain its enormous benefits such as global access, immediate real-time access, infinite space, interactivity and availability of multimedia, (Darby et al, 2003). The 4 Ps of the marketing mix model have been the target by the Internet strategists in order to enhance the competitiveness of their organizations.

### **Price**

Rayport and Svioka (1994) state that organizations will have to employ new pricing models when using the Internet. They indicate that the ability of technology services at a cheaper cost could make it difficult to determine the appropriate price for a consumer. The consumer has increased ability to compare prices using the Net, thus making price competition very intensive.

### **Product**

The implications of the Internet for the product are diverse. The Internet provides consumers with an opportunity to search more thoroughly and at virtually no cost the products they want provided by a third party bypassing traditional suppliers and resellers. The Internet also supports the product innovation process by using direct access to consumers to gather information to develop new products to meet customer’s needs.

**Place**

This marketing mix deals with ‘where the product is found and how easily accessible it is’. The Net makes the product ever accessible as long there is a connection with the Net. Ghosh (1998) identified an interesting facet which is that the Internet allows companies to bypass parts of the value chain.

**Promotion**

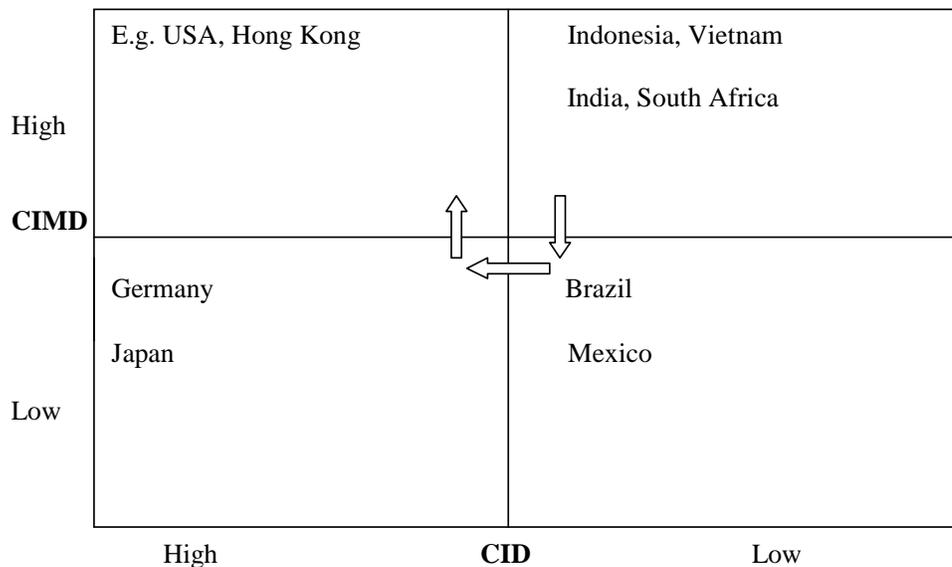
Promotion encompasses all the various ways a company undertakes to communicate its product’s merits and to persuade target customers to buy them from them (Kotler,1991). Evans and Wurster, (1999) highlight the advantages incumbent retailers and manufacturers have when promoting products and services via the Net. These include among others immediate real-time access, global access and infinite space.

Adoption of the e-commerce model by companies will depend on several factors among them are country’s infrastructure development (CID) and country’s marketing institutional development (CIMD) (Sharma and Sheth,2005). The country’s infrastructure development refers to roads, telecommunication, legislative bodies, open and free justice systems, etc.

Infrastructure development is usually associated with economic development (Sharma and Dominguez, 1992 in Sharma and Sheth, 2005). The marketing institutional development is associated with availability of competitive, efficient and effective distribution and communication channels. (Iyer, 1997 in Sharma and Sheth,2005 ).

**Classification of countries**

Based on the CID and CIMD framework, countries can be placed on a quadrant matrix as shown in figure1.



**Figure 1: CID/CIMD classification of countries (Cateora, 1997)**

- Developed infrastructure and developed marketing institutions are available in advanced countries such as USA and Hong Kong (Sharma and Dominguez, 1992, in Sharma and Sheth, 2005) . These countries have invested resources in developing infrastructure and have rules and regulations that allow the development of competitive marketing institutions.
  - Developed infrastructure and restricted marketing is available in countries that protect legacy institutions or restrict size of stores, for example, Germany and Japan respectively. In such countries there are advertising restrictions, minimum margins or resale price maintenance.
  - Low levels of infrastructure development and developed marketing institutions is available in some less developed countries but have developed print and advertising media as well as distribution systems, for example, Brazil and Mexico (Cateora, 1997).
- Low infrastructure development and low developed marketing systems are available in countries that have not developed efficient and effective distribution systems due to geography or legal restrictions. These countries have limited access to e-commerce (Cateora, 1997).

### **Methodology**

The research was conducted among marketing, IT and customer service executives of companies in the manufacturing and tourism industries in Harare, Bulawayo, Mutare, Masvingo and Victoria Falls. Executives of companies that offer support services such as Internet advertising agencies, website designers and phone and Internet connectors were also included in the sample.

The sample consisted of 15 manufacturing companies, 10 tourism companies and 10 support service companies.

Sampling was purposive as the research focused on companies with international marketing involvement and have been in operation for at least 5 years.

Of the 35 companies sampled, 23 responded to the survey, constituting a 66% response rate. This is broken down as 10/15 or 66.7% for the manufacturing sector, 7/10 or 70% for the tourism and 6/10 or 60% for the support services sector.

The data collection instruments used were the questionnaire for the manufacturing and tourism sectors and personal interviews for the support service sector. This explains the lowest response rate for the support service sector as some of the target interviewees missed appointments or gave excuses. The questionnaire was developed using established methods ( Fowler, 1998) and pre-tested in a pilot study of 5 companies in Gweru. Gweru was chosen because of its proximity to the researchers. Minor revisions were then made based on resultant findings.

## Findings

### *Number of employees*

The majority organisations that were sampled are SME s. 52 % of the organisations have less than 1000 employees.

### *Internet use*

The results show that:

- 60% of the manufacturing companies surveyed have started using the Internet to enhance their business operations. There is a big difference with the results of the E-Readiness Survey Report, ([www.ict.org.zw](http://www.ict.org.zw)), which shows that 61% of the manufacturing companies do not use the Internet for other purposes other than the e-mail.
- 86% of tourism companies use the Internet as a marketing communication tool. This supports the results of the Zimbabwe E-Readiness Survey, ([www.ict.org.zw](http://www.ict.org.zw)) which show that in Zimbabwe e-tourism is on stage 2 of the HUG model.
- 50% of the support service companies have started using the Internet to do their business. This means that the other 50% is still conducting all business face-to-face.

### *Promotion tools used by the companies*

Table I presents the mean rankings out of five of the promotion tools used by the companies in the different sectors.

Table I: Mean ranking of Promotional tools

Promotion Tool	Mean		
	Manufacturing	Tourism	Support Service
Print Ad	3.6	4.8	4
TV Ad	2.7	3.75	2.5
Personal Selling	4.4	2.4	4.6
Sales Promotion	3.4	3.4	4.3
Internet	1	3.5	2
Any other	1.5	1	5

The results show that although all the sectors have adopted the Internet as a business model, it is still the least used marketing communication tool by manufacturing and support service companies (mean of 1.0 and 2.0 respectively) while it is the third most used tool by tourism companies (mean of 3.5). Manufacturing and support service companies mostly use personal selling and others like word of mouth (WOM) respectively while tourism companies mostly use print ads.

### ***Website development***

Our research shows that only 40% of the manufacturing companies, 86% of tourism companies and 17% of support service companies have their own websites. The skewedness towards tourism could be a result of this sector's endeavour to market its products to emerging markets particularly in Asia.

### ***Internet service providers***

Table II shows the main Internet service providers and the percentage of customers who use them.

Table II: **Internet providers and their market share**

<b>Internet Service Provider</b>	<b>% of customers</b>
Africa-on-line	36
M-Web	27
Eco-Web	9.25
Technopak	9.25
Telco	9.25
Others	9.25

The results show that Africa-on-line is the most preferred, followed by M-Web. The rest of the service providers have the same market share.

The reasons for the choice of these service providers include good security, user friendliness, easy access, affordability, efficiency and speed.

### ***Main uses of the Internet***

Table III illustrates the main uses of the Internet by companies in the three different sectors.

Table III: Main uses of the Internet and % of companies using them

Internet function	% of companies using each Internet function		
	Manufacturing	Tourism	Support Service
Product promotion	20	29	34
Company image enhancement	40	58	17
Support customers after sale	10	43	17
Promote company as a whole	40	29	17
Prospect for new customers	40	58	21
Receive payment (using e-money)	0	14	0
Virtual exhibition	40	29	17
Revenue generation (using banner ads)	10	14	17
Individualise customer	20	29	17
Solicit international business	50	43	17
Product procurement	50	14	17

50% of manufacturing companies mainly use the Internet to solicit international business and for product procurement while no manufacturing company is using the Internet to receive or effect payments.

58% of tourism companies use the Internet to prospect for new customers and to enhance the image of the company. Only 14% of the companies use the Internet to generate revenue, to receive payment and for procurement of products.

Those companies in the support service sector use the Internet mainly for promotion of their products and to prospect for new customers.

The companies using the Internet have faced several challenges that include the following:

- slow navigation
- Perception of risks by customers
- Power blackouts
- Low computer penetration leading to reduced Internet connectivity
- Few customers with access to Internet

- Downfall time caused by ISP
- Creating awareness of the function
- Shortage of technical expertise

### ***Factors affecting adoption of Internet model***

Table IV shows the reasons for failing to adopt the Internet as a business model and their mean weight out of 10.

Table IV: **Factors affecting Internet adoption**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Mean weight/10</b>
Limited Internet access by customers	6.5
Limited financial resources	6.2
Lack of technical expertise	5.3
Few customers with credit card	5.2
Service too slow	4
Lack of privacy and security	3.1

From table IV, it can be seen that the most deterrent factors in the adoption of the Internet as a business model are:

- Limited access to Internet by customers
- Limited financial resources
- Lack of technical expertise
- Few customers have credit cards for online payment

### **Conclusions**

The study has shown that the tourism sector is ahead of the manufacturing and support service sectors in the adoption of the Internet. However, the main constraints for the rapid adoption and use of the Internet by the three sectors studied are:

- Absence of the Internet legislation regarding the recognition of electronic signature or e-documents as official contracts between companies in B2B or B2C transactions.
- There is absence of a unified payment system which is trusted and accepted by both buyers and sellers.
- Few customers have credit cards for online payment.
- The financial constraint as a result of the harsh economic environment. Some of the companies are struggling to survive and therefore, the Internet access and establishment of corporate websites are not in their list of top priorities.
- Low computer penetration, low telecommunication density and low band- width experience coupled by limited technical expertise.

## Recommendations

The Internet experience in Zimbabwe is evolving very slowly compared to other developing countries and as a result of that, we recommend the following:

- Government could put in place an act of parliament that recognises e-documents as official contracts between companies and should authenticate e-commerce transactions. This should be able to develop trust and confidence among the potential users of the Internet.
- Financial institutions, other companies in the private sector and the Government could work together and improve restrictive regulations on the acquisition of credit cards for online transactions.
- Internet start-up costs could be reduced by further lowering tariffs on the importation of computers and related materials as well as supporting local companies that manufacture computer hardware or develop the software.
- There could be promotion of awareness among the SME s particularly in the manufacturing and support service companies on the benefits that can be derived from the adoption and appropriate use of the Internet. The Ministry of Science and Technology and Tertiary Institutions could spearhead these campaigns.
- Both private and public companies could collaborate with tertiary institutions to design, develop, fund and run human resource development programmes that broaden the level of technical skills needed to implement online strategies.
- Private companies could support Government to partner with other neighbouring countries to adopt strategies for the expansion of the local as well as the international bandwidth.
- Companies in the same sector or related sectors could form alliances and work together to acquire, develop and use online technologies more effectively.

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**PATRICK BOND AND MASIMBA MANYANYA, ZIMBABWE'S PLUNGE:  
EXHAUSTED NATIONALISM, LIBERALISM AND THE SEARCH FOR  
SOCIAL JUSTICE, WEAVER PRESS, HARARE, 2003. ISBN 1-777922-005-7**

Reviewed

by

**Percyslage Chigora<sup>1</sup>**

It is certainly a public knowledge both internally and internationally that Zimbabwe towards or at the new 2000 millennium and still today is embroiled in a crisis reflected in various spheres of life. The book exposed these problems in great depth and in chronological way. It attempts to locate the problems within the framework of contradicting ideological underpinnings of nationalism and neo-liberalism.

Chapter one explores the origins of uneven development in historical perspective. It covers the whole 90 years of colonialism and underdevelopment in a brief and concise manner. Reading the Chapter one, one will have an understanding of how colonialism contributed to current problems bedeviling the country. The authors underscored the issue of debt that was inherited from the previous regime and international financial institution's policies as the central to economic quagmire. It's well summarized:

"...Zimbabwe was born in 1980, just as the neo-liberal barrage against Third World economies in earnest, led by institutions which already owed much to the black Zimbabweans: the World Bank"p.18.

Chapter two examined the economic constraints that largely emanated from foreign debt and balance of payments and which were further exacerbated by Economic Structural Adjustment Programmes. The conclusion summed it well, where the authors noted:

"Economic constraints to the country's democratisation remained formidable. And as result, it would be up to nascent social, labour and related movements of the post- Esap era-not the government, the political opposition or organized business- to change Zimbabwe's history, via an inward-oriented, low debt, economic development strategy. It is the multifaceted political challenge, especially in relation to the balance of forces with the two main parties..."p.60-61.

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Chapter three exposed the political rhetoric that has dominated the Zimbabwean political scene. These include radical arguments by left-nationalist vis-a-vis neo-liberalists. But central to Zimbabwean politics.

“...the more the ruling party searches desperately for scapegoats, and the more that people of good will reject Zanu’s dictatorial tendencies and misinformation with revulsion” p. 104.

Chapter four analyses constraints emanated through globalisation. The authors exposed Washington’s interests in Zimbabwe, largely has to do with the spreading of the neo-liberal agenda. The chapter also espoused the reactions by Zimbabwe in various for a particularly the multilateral institutions. The authors advised: “Delinking from financial circuits could be accomplished on peace meal basis...” p. 146.

Chapter five grappled with providing solutions to the constraints Zimbabwe is facing. These include movements for justice that ‘... promote globalisation of people and halt/at minimum radically modify the globalisation of capital’ p.151, transforming elite institutions, anti global apartheid strategies, need for concrete financially strategies, domestic financial self-reliance and a completely international-scale agenda. For Zimbabwe the authors recommended strategies for dealing with debt i.e. through repudiation of foreign debt and deflation of domestic debt’ regulation of the foreign exchange system solving distortions that underpin the society.

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