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THE BIRTH, OPERATIONS AND DEMISE OF ZIMBABWE INTER-AFRICA NEWSAGENCY [ZIANA]

By

Peter Mandava¹

Abstract

In the first place, the paper locates the creation of alternative news agencies in the realm of Third World nations' struggles for self-determination in all aspects of their lives. The arguments of the paper are that ZIANA was founded on noble ideas but was undermined by a number of factors that included: weak capital base from point of inception and along the way, ownership structure not preferred by larger part of media industry, lack of corporate identity, lack of a profit-motive drive in the core-business of gathering and selling news and generally poor managerial and administrative skills. The paper concludes that these problems if not addressed, most preferably in a holistic manner, will constitute an insidious worm that render the second experiment another still birth.

Introduction

"The establishment of ZIANA as a national news agency marks an historic event in the process of the consolidation of our independence" [Robert G. Mugabe, 1981]

Inasmuch as communication is as old as humanity, the struggle by humanity for self-determination has the same age. These opening remarks go a long way in assisting an understanding of forces that spurred the creation of national news agencies in most Third World countries. Although national news agencies, also known as alternative news agencies are a fairly recent development their history dates back to developing countries' struggles against the multi-faceted forms of colonial subjugation. The radical nationalist spirit that gave seed and impetus to national news agencies' development is rooted in numerous cultural performances that were expressions of undying resistance and struggle to proclaim own definitions.

After 90 years of colonial rule and about fifteen of which involved a protracted armed struggle, Zimbabwe became a politically independent and sovereign nation state in April 1980. Since colonialism is essentially institutionalised violence on the colonised, with the attainment of independence, it was logical to implement some wide-ranging structural re-arrangements in different strategic institutions to go in line with the agenda of the new democratic government. The nationalist agenda sought to make the Zimbabwean majority attain and practice full citizenship thus having a voice in their own governance. This saw a number of changes in the socio-economic, political and other public institutions. Zimbabwe Inter-Africa News Agency

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[ZIANA] and the some media organizations were among the first establishments to be radically overhauled in terms of ownership, control and philosophy of operation as part of the larger process of consolidating the country's newly attained independence and sovereignty.

Along these lines, it has been argued that the process of de-colonising the information and communication sphere in many Third World countries is part of wider struggles for self-determination [Musa, 1997: 117]. The trend whereby the news media in the new nations gradually became dependent on foreign agencies for their material was seen as inimical to the former's commitment to self-determination. The activities of the foreign news agencies that produced news with a western perception and aimed primarily at a Western audience came under increasing attack from the Third World countries [Musa, 1997: 117].

In short, Third World countries wanted to project their experiences from a Third World perspective and consolidate their independence in the process. It is in this context that the then Prime Minister of Zimbabwe, Robert Gabriel Mugabe proclaimed that, "the establishment of ZIANA as a national news agency marks an historic event in the process of the consolidation of our independence" as his opening statement in a speech made when he officially opened ZIANA.

Before the Birth of ZIANA ...

The colonial period was fraught with all sorts of undemocratic practices that permeated all mass media practices or processes of communication. This was neither coincidental nor restricted to colonial Zimbabwe alone. It was part of the larger colonial injustices that saw and persistently treated the colonised Blacks as worse than animals. This unfortunate but well orchestrated onslaught on Blacks was apparent from the basic organisational structure and staffing of colonial media to the range of racial insults that were chinned out in the name of news and current affairs programmes.

What became ZIANA in 1981 was formally Inter African News Agency [IANA] established in 1961 as a subsidiary of the South African Press Association [SAPA]. It was wholly owned and controlled by SAPA which for many years funded it through subsidies. Its managers and editors were appointed from Johannesburg. Furthermore, all news from international news agencies was first transmitted to the SAPA office in Johannesburg for editorial processing before publication in Zimbabwe.

In the business of news production and publishing, it must be remembered that editorial "angling" and "framing" are practices of cardinal importance. This explains the thrust of a wide range of discourses on the media and ideology. The mass media operate in specific ideological frameworks and consciously create certain realities and not others. This is what Stuart Hall refers to as "the politics of signification" or "the re-presentation and not representation of reality" by the media. The operations of news agencies in their routines of gathering, processing, and distributing news can be explained in these political terms. They are informed and guided by certain ideologies.

Within this context, IANA, processed news from international news agencies in ways that were congruent with the false racial supremacy that the colonial state wanted to promote and naturalise. The news agency endeavoured to do political public relations campaigns for the apartheid system that was institutionalised and reined in the then Union of South Africa and Rhodesia. This role was even more involving given that during the larger part of IANA's existence, the two countries were under international persecution coupled by sanctions while liberation struggles in the respective countries were gathering momentum leading to the colonial states' commission of extensive brutalities against the colonised Blacks.

This emphasises the point that, although the media generally constitute an important ideological and political arena, that role is even more crucial in times of massive political differences when such heated contestations spill into the marketplace of ideas where the media operate. This was the case in colonial set ups that gave logic and impetus to the need to de-colonise media following the attainment of political independence.

The situation that obtained before the establishment of ZIANA was generally seen as unacceptable by the new political establishment. Commenting on the issue, the then Prime Minister of Zimbabwe Robert G. Mugabe said:

This situation was totally unacceptable to my government. If allowed to continue, it would make a mockery of our status and national pride as an independent nation. The birth of ZIANA brings to an end, a situation which was politically intolerable [Ibid.].

Severing Media Ties With South Africa

Although all former colonial masters of Africa are geographically to the North of the continent, Britain's colonial intrusion of Southern Africa was executed from the South. As a result, a number, if not all, colonial institutions including the media and their legal provisions, were "shipped" from Britain to Cape of Good Hope [now Cape Town] before being carted and later railed in-land after being accorded a South African colouring and links. Consequently, the attainment of independence in Zimbabwe meant severing ties in general and media ties in particular with the then apartheid ruled South Africa, a country that had close relationships with Rhodesia and was fiercely hostile to Zimbabwe from independence. It's worth recalling at this point that from the early eighties, South Africa militarily attacked Zimbabwe and, among other acts of sabotage, ran a pirate radio station ironically called *Radio Chokwadi* [Radio Truth] whose total out-put was deadly propaganda venom meant to destabilise the infant Zimbabwean nation.

As a co-operative and non-profit making agency, SAPA was built around its membership of Afrikaans and the English press. The agency has a history of serving the interests of its newspaper members - owned by both Afrikaners and English Whites but predominantly the latter. According to the Agency's editor, Mark van der Velden, in the 1930's, guidelines for stringers - mostly school teachers and postmasters - included an instruction to ignore news involving 'natives' unless it was an attack by a Black on a White person [Forbes, D. 1998: 155]. This context explains why the process of media disengagement from South Africa started as early as December 1980 with the establishment of Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust [ZMMT].

The ZMMT, was seen as a “unique experiment” in Africa’s search for alternative frameworks of media ownership and control. The Trust was meant to be the guardian of the independence of newspapers and to institute internal media policies that are in harmony with policy positions of the new nation state.

The ZMMT was set up to act as a buffer between the government and media organisations and ensure adherence to certain professional ethics in the media in which it had stakes on behalf of the citizens of Zimbabwe. The Trust, private companies and some individuals acquired shares formerly owned by Argus Company and other South African individuals in the Zimbabwe Newspapers. This was meant to make independence in the mass media field both meaningful and tangible.

This point was clearly articulated by the then Prime Minister of Zimbabwe in the same speech when he said:

While our country was ruled and dominated by a white settler minority that relied heavily on South Africa and Britain, it followed that our mass media was equally dominated from those quarters. The wishes and interests of the majority of our people could not be ventilated fully in that media, because they conflicted with the interests of the ruling class. The views of the colonised majority were either ignored or totally misrepresented in order to support the interests of the ruling class. It is the intention of the ZMMT to reverse this colonialists trend and make our media an instrument of the masses of our people.

In Zimbabwe, the formerly oppressed masses have now become the dominant social force. The media should reflect their wishes, and help them consolidate their political gains as a result of achieving national independence [Prime Minister of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe’s speech at the official launch of ZIANA 1-07-81].

Among other things, these remarks fall in the larger terrain of discourses by most Third World leaders in their new domestic and international information and communication order advocacy.

Colonial Media and Blacks

As intimated above, the struggle for a democratic domestic and international information and communication order was not ushered by the attainment of independence but was inextricably intertwined with the larger struggle for self-determination whose crux were the liberation struggles that brought independence. The oppressed wanted freedom to: draw their agenda, chose their leaders; compose and sing their songs; perform their dances; till their land and produce what they wanted; have the number of beasts they wanted to own; teach their children what they believed worthwhile; tell their own stories; and share their wishes and fears. In short, Blacks wanted spaces to say and do their own things by themselves and for themselves. The colonial system could not allow this freedom without negating itself.

The larger colonial media variously collaborated and negatively covered the colonized that is if they covered them at all. This was the case because the press is an exotic institution in

Africa [see Ainslie, 1968; Hachten, 1971; Head, 1974; Mayton, 1983]. The first to be introduced was print media, which was essentially ‘settler press,’ published in the language of colonial masters primarily to cater for their needs and interests and maintain the status quo of colonialism [Boafo, K. 1991: 104]. Some unofficial newspapers followed in the middle of the nineteenth century owned by missionaries and some indigenous Africans.

The introduction of broadcasting media technology started with radio had the initial role of providing information and entertainment to the colonial white settler community. As Ansah [1985] puts it, radio services were “primarily aimed at enabling Europeans in Africa to maintain political and cultural links with the metropolitan countries. In the case of the French colonies, an additional reason was to spread metropolitan culture among the educated African” [p. 6]. As stated in Item 1 of the “Younde Declaration,” adopted at the Intergovernmental Conference on Communication Policies in Africa, held in Younde, Cameroon, July 1980:

In Africa, in the communication field, more perhaps than in any other, the prevailing situation is the direct result of the heritage of colonization. Political independence has not always been followed by a decolonization of the cultural life or the elimination of many alienating factors, imposed by the colonial system. Communication structures often still conform to the old colonial patterns and to the needs and aspirations of African peoples [UNESCO, 1981: 23].

The Domestic and New International Information Order Debate

Besides the above sad reality of media operation in colonial Africa there were other issues related to cultural imperialism that were raised by the Third World countries. These were aptly captured below:

The on-going search and struggle for the establishment of a new World Information Order cannot be correctly evaluated and understood unless it is taken as the continuation of the oppressed nations’ struggles and quests for complete emancipation in the fields of economics, politics, ideology and culture. One of the colonial legacies of the nations of Africa ... has been the biased, unbalanced and often distorted pattern of reporting and assessing of events designed to reinforce the news ascendancy and value judgements of the Western countries. That kind of journalism and manipulation of the press made possible the white-washing and camouflage of the brutalities, inhumanities and selfish motives behind slavery and colonialism and presenting them as missions of civilisation and Christianity [Chikerema, 1986: 17].

This sums up the diverse range of issues that made up the New World Information Order debate. Among a number of options and ways forward, the creation of alternative news agencies was argued for and pursued as one of solutions to the problem. This is the global political and cultural context in which organisations like ZIANA were established in developing countries. These countries were demanding a chance to “develop their own collective self-reliance in news, information and entertainment, progressing at a rate and in a manner appropriate to their needs rather than in conformity to the marketplace needs of the industrialised nations [Fore, W. F.].

Dimensions of ZIANA

According to the organisation's policy document of 1981, Ziana was set up under the Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust chaired by Dr Sadza to:

Seek, obtain and otherwise receive their subscription, payment, exchange national regional, local and other news and features; distribute such news, news material and news features to subscribers against payment either in the form of features or news exchanges or such other terms as may be agreed upon; present complete objective and impartial information, news or news material or features on any matter of public or national interest within and outside Zimbabwe; report truthfully and fairly without prejudice to public and national interest the views of all sections of the population of Zimbabwe, [ZMMT Policy document: 1981].

In the organisation's documents it is reflected that when it was founded, ZIANA had 80 staff members of which 20 were journalists working at the head office in Harare and bureaus in Mutare, Gweru, Bulawayo, Masvingo and Gwanda. The head office was linked to Gweru and Bulawayo bureaus by point to point telex system allowing a two-way transmission of news at any time and by telephone link with other offices.

ZIANA had contractual relations for commercial or exchange agreements with 22 foreign news agencies, eight of which were in Africa and Asia. Reception of news by ZIANA head office from six foreign agencies via cable and five radio Teletype casts and printed bulletins. Within Zimbabwe, ZIANA offered news service transmissions via leased cable lines, postal and messenger services. The news agency gave itself a target of 10 000 words per day of news from Zimbabwe and SADC. Among other organisations, the news service was served to Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, Zimbabwe Newspapers, News File, News Services, Reserve Bank, Orbis International, Modus Publishers, Ministry of Information, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, some embassies, Associated Press, AFP, Reuters, Tass, Xinhua News Agencies, Inter-Press Service, Aim, PANA, ZANA and Shihata.

In short, the ZIANA project was quite ambitious and founded on noble principles and objectives of democratising the flow of information at domestic and international levels. However, in spite of its grandiose pronouncements, and promising beginning, ZIANA, just like a number of similar projects in developing countries, suffered retarded growth and could not adequately fulfill the purpose for which it was created en route to its demise.

What Went Wrong?

With reference to the functioning of the dilapidated state of ZIANA just before its demise, the then Minister of State for Information and Publicity in the Office of the President and Cabinet, Professor Jonathan Moyo rightly commented that:

“It would be dishonest for any informed person to pretend that Ziana's difficulties are new because things there fell apart a long time ago,” [*The Sunday Mail* 4 August 2002].

There was something rotten in the running of not only ZIANA, but also the organisation's mother body: ZMMT. However, diagnosing the chronic illness of the later is beyond the scope of this paper. Below is a discussion of what went wrong with ZIANA.

At a seminar in 1991, ZIANA's editor-in-chief and chief executive officer, Henry Muradzikwa threw some light on his organisation's ailments. He said:

The history of Ziana is one of confusion, chaos and lack of a clearly defined direction. Not a single document exists stating in unambiguous terms, the rationale and philosophy of the organisation. Consequently, for 10 years the organisation has drifted in circles and turns almost without aim.

The captain and his crew have only managed to keep the ship afloat in a struggle for survival. That in itself must be considered a success given the enormity of the problems the organisation faced and still faces, [Muradzikwa, "Ziana Maps out Future Strategy", ZIANA Copy 8 September 1991.

He said that one thing which was clear was that Ziana was in the business of gathering news, producing features and selling all of these to its various clients. The seminar's purpose was to critically examine the operations of Ziana, past, present and synthesize their ideas into a new vision for the future.

The major problem with ZIANA was succinctly captured in a 1997 consultancy report carried that stated that:

Ziana suffers from debilitating structural and financial incapacities. They begin with the absence of any clear legal status on which to operate commercially, compounded by limited financial management skills, lack of marketing and pricing policies, and an endemic culture of non-profit making shored up by subsidy.

There is no evidence of any purposive and methodical attempt to match costs by revenue, or to set goals and targets in either of these areas. Nor does there appear to be any effective mechanism to separate out and monitor the organisation's various business functions and activities, [Consultancy Report on the Commercialisation of Ziana Prepared for the Minister of Information, Posts and Telecommunications by the British High Commission in Zimbabwe, 1997: 20].

In the larger part of its existence, ZIANA was technically insolvent. According to the agency's documents shareholders, funds turned to a debt balance of over \$13m at the end of December 2000. Current liabilities exceeded current assets by over \$16 million making it impossible for the agency to honour the payment of its obligations as they became due. For example, on many occasions, ZIANA ran up astronomical telephone and telex bills to a point where the responsible organisations switched the agency off-line. This action disrupted the work of ZIANA's clients, depriving them of a vital source of foreign news. To make matters worse, workers were occasionally not paid on time leading to low staff morale, something that seriously undermines productivity. In any case, disruption of core business in the media industry is seriously damaging since timeliness and consistence are highly valued.

In fact, the agency's expenditure massively outstripped revenue. Monthly fixed costs exceeded \$2m, whilst revenue potential based on current subscribers was less than half a million dollars. The deficit was always funded by the ZMMT and through annual government grants which were always dwindling thereby further crippling the agency.

Perception is another problem that haunted ZIANA. In spite of the steady growth of the country's media industry especially in the 1990s, the news agency's subscriber base did not increase. In stead, the number of its clients drastically dropped at international and domestic levels. At the latter level, the problem has largely been that of perception. The Zimbabwean media industry is seriously polarised with the public media wrestling with the accusation of being Zanu [PF], government and state sycophants while private media see themselves as champions of freedom of expression hence democracy.

This was revealed in stories written on ZIANA by most private media houses. For example, ZIANA was referred to as an agency that writes "near-useless stories" and on top of that the copies will be late. *The Daily News* argued that in spite of the troubled nature of the agency, money continued being poured into ZIANA, with no returns while it sank deeper into debt. The report says the agency could not pay its staff and creditors. ZIANA was said to be "a complete waste of public funds and must go." The story whose strongly worded headline screamed, "Shut Down Ziana Now, There is no Future for it," ended by asserting: "controlled information through government news agencies will never sell" [*The Daily News*, 30 August 2002].

As a result, from the above 50 subscribers it had in the 1990s, ZIANA had about ten at the point of its demise. From a media economics perspective, such a small clientele base cannot fully support the operations of any national news agency. This contrasts sharply with other news agencies whose business is propped up by a larger subscriber base. For example, SAPA has more than 100 subscribers, Associated Press [AP] serves well over 14 000 newspapers, radio and television subscribers in over 100 countries. Maybe this is not the best of comparisons. However the fact remains. This show that ZIANA failed to grow and fully execute and accomplish its national obligations.

Operational Handicaps of Ailing ZIANA

Taking note that, among other things, ZIANA was set up to democratise the domestic information flow, it becomes clear that the agency failed in that regard. The formerly information poor masses in rural areas have remained marginalised as ZIANA was forced to re-define itself and shrink its news catchment areas in favour of the vicinity of its head office in Harare and a few of its remaining provincial offices. In this case, operational policy was defined by financial realities and contrasted sharply with the one on paper and declared at inception.

The national news agency had no financial resources to pay its reporters well enough to retain them, let alone employ enough reporters. Also, there was no money to provide enough transport and technological gadgets for communication in the fast relaying of news before they become stale. These problems forced ZIANA to cover the same urban events that were also covered by their subscribers thereby rendering their copies a duplicate of what they already had hence useless. This explains why, in spite of having a common ZMMT

parentage, Zimpapers rarely used ZIANA's copy. For example, it was common practice for *The Herald* to go for six days of the week without using a Ziana story. Normally, there were two or so ZIANA stories in Monday's edition of *The Herald*. It was so because *The Herald* has a skeletal staff on Sundays that write stories for the Monday paper that is traditionally quite thin. Moreover, there is little that takes place in public and corporate sectors on Sunday to be reported in the Monday paper.

Related to this scenario is the fact that, because of failure to pay its reporters competitively, ZIANA has become training ground for journalists who are quickly snatched by better paying organisations as soon as they become seasoned. In an interview the president of ZUJ, Mathew Takaona, bemoaned the agency's problems. He said:

ZIANA has fallen from the prestigious position that it enjoyed in the 1980's. It used to pay so well that it attracted the most senior journalists in the country and the agency's copy was always better written than that of its subscribers. Today the agency is almost dead. Besides having journalists that are fresh from college or on attachment, there is no transport and other resources for the coverage of events we [Zimpapers] fail to cover [6 September 2002].

ZIANA, just like the rest of mainstream and community media in Zimbabwe, did not go deep into rural areas if it was not following a high-ranking government official going to preside over a certain public ritual. As a result its stories were always more than 90% urban and the rest based on peri-urban happenings.

Other Ailing National News Agencies

ZIANA was not the only national news agency in that predicament. Generally, most news agencies in developing countries are besieged by many problems that have grossly compromised their discharge of core business. This has been the case whether it is Zambia News Agency [ZANA], Namibia Press Agency [NAMPA], Botswana Press Agency [BOPA] or Shirika la Habari la Tanzania [SHIHATA] just to name a few. Even the Non-Aligned News Agency Pool [NANAP] and Pan-African News Agency [PANA] are equally crippled. If it is agreed that the realities, philosophy and objectives that led to the establishment of Ziana were shared among Third World countries when they set up their national news agencies including PANA and NANAP, then it is also agreed that that the current scenario implies the disruption of a noble and well intentioned dream of developing countries. PANA has since been privatised due to financial problems. As a result, it is grappling with the characteristic challenges associated with the need to balance the profit motive drive and the execution of a public service obligation.

How others are flourishing when some are perishing

As discussed above, ZIANA, like other similarly constructed news agencies, is a victim of negative perception emanating from its link with the government. In practice, media houses that are financially and politically independent have a stronger claim to credibility, impartiality and objectivity in their news reporting. The limits to autonomy are generally seen to relate

variously to issues of ownership, control and sources of finance. Within the context of this argument, it is interesting to look at profiles of successful international news agencies.

The 19th century Reuters, Havas [France] and Wolff/Continental [German] had government links. These agencies, the leading ones in the 19th century, were independent companies whose success in their early years was generated by the strengths and personalities of their founders. They were all indirectly linked to their respective governments, which were important as sources of revenue and as sources of intelligence, and it is generally considered that their news services reflected their respective national interests. For example, Read argues that Reuters in the period 1860 - 1900 functioned “increasingly as an institution of the British Empire” [Quoted in Boyd-Barrett, O 1998: 23]. Wolff was subsidised by Bismarck’s government that wanted to prevent Reuters from taking over the German agency [Ibid.]. In fact, political funding of news agencies has been practised in many disguised forms including ‘excessive’ payments for services rendered in the case of Reuters. But what is important to note here is that the media in their countries and even abroad did not disfavour these news agencies on the basis of government links.

A new model of agency ownership and control in the form of a co-operative emerged in the 20th century US. For example, when AFP succeeded Havas, it took a co-operative ownership structure, representing newspapers, journalists and the state. AFP is subject to government interference through state representatives on the agency’s governing council. Such influence was exerted in 1975 to block the re-appointment of Jean Marin as director general and again to prevent the re-election of Lionel Fleury as director in 1996, following the agency’s 1995 coverage of a housing scandal which involved the Prime Minister [Ibid. 25].

This implies that what really matters is not mere government involvement in a news agency’s affairs that should devastate its credibility but power relations in the operations of the agency and how the media in a country view the government and state and subsequently understand the issue of national interests. In fact Reuters has provisions to prevent the control of the agency by a single interest group. Unfortunately, it is largely in developing countries and specifically in Africa where the populace and culture industries have been mis-schooled to hate their governments together with government-related institutions.

Related to the success of global news agencies, as noted above, is their broad-based or democratised ownership structure. This development is at the centre of their prosperity in the sense that even if the big news agencies have global markets, their most important markets have tended to be their home or domestic markets, followed by North America and Western Europe. “For Reuters”, Boy-Barett argues, “the UK is the single most important country, in terms of revenue” that amounted to 16% of the total in 1995 [Ibid.30]. He adds that the same is true for AP and AFP in their domestic US and French markets respectively. What this means for someone tasked to revive a news agency like Ziana is discussed below.

Zimbabwe's Domestic Information Order

*“Every country needs a national news agency that not only links and unifies various parts of that country together but also links the soul of that country itself with the rest of the world from the point of view of up-to-date news and information” [Moyo, J. **The Sunday Mail**, 04 August 2002].*

If the objective of African governments' [including Zimbabwe] communication policies was to democratise the flow of information at domestic and international levels the result has been a flop. A number of factors, inter alia, weak initial capital base; poor management and lack of equipment and commitment militated against the realisation of this noble objective. Communication technologies have remained centralised much to the exclusion of the citizens who live in rural areas. Consequently, the much-lauded policies of nation building and socio-economic and political development have remained at the level of rhetoric. Tehranian, [1980] refers to this as, “cognitive tyranny by the ruling groups.” His argument is that, in African societies the use and management of communication technologies, especially the dominant mass communication systems, has been to propagate the views and values, and to perpetuate the interests and positions of the political leadership and elite.

As a result of centralised structures, communication technology is monopolised by the urban population, particularly the socio-economic, political, military, and administrative elite, who use it for “collective monologue, ignoring the villages and farmers and, by implication, an overwhelming majority of the population” [Ekwelie, S. 1985: 28]. The structure of communication technology systems in Black Africa ensures vertical communications, in which the predominant mode of information flow is from the top to the bottom, and the few talk to the many about the needs and problems of the many from the perspectives of the few, [MacBride, S. 1980: 168]. A form of information apartheid is the result.

Ziana's successor

A successor to ZIANA is already in place. It operates as a news agency falling under an ambitious multimedia organization called New Ziana. Well before its birth, the core business of the news agency was stated as that of performing the dual job of bringing Zimbabwe to world and taking the world to Zimbabwe.

“ZIANA is a key and strategic national institution that should never be allowed to die. We have a vision of new, well funded multi-media ZIANA that would have new and nationally dedicated staff who are highly qualified and are committed to using the best business and media industry practices to gather and disseminate credible news about and from Zimbabwe from a Pan African perspective,” [Moyo, J, **The Sunday Mail** - 8 August 2002].

So what is clear is that, government acknowledges the importance of a national news agency as a strategic institution. Such an institution become even more important and strategic in this epoch of rapid cultural fussions as waves of globalisations continue to intensify.

However, unclear funding mechanism and funding levels have already appeared. This can be deciphered from the text below in which the responsible government minister was responding to the following question by a reporter in a question and answer session:

Reporter: If ZIANA is that necessary, why is there a reluctance to spend money on it, or is it a question of prioritising?

Minister: *“It is not true that there is a reluctance to spent money on New Ziana nor is it true that any money has been requested from anybody or authority. The New Ziana is not yet there, nor do we know how much it will require once it is there. We still have the old ZIANA and we are in the process of restructuring it because it is not relevant and not viable. In the restructuring process, we must be careful not to take the approach that money is the solution because it never is. Money is not the issue. Anyone who tells you that they will do good things only if you pay them huge amount of money is either a charlatan or a mercenary and needs to get real. Yes, money is an important thing but real solutions to real problems require much more than money. Good solutions are driven by good ideas and often those who want money do not have good ideas. That is why it is always better to reward good ideas that you have than to use money in the hope of getting good ideas.” [Moyo, J, **The Sunday Mail** - 8 August 2002].*

In the same speech he noted that the future of the new project was anchored on the formulation of Strategies and structures that are competitive and driven by a professional, motivated and committed news staff capable of identifying new business opportunities that can attract investment [Ibid.] The kind of investment referred to here is not quite clear in the sense that the umbrella organization, New Ziana, to which the news agency belongs, is a private company. New Ziana is wholly owned and controlled by the government of Zimbabwe. However, the issue of corporatising the entity is necessary so that dependency on government grants while operating in ways that are inimical to business becomes a thing of the past.

Concluding remarks

The problems of ZIANA were quite crippling and restructuring the project was necessary was long over due. However, a challenge that has already emerged is that of coming up with a structure of ownership that endears the news agency to the local media market. That has not been done. As discussed above, the prosperity of news agencies lie in a co-operative structure that is in line with what prosperous global news agencies have adopted including the “Big Four.”

The new News Agency’s structure of ownership and control should include interested parties and main categories of clients for news agency services which include domestic media, corporate sector government and other stakeholders. This model ensures that a news agency, in the first place attains funding, gain local acceptance and prosper within and without Zimbabwe. This will make the agency capture the domestic market, which, as illustrated

above, is a requisite foundation upon which the big global news agencies constructed their success. This challenge is looming and may lead to another flop if drastic administrative steps are not taken to address it.

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DEGREE-DAYS AS A TOOL IN DECISION MAKING AND CROP MONITORING

By

Kampion Shoko¹

Abstract

The objective of this study was to demonstrate how degree-days can be used in decision making and crop monitoring. The results obtained include monthly mean degree-days total, cumulative monthly degree-days, mean annual cumulative degree-day map and graphs, mean monthly temperature graphs for selected stations and the Beitbridge example that illustrates the use of degree-days as a decision making tool in agriculture. The cumulative degree-day map shows the magnitude and temporal distribution of heat units for Zimbabwe. The graphs show high values of degree-days in the low lying areas decreasing with altitude. Near zero values are found over the Eastern Highlands. This means that for base temperature 18 ° C, temperate crops are unsuitable for this area. Values of 2000 and more degree-days in the low lying areas mean that tropical crops can be grown in these areas all year round. The middle and high velds can only support tropical crops in the summer season. The map drawn goes further to confirm this trend. The example graph for Beitbridge illustrates how to determine dates for attainment of critical phenological stages and harvesting using degree-days where warmth is the only limiting factor.

Introduction

Plants require energy for growth and development and some of this energy is in the form of heat. A lot of work/research has been done on rainfall and its effects on the spatial distribution of cropping systems in Zimbabwe. On the other hand, despite the fact that temperature data/information is readily available and the fact that temperature is the single most important weather element that affect plant response, not much research has been done to effectively utilize the thermal resources of Zimbabwe.

The concept of degree-days or heat units has evolved and is being used in other countries.

These (degree-days) have been found to be a better way of relating plant growth, development and maturity to temperature than temperature alone. The degree-day concept assumes that each plant has its own base and threshold temperatures and these vary with the phenological stage.

The rates of most plant developmental processes and hence the timing of phenological phases are strongly temperature dependent. Take for example a given phenological stage that takes k days, the corresponding rate of development (R_d) is $1/k$. So this means that there is an inverse proportionality between the time taken to complete a developmental stage and the corresponding rate of development (R_d). In a constant environment then ;

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$$1/k. =R_d =f(T) \dots\dots\dots 1.1$$

where T is the temperature. Within a growing temperature range for a plant, increasing the temperature will result in decreased number of days taken to complete a particular stage and vice versa.

Objectives

This research has been done with the following objectives in mind;

- Demonstrating how degree-days can be used to monitor crop growth and development.
- Demonstrating how degree-days can be used in pest management.
- Demonstrate how degree-days can be used for strategic planning for example, determining dates for harvesting and dates for attainment of critical phenological stages.
- Establishing the spatial distribution of degree-days in Zimbabwe and how this can be used in decision making.

Definitions of important terms or concepts:

- **Base temperature:** This is the lowest threshold temperature below which growth ceases for a plant.
- **Upper critical temperature:** This refers to the highest temperature beyond which growth is curtailed or stops for a plant due to heat stress
- **Optimal temperature:** This is the temperature range where maximum growth rate is realised for a plant. This is between the base temperature and the upper critical temperatures
- **Phenological stage:** This is a particular stage of plant/crop development for example, flowering and maturity stages
- **Degree-day:** This is excess temperature above a given threshold, below which growth and development ceases. In this research the threshold temperatures were 15° C and 18° C.

Temperature and Agriculture

“Climate is the dominant natural characteristic in all parts of Zimbabwe and is the most important single factor influencing land use. It sets the pattern of agricultural production through its direct and indirect effects upon crops and animals” (Vincent and Thomas, 1956). Combinations of climatic factors such as rainfall, radiation, humidity, temperature and wind just to mention a few are needed for optimum development and production.

Although there are many weather elements that are of vital importance to agriculture, only temperature and degree-days will be discussed in this article, and in particular the role of temperature and its derived parameter degree-day will be discussed. The main aim is to bring out the importance of degree-days and temperature to crop and animal production.

Temperature is the second most important meteorological element in agricultural production (after rainfall). Temperature directly affects plant functions of photosynthesis, respiration, cell-wall permeability, enzyme activity and protein coagulation. For a seed to be able to germinate and grow, it has to absorb moisture. The ease with which it can do this is determined by temperature and the level of available moisture. Temperature is therefore one of the factors determining growth rate, level of bacterial or fungal activity, duration of the growing period, mineral and nutrient uptake rate and the time to flowering.

In crop production and animal husbandry, there is a range of temperatures in which growth and development are realised. At each phenological stage in crop growth and development, there is a threshold lowest temperature at which growth ceases called the lower critical temperature or the base temperature. There is also the highest temperature beyond which growth is curtailed due to heat stress which is called the upper critical temperature. Between the upper and the lower critical temperatures is found a temperature or temperature range where maximum growth rate is realised. This is the optimum temperature.

It is important to note that the maximum temperature for plant life is about 54 °C and the minimum temperature for plant growth is 5 °C. These values vary from cultivar to cultivar. The following is a table indicating the average base temperatures for selected crops in general.

Table 1: Average base temperatures for selected crops

Crop	Base temperature in ° C
Spinach	2.2
Lettuce	4.4
General plant growth	5.5
Peas	5.5
Asparagus	5.5
Corn	10.0
Beans	10.0
Pumpkins	13.0
Tomatoes	13.0

Source: Jones H.G (1992)

For animals, the thermo-neutral zone is very important in the maximization of the efficiency of metabolism. For both plants and animals, temperature is important in the emergence, development and propagation of pests and diseases. Most plant viruses, unless they are very infectious and easily transmitted by contact like tobacco mosaic virus, are transmitted by anthropoids, and some insects. So viruses spread fastest under conditions optimal for insect multiplication and activity. Aphids and leafhoppers are the principal vectors of plant viruses. The optimal temperatures for aphid reproduction is 26°C (Taylor, 1967). Winged aphids cannot fly when the temperature is below 13°C and above 30°C. Temperature has a major role in the over-wintering of pests and aphids. Very cold temperatures mean few pests and viruses over-winter.

The delineation of frost-areas, hot-areas and areas with optimal temperatures for growth can be achieved easily with temperature maps. Determination of degree days, growing period, vernalization time, time for abscission and dormancy all depend on temperature in combination with light (Jones, 1992). In cold countries like Russia the heat index plays a very crucial role in crop and animal production.

Sivakumar et al (1993) describes the temperature of a locality as a manifestation of the radiation and energy balance and that thermal regime analysis of a place are essential to evaluate the rates of activity of temperature dependent developmental processes such as leaf initiation, leaf expansion, photosynthesis and respiration.

Degree-days and their importance to Agriculture

In plant growth and development each phenological stage requires a specific number of thermal units or heat units that vary with plant type and the stage of development. These thermal units are often referred to as degree-days. There are three ways to calculate degree-days namely, the mean temperature method, the triangulation method and the sine curve method (Chmielewski et al, 1995). Despite their differences, the mean temperature method gives results that are not significantly different from the other two methods. In the mean temperature method degree-days are given by:

$$DD = \sum_{d=0}^n (T_{\text{mean}} - T_t) \text{ for } T_t \leq T_{\text{mean}} \leq T_o \quad \dots\dots\dots 1.2$$

Where DD is the accumulated degreedays.

DD = 0; for $T_{\text{mean}} \leq T_t$ (Jones, 1992), where T_{mean} = mean temperature calculated from $(T_{\text{max}} + T_{\text{min}})/2$, T_t or T_{base} = threshold temperature for development to occur, T_o = optimum temperature.

Hergarty (1973), in his studies of field performance of crops in temperate climates indicated that temperature accounted for far more of the total variation in the relative growth rate than did any other climatological factor. Temperature influences all enzyme controlled chemical reactions in the plant from germination onwards. The timing of phenological phases, dormancy and leaf abscission all depend on temperature and degree-days.

In crop production degree-days are important in a number of ways. These include assessment of crop growth and development, crop production strategies and policies. Degree-days are a better way of assessing thermal units than temperature, for they take into account the growing temperature conditions for a crop or plant.

In animal husbandry and industry, the concept of degree-days has been used in the assessment of the development of both homeotherms and poikilotherms. Insects also experience a temperature - mediated (controlled) "time scale," which is the dominant driving variable in their population dynamics (Allsopp et al , 1987).

Uses of the growing degree-days concept in crop production include the following:

- scheduling of planting and harvesting for many cash crops for example peas, beans and corn
- monitoring growth and development progress for plants, for example bloom date and fruit development
- yield forecasting
- prediction/indicator of oil quality for soya beans and other legumes.
- site selection for crop or crop selection for a locality
- prediction of dates for insect activity related to agriculture and forestry

Use of heat units (degree-days) in pest management

Living organisms, like plants have upper and lower critical temperatures for growth and development. The accumulated degree-days for a given organism to complete development are constant. This measure of accumulated heat is known as physiological time. As temperature increases, the time taken to develop decreases and vice-versa. Physiological time is measured in degree-days. The date to begin accumulating degree-days is called the biofix and is mostly based on specific biological events such as planting date, first trap catch and first occurrence of the pest.

Population and development models based on degree-days have been used to pin point biological events. In pest management these degree-day- based models can be used to achieve the following:

- to determine when to start applying the pest control measures;
- to minimise the conflict between cultural and pest control operations such as irrigation and pesticide application;
- to determine the situational position in the development of a generation of pests;
- to schedule and time efficiently pesticide application;
- to determine whether the outbreak is false or peak;
- to determine when to do extensive scouting and sampling; and
- to maximise production through reduced cost and damage by pests

Use of degree-days in the management of energy resources

The need to conserve energy has led some cities to use degree-days in their energy resources management strategies. Base temperature 18.3°C and any cumulative units above this base temperature are referred to as cooling units whereas cumulative units below this temperature are

called heating units. Given temperature data, city engineers can determine the energy requirements for heating or cooling on daily , weekly, monthly and even on annual bases. (Internet)

Methodology

The objective of this study was to demonstrate how degree-days can be used for strategic planning such as monitoring crop growth and development, determining dates for planting, harvesting, critical phenological stages attainment and also pest management. Degree-days which are derived from temperature data are the second most important weather parameter in agricultural production after rainfall. Pest management’s main source of decision making information is obtained from degree-days. Degree-days are an indicator of warmth or cold which are important parameters in pest population dynamics.

Temperature information that was used to calculate the degree-days was obtained from the Meteorological Department for 43 stations period 1951-2000. Daily maximum and minimum temperatures were collected and monthly mean maximum and minimum temperatures for each of the 43 stations were calculated.

Degree-days were calculated using the following formular;

$$DD = \sum_{d=0}^n (T_{mean} - T_t) \text{ for } T_t \leq T_{mean} \leq T_o \dots\dots\dots 1.3$$

Where DD is the accumulated degree days.

DD = 0; for $T_{mean} \leq T_t$ (Jones, 1992), where T_{mean} = mean temperature calculated from $(T_{max} + T_{min})/2$, T_t or T_{base} = threshold temperature for development to occur, T_o = optimum temperature.

In the **mean monthly temperature method** the formular given above for the calculation of degree days can be simplified to:

$$DD = (T_{mean} - T_{base}) \times M \dots\dots\dots 1.4$$

Where DD = monthly degree day total

T_{mean} = monthly mean temperature calculated from $(T_{max} + T_{min})/2$, M = number of days in the month. The choice of this method was necessitated by the fact that daily or hourly temperature data is hard to find for most places

Where daily maximum and minimum temperatures were available, INSTAT was used for calculations. SURFER 4 and SURFER 32 were used to draw maps while graphs were drawn using EXCEL

The results obtained include monthly mean degree-days , cumulative degree-days(annual totals) for each of the 43 stations. This data was used to draw the annual mean cumulative degree-day

total map, monthly mean degree-days graph for selected stations and the Beitbridge example illustrating the use of degree-days as a decision making tool in agriculture.

The other methods that can be used are the double sine, single triangulation and the double triangulation. All these are linear methods. Non-linear complicated methods are available and are often used for research.

Mean temperature calculations

The aspect of temperature investigated in this research is the mean temperature. This is because mean temperature and degree-days are highly correlated, in fact degree-days are derived from mean temperature. There are two methods that can be used to calculate mean temperatures namely:

- 1) using the daily/monthly maximum and minimum temperatures as shown by equation 1.4
 - 2) using the thermograph to calculate the twenty four hour mean temperatures
- The first method has been preferred to the second for a number of reasons, some of which are that thermographs are not reliable and that they are very few stations with this facility as compared to stations that record maximum and minimum temperatures.

The mean temperature data obtained from the calculations were then used in the calculation of degree-days, the drawing of monthly mean temperature graphs and monthly cumulative degree-days graphs for selected stations in Zimbabwe.

Results and Discussion

Figure 1.0 : Mean monthly temperature graphs for selected stations

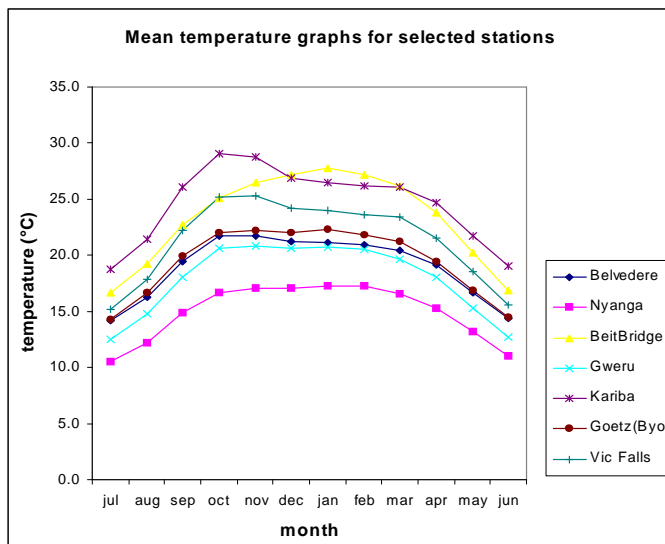


Figure 1.0 shows the selected stations on one graph. From this graph it can be observed that all the stations show a gradual rise from July to a maximum in October and a decrease towards June. From October to December, there is steep cooling attributed to summer convection and cloudiness. Peak values of nearly 30 °C are at Kariba and lowest values of 12°C are at Nyanga.

Degree Days

Mean monthly degree-day totals and monthly mean cumulative totals were calculated from the maximum and the minimum temperatures for base temperatures 18 ° C. Equations 1.4 and 1.3 were used for these calculations. The calculated degree-day data were then used to:

- a) Draw monthly mean degree-day totals bar graphs for selected stations
- b) Draw the Annual mean cumulative degree-day map for Zimbabwe
- c) Draw multiple line graphs for selected stations, showing monthly mean temperatures
- d) Draw multiple line graphs for the cumulative monthly mean degree-day total for a selected group of stations

Monthly degree days mean total graphs for selected stations

Figure 2(a): Monthly mean degree days total for Beitbridge

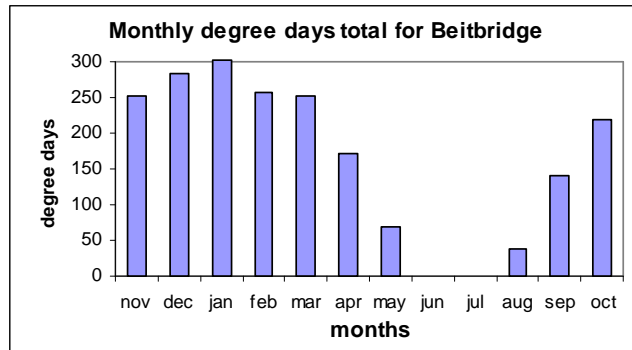


Figure 2(b): Monthly mean degree days total for Buffalo Range

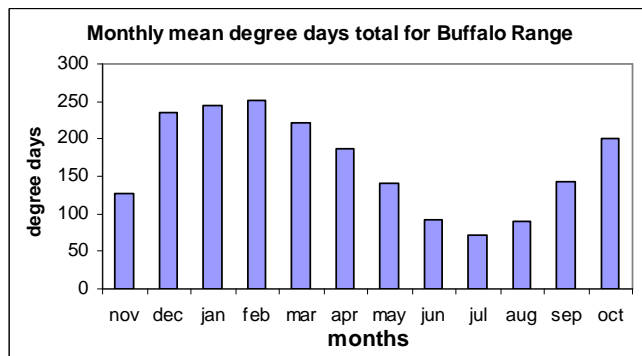


Figure 2(c): Monthly mean degree days total for Goetz

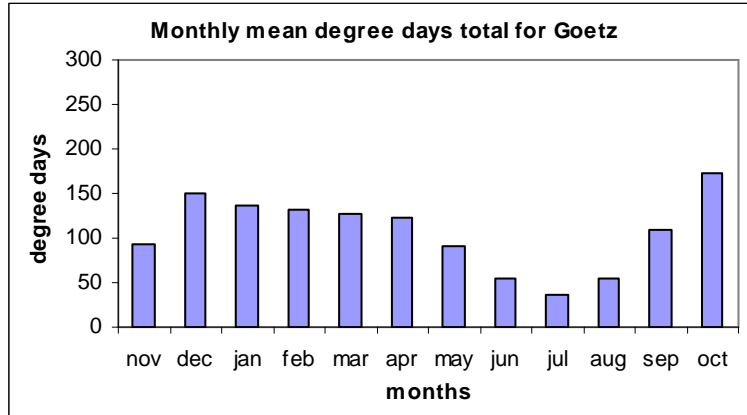


Figure 2(d): Monthly mean degree days total for Victoria Falls

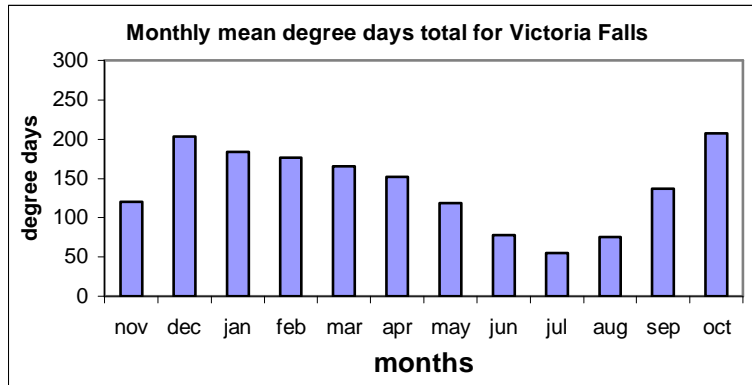


Figure 2(e): Monthly mean degree days total for Belvedere

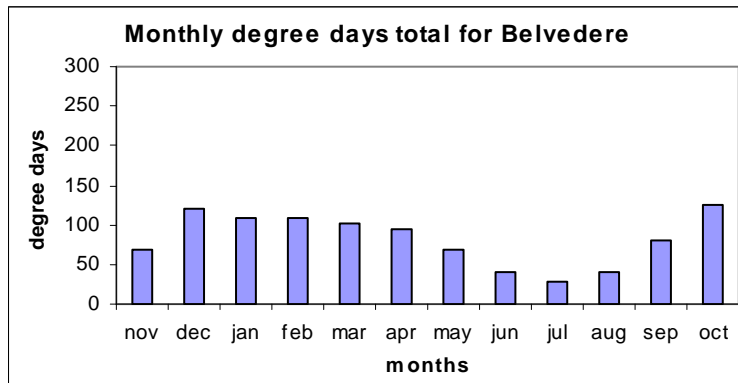


Figure 2(f): Monthly mean degree days total for Gweru

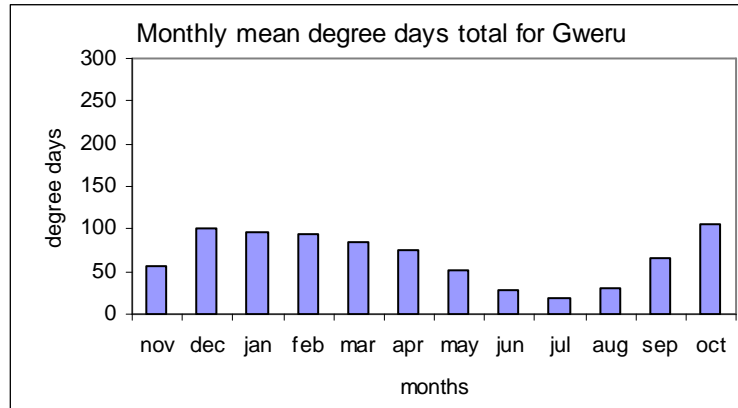
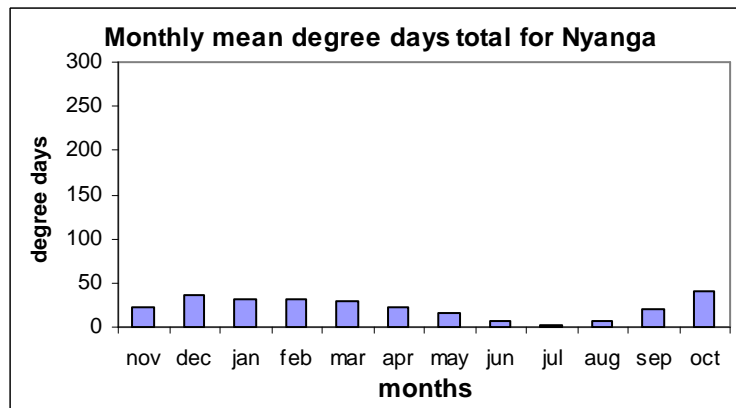


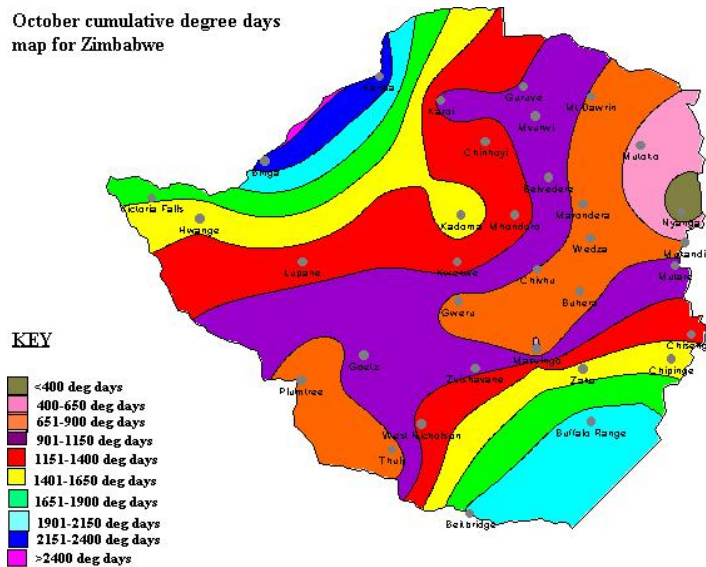
Figure 2(g): Monthly mean degree days total for Nyanga



Figures 2(a) to 2(g) show monthly mean degree-day totals for selected stations. The graphs resemble the monthly mean temperature graphs with highest values over the Limpopo and the Zambezi valleys where Beitbridge, Buffalo Range and Victoria Falls have 300, 280 and 260 units respectively. These values were calculated for the growing season which stretches from mid October to March .

The lowest values are 5, 45 and 20 units for Nyanga, Gweru and Belvedere respectively. Nyanga has near zero values for all the three winter months, remaining low even in summer and the hot season with 50 units being hardly received. Moderate values range from 100 to 150 units in summer and the hot season.

October cumulative degree days map for Zimbabwe



The map above shows the spatial distribution of the added monthly totals starting in November to October the following year. This calendar year is ideal because the growing season is not divided into two like what happens if the calendar year starts in July. Nyanga has an annual total of 400 or less units. On the other hand low lying areas have 2000 or more units. These units are actual high values ideal for tropical crops such as sugar cane. The middle veld has moderate values ranging from 900 to 1900 units. This can support crop growth especially in summer.

Figure 4(a): Cumulative monthly mean degree-class total multiple line graphs for a selected group of stations

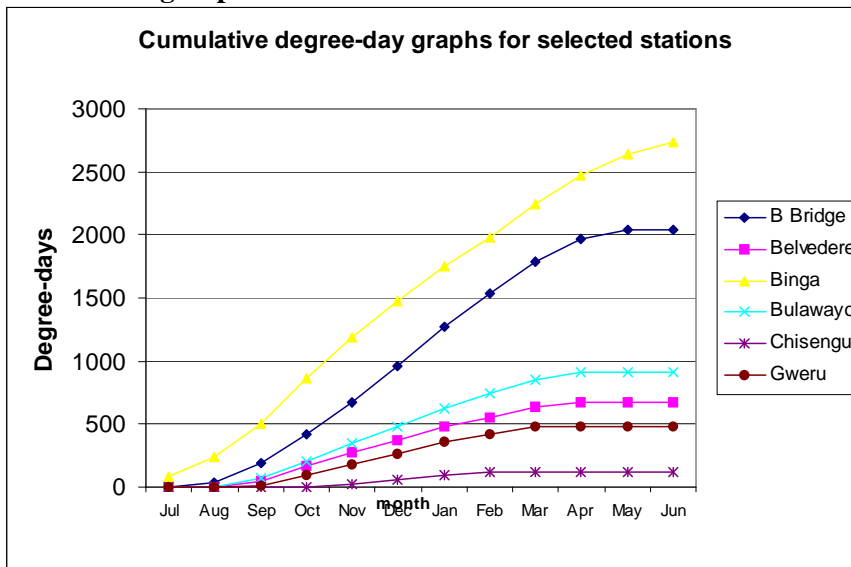


Figure 4(b): Cumulative monthly mean degree-day total multiple line graphs for a selected group of stations

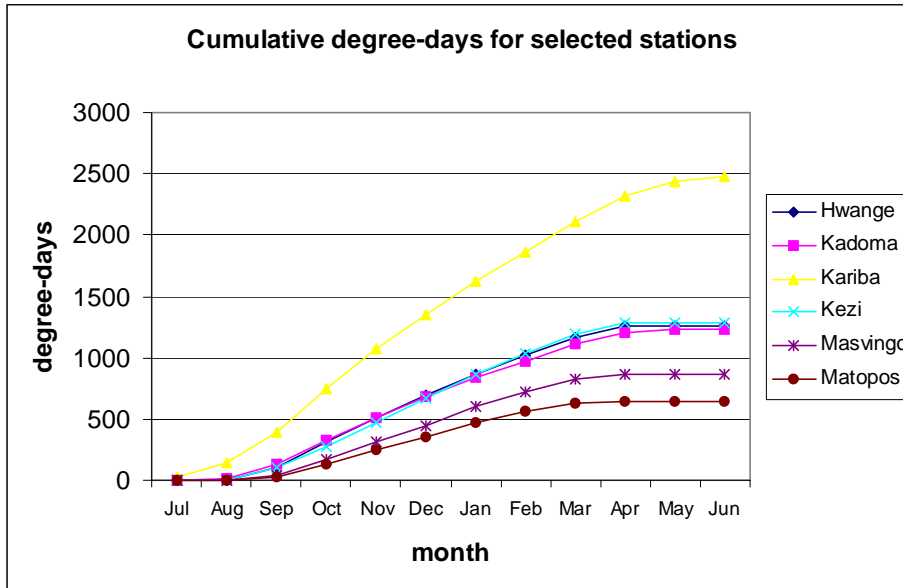


Figure 4(c): Cumulative monthly mean degree-day total multiple line graphs for a selected group of stations

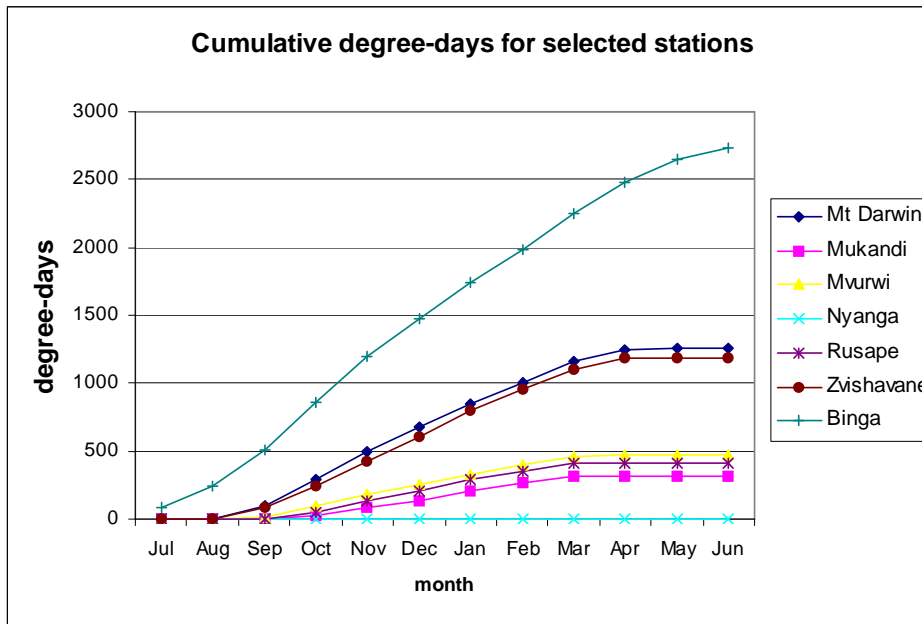


Figure 4(d): Cumulative monthly mean degree-day total multiple line graphs for a selected group of stations

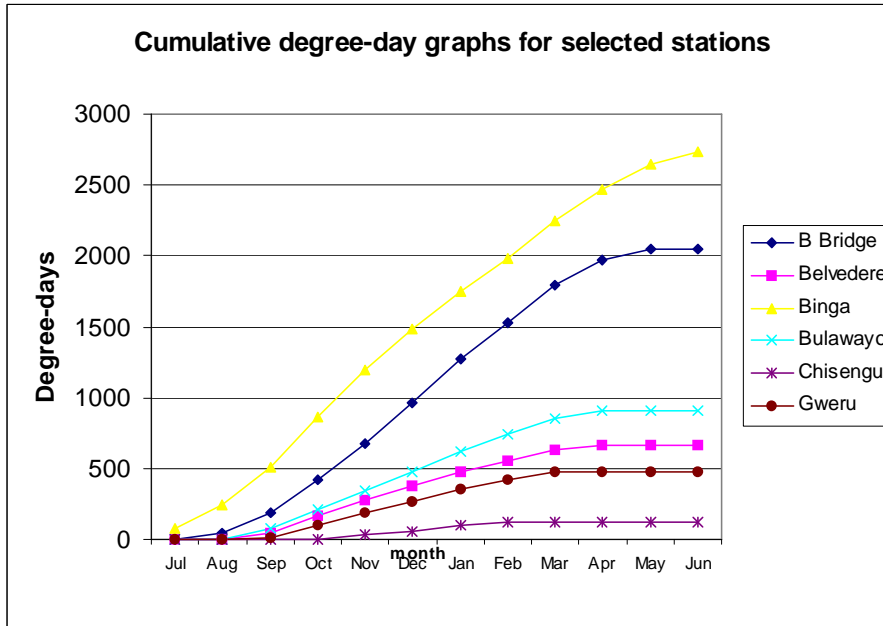
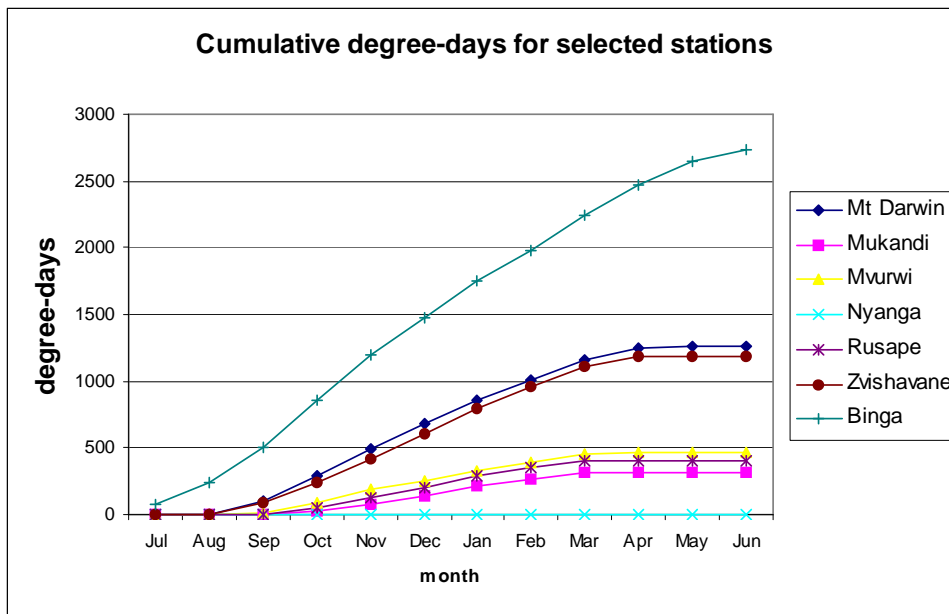


Figure 4(e): Cumulative monthly mean degree-day total multiple line graphs for a selected group of stations



Figures 4(a) to 4(e) are groups of graphs for selected stations. These graphs are very useful. The values indicate the magnitude of thermal units the station is capable of attaining. This information used in conjunction with the growing degree-days for a particular crop or agricultural operation can be a useful tool in crop selection for sites and site selection for crops or plants. The graphs indicate very high values of 25000 at Binga, Beitbridge and least values ranging from zero to 400 units are at Rusape, Mukandi, Chisengu and Nyanga. This means that only crops with thermal units of 400 degree-days or less can thrive in these areas. These are temperate crops such as wheat and apples for example.

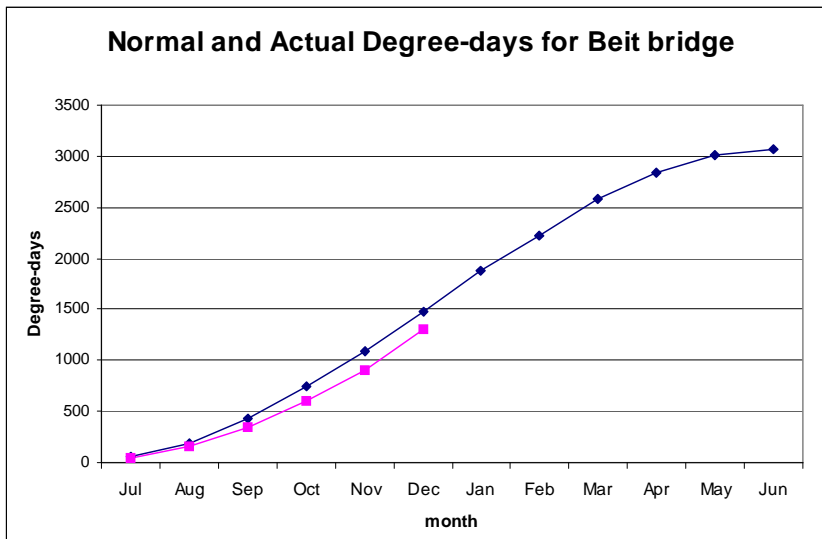
An example of how to use growing degree-days to forecast /determine harvesting and dates of attainment of the various phenological stages.

Method

Steps

1. Calculate long-term monthly cumulative degree-day totals for the place in question
2. Plot a graph of long-term monthly cumulative degree-days against the corresponding month of the year. Figure 5.0 shows an example of such a graph using the degree-day data for Beitbridge for base 10 ° C . The line marked by large squares (blue) and the line marked by smaller squares (red) are the normal and the actual cumulative degree- days.

Figure 5.0: Cumulative normal and actual degree days graphs for Beitbridge.



3. Assume the planting date was 31st October and the maize variety in question takes 2000 degree-days to reach harvesting date. If the temperature throughout the season was normal then harvest date will be at $(2000 + 748) = 2748$ degree-days. From the graph this date is 19th April.
4. If temperature conditions deviate from the normal, then the harvest date can change as well and this should be adjusted as the season progresses. To do this the actual daily temperatures are used to compute the degree-days accumulated up to the date that the calculation is to be done. From the theory that we have learnt a deficiency or surplus either delays or hastens the harvest from its predicted date. Suppose one plants on the 31st of December, to find the new harvest date resulting from this variation in the planting date. From the actual graph, 1300 degree-days will have accumulated up to this date, 600 of which will have elapsed on planting day. So the plant has acquired 700 degree-days. The plant still needs 1300 degree-days to be ready for harvesting.
5. From 1300 degree-days on the actual cumulative graph on 31st December, draw a line Parallel to the normal accumulation curve continuing to count for a further 1300 degree-days. This should count up to 2600 degree-days with a corresponding maturity date of 13th May. This is the new harvest date.

Note: The example given above assumes that all other growing conditions are not limiting and that temperature is the only variable element. Cooler than normal temperature has delayed the harvest date by 25 days and the reverse would be true for warmer than normal temperatures.

Given growing degree-days for various stages of a plant/crop and the daily temperatures for a place, apart from harvest date one can monitor the following:

- Appropriate planting dates
- Rate of plant/crop development
- Determine the growing period for a location for a particular crop/plant
- Crop selection for an area and site selection for a crop/plant

For pest management given the physiological times for various stages of pest development and the daily temperatures for a particular area apart from detection of peak infestation periods one can obtain the following information from the degree-day graph shown in Figure 5.0;

- Determine when to start applying the pest control measures
- Determine the situational position in the development of generation of pests
- Determination of whether the outbreak is false or peak
- When to do extensive scouting and sampling
- Delineation of pest prone areas

Conclusion

The study and discussions in this paper have illustrated or highlighted areas where degree-days can be used for various purposes. These areas include suitable site or areas for a crop or the selection of a suitable crop for a particular area, strategic agricultural planning like designing of crop callenders, pest and livestock management.

The map for the mean annual(cumulative) degree-days shows that the low lying and hot areas can support maize production all year round where as areas like the high-veld only offer the right

growth conditions in summer. The eastern highlands are the least suitable for maize growth and development. In fact the degree-days in this area are ideal for temperate crops like tea, apples etc which require small amounts of degree-days.

Recommendation

The study is suggesting a simple method that can be used for strategic planning which only requires, temperature data, agroclimatic data like phenological stage and corresponding degree-days. Where the method is used for pest management, information such as the number of degree-days required for various stages in development dynamics of the pest is required.

The study therefore recommends that there be the following;

- adequate research on heat requirements in terms of degree-days of local pests and crop cultivars. This information should include degree-days required for each phenological stage of a particular crop up to maturity. Where the method is used for pest management, warming or chilling units expressed as degree-days for problem pests should be researched on. This information is essential in the management of the pest populations and scheduling of pesticide application.
- an efficient network for the dissemination of this agrometeorological data to grassroots users.
- a good network of agrometeorological stations in the country to provide a good coverage of agrometeorological data.
- research stations where all other growth factors are not limiting apart from temperature.

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**THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMAN AND RESISTANCE TO
DOMINATION AND REPRESSION: A STUDY OF ALICE WALKER'S
CONTRIBUTION TO AFRICAN-AMERICAN LITERATURE AND
THOUGHT**

By

Tafirenyika Makombe¹

Abstract

This paper looks at Alice Walker's contribution to Black American writing. Her contribution is unique in the sense that she strives to highlight the condition of the African-American woman in America – she departs from mainstream African-American writing which focuses on the Negro's experiences in general. The paper argues that Walker presents Negro women being dominated and exploited as Negro women and not necessarily as African-Americans, and that men in general use Negro women as the arena in their power struggles. The paper acknowledges the limitations of Walker's artist vision and shows these limitations.

*“I believe that the truth about any subject comes when all the sides of the story are put together, and all their different meanings make one new one. Each writer writes the missing parts to the other writers' story.” (Alice Walker – *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* – p. 49).*

In an essay entitled “Saving the Life that is Your Own: The Importance of Models in the Artist's Life,” Alice Walker writes that “... I write all the things that I should have been able to read.”¹ The question that arises here is: what are these things that Walker should have been able to read? The answer to this question is: these things are the struggles of women, especially the American Negro women, against all forms of domination and oppression. They are the experiences of the American Negro woman in struggle. These experiences are the missing parts to the other writers' story which Alice Walker wants to tell.

By telling the story of these women, Walker inevitably tells the story of the relationships of these women with their men. And even more important, it is an inevitable waving goodbye to Negro American writing in which we see “... white people as primary antagonists.”² Walker argues that this kind of African-American writing tells us “... a lot about isolated (often improbable) or limited encounters with a non-specific white world.”³ She further contends that a book which deals with personal relations is as good as one which deals with Negro relations with the white world. The unique nature of Walker's contribution to African-American literature lies in this departure from dealing with essential Negro/white relations to dealing with personal relations.

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This departure should not be interpreted as Walker's failure to perceive the wider forces at play in the African-American's experiences. This is simply to say the struggles of Negro women in America against all forms of oppression have not been adequately told in these experiences, and hence Walker feels the need to assert the vital importance of these struggles.

This brings us to the main thrust of this essay, which is to discuss Alice Walker's portrayal of gender relations in her writings in the context of skewed economic and racial relations in America. The essay will attempt to trace gender relations through an analysis of sexual relations (rape), marriage, education (school) and the parasitic nature of men. The essay will then attempt to explain Walker's solutions to the problems she raises and discusses. In conclusion, the essay will take a look at some of the criticism leveled against Walker's artistic vision.

Essentially, the male/female relations in the arena of sexual intercourse, as portrayed in Walker's fiction, is characterized by the callous rape of women. Meridian is victim to Dexter (p. 59), Eddie (p.53) and Truman (p.111). She is also Professor Raymond's target for sexual gratification (pp. 107 – 108). Dexter's assistant pounces on the baby sitter (pp. 60-61). Tommy Odds takes it out on Lynne (pp. 159-160) and The Wild Child is pregnant by an unknown man (p. 24). The relations in the Grange/Margaret and Brownfield/Mem paradigms have the dubious distinction of systematic sexual battery. Fat Josie has also been systematically raped (pp. 39 – 40); Margaret has fallen prey to Shipley (p. 178) in the same way as Squeak has been preyed upon by Hodges, the Chief Prison Warden (p. 184). Celie's brutal and beastly victimization by Mr. — cannot be overemphasized.

What emerges in all the sexual relations outlined above is a situation in which sex has become an exercise where the express gratification of the men is not the only ultimate goal, but more significantly, a way of dominating the woman. This attitude is an undesirable residue from the days of slavery in which, as Angela Davies correctly argues, the slave master used violent sexual assaults to remind the slave woman of her essential and unalterable femaleness and male supremacy: "Rape was a weapon of repression, whose covert goal was to extinguish slave women's will to resist, and in the process, to demoralize their men."⁴ The idea of attempting to dominate the Negro man through raping Negro women as from the days of slavery is exemplified by Shipley, who reasons that since he "owns" Grange through sharecropping he can have Margaret as well. Tommy Olds, Brownfield and Mr. — attempt to dominate Lynne, Mem and Celie respectively by some savage and primitive apemanship of Shipley. Rape has become a process of asserting dominance by the white man as well as the black man. For women it has become a constant threat to their well being and the threat transcends race and time.

The contention that the exploited and brutalized tend to perpetrate the same kind of treatment to those weaker than him/her has been eloquently articulated before. This is the phenomenon of the oppressed enjoying his own oppressed. In the context of the African-American situation the argument is that Negro men take it out on their Negro women because they have had it from the white master. Brownfield is articulating this kind of logic as he tries to justify his abuse of

Mem: “Lawd, Mem, you knows how hard I try to do the right thing. I don’t make much money, you knows that. What can a man *do*?”⁵ Several other male characters: Mr. ———, Grange and Truman all attempt to blame the whites in their own different ways for the abuse of women. Walker invalidates this argument through Tommy Odds who foolishly continues to declare to Lynne that “We fucked” (p. 163) after she had put it to him that rape was a spurious way to assert power and control. This is a presentation of rape as the dastardly, barbaric and abominable act it is without regard as to the colour of skin or the reasons for the act.

The institution of marriage provides Walker with further ground to explore the male/female relations in the American experience. The essence of the argument is that marriage is some nefarious trickery meant to keep the woman in “her place.” In the marriage between Eddie and Meridian the quarrel between the two about starching and ironing Eddies’ pants and shirts, reflects the way Negro men want to use tradition to maintain a position of dominance and oppression of the woman. The answer to Meridian’s question as to why she has to do the ironing and starching is: “Things have always been done that way.” Tradition thus becomes a weapon of oppression and injustice for the women through the institution of marriage. This idea is born out of the patriarchal nature of the American society.

While Eddie attempts to use tradition to dominate Meridian within marriage, Brownfield and Mr... use violence. Mem is constantly being battered by Brownfield (p. 77 – 78), and is finally shot dead (p. 122). The conjugal union between Sofia and Harpo is a series of fights between the two (p. 36). All this indicates that violence is a special ingredient of African-American marriage, and the major reason for this is the men’s desire to exert control and dominate their women.

The violence can be traced back to the slave plantation where the whip was used liberally on the Negro; he/she was mutilated casually and the crackers had great fun taking pot shots at Negroes. Later in the American experience this kind of violence manifested itself through the Ku Klux Klan lynchings, police brutality and castration. American historical experience is thus a catalogue of various forms of violence whose specific aim is to enhance domination and oppression of one sort or the other. This is the psyche that informs the importing of violence into the institution of African-American marriage.

The image of marriage that we see in “Roselily” is that it is prison. This enhances the view that marriage is a tool of domination and oppression of the woman by the man. Through the motif of chains and shackles in the story, Walker presents the dungeon like nature of marriage. The gaoler emerges as the husband whose “... hand is like the iron clasp of an iron gate”⁶ and the prisoner the wife: “She thinks of the ropes, chains, handcuffs, his religion. His place of worship. Where she will be required to sit apart with covered head.”⁷ Marriage, therefore, does not guarantee freedom and Roselily’s uncertainty is further proof. Mrs. Jerome⁸ and Meridian’s mother⁹ also reflect how debilitating marriage can be. Thus male/female relations in marriage are essentially jailer/prisoner relations, and the victim is the woman.

The school and education appear as other forms which promote warped gender relations in America, particularly for the African-American woman. Meridian rejects Saxon College

because it was meant to turn the girls who attended it into ladies, which meant inculcating values that perpetuated the status of women as second class to that of men. Anne-Marion and Meridian's rebellious attitudes (p. 28) equate to the resistance against institutionalized oppression of women. The issue of turning the girls into ladies parallels the idea of transforming an individual into a slave – it is an assault on the individual's psyche. One can only be a slave if he/she believes he/she is a slave, and as Frederick Douglass asserts, you can be a slave in form and not in fact. This translates into the logic that a woman who accepts ladyhood accepts the male dominance that comes with the deal.

The limited and oppressive nature of Negro education returns at Ruth's nameless three-roomed school in Baker County. The idea of the Negro being at the foot of "The Tree of the Family of Man" (pp. 185 – 186) reinforces the false notion of the Negro being inferior to other human races. If the Negro man is at the bottom of the tree, then the Negro woman is surely nothing if she is supposed to be below the Negro man. This also means that she has to serve the whole world, as she is the servant to the world. Zola Neale Hurston articulates this argument through Jamie's grandmother: "De Nigger woman is de mule uh de world so fur as ah can see." (p. 29) Mr. ——'s insults aimed at Celie express the same philosophy of her being the ultimate inferior by virtue of her being a black woman: "You black, you pore, you ugly, you a woman. Goddam, he say, you nothing at all."¹⁰ And Brownfield also attempts the justification of his violence against Mem through the same logic: "A woman as black and as ugly as you ought to call a man Mister."¹¹ This kind of view of the woman as being inferior to the man is the view of women which Baker County School attempts to inculcate in the minds of its pupils. Ruth's outburst against Mr. Grayson parallels Meridian and Anne-Marion's resistance to being turned into ladies at Saxon College. The school and education are thus presented as being anti-woman and her emancipation.

The question of religion has always intrigued Alice Walker. In an essay entitled "From an Interview" she argues that God does not go beyond nature – a thesis she attempts to explain in *The Color Purple*. To her "... the world is God. Man is God. So is a leaf or a snake."¹² This issue of God, religion and Christianity finds its way into Walker's fiction.

Christianity, in Walker's presentation, plays an ambivalent role in women's lives. On the one hand it can be oppressive, and on the other hand it can be liberating. It becomes an oppressive tool due to the white patriarchal view of God as a white male as Celie writes to Nettie: "... this same old white man is the same God she used to see when she prayed."¹³ "Man" and "whiteness" are powerful symbols of oppression in a Negro woman's life. By associating God and these symbols Walker is underscoring Christianity as an oppressive institution to the Negro woman. Walker, however, challenges the linking of God to white maleness by arguing that God is African, is within the individual and is essentially everything (*The Color Purple* – pp. 166 – 167). This philosophy is critical to women because "... not being tied to what God looks like, frees us"¹⁴ as Nettie says. Walker thus redefines the concept of God and attacks the masculine conception because it is oppressive to women.

Meridian also rejects the oppressive presentation of Christianity when she refuses to accept God as a master (p. 16). The idea of master calls to mind the idea of slavery, and conjures up negative experiences of that dark era in Negro history. Accepting the kind of Christianity in which God is master is like embracing submissiveness and by extension oppression. This kind of Christianity is presented as incomprehensible to Meridian's mother (p. 71) because it is alien to her due to its oppressive qualities.

The kind of Christianity which Meridian eventually embraces is the one which, like Nettie's conception of God, offers and fosters the spirit of resistance to oppressive tendencies, and allows for freedom (pp. 199-200). The preacher who imitates Martin Luther King is Meridian's catalyst towards the realization that Christianity is as much a weapon of gender oppression as it is a tool of gender liberation: "He told the young women to stop looking for husbands and try to get something useful in their heads."¹⁵

The general picture of the nature of maleness which Walker presents in her fiction is a sharp accusation of men as diabolic and parasitic in nature in their relations with women. The male characters feed, vulture style, on the achievements of female characters. Grange is the "classic" symbol here. His journey to the North in search of the American dream turns out to be a nightmare as the North offers slavery in a different guise: "He had found that wherever he went whites were in control; they ruled New York as they did Georgia; Harlem as they did Pootung Street"¹⁶ On his return to the South, Grange cheats Josie out of her livelihood (the Dew Drop Inn - p. 156), and then discards her. He channels his loot towards Ruth, but this is not for her sake only, but his as well. She provides him with the opportunity to do what he failed to do for his family and himself: "And the Lord or something dropped you in my lap. A voice said to me, you stop that cuttin' up, Nig, here's a reason to get yourself together and hold on."¹⁷ Grange sees Brownfield as his failed second life and Ruth as his third that should not fail, hence his desire to do the best he can. Grange had cheated Margaret (running away from home and leaving her at the mercy of Shipley), and his taking away of Josie's Inn is another form of cheating a woman out of the fruits of her labour. He is thus making a hollow attempt to exorcise himself through Ruth. His life is a satanic opera at the expense of the women in his life. Grange's drama is acted out by a host of other male characters in Walker's fiction: Pa steals Celie's fortune, Mordecai steals Raul's wife's short stories, Trynor's fame is based on songs written by Grace Mae Still, Harpo's club thrives because of Shug's singing and so on. The thesis here is that men are callously parasitic in their interactions with women.

Having painted such a horrific picture of gender relations in America one wonders whether the situation can be saved. Alice Walker certainly believes the situation is not beyond saving.

First, Walker argues that if violence can be used by men to oppress and dominate women, then it is also a good enough weapon to use for women to liberate themselves. On this score she agrees with Malcolm X who advocates violence to counter violence: "I'm non-violent as long as somebody is non-violent – as soon as they get violent they nullify my non-violence."¹⁸ Violence is the knockout punch that Sofia (p.36) and Mem (pp. 92 –97) use to exorcise the

demons afflicting the men in their homes. Even Celie learns the power of violence as illustrated by her threat to attack Mr. — with razors.

One should also note that by hitting back through physical violence the women are essentially breaking the tradition of submissiveness. This violent resistance to unpalatable oppression has positive results as reflected by the sense of community and harmony we see at the close of *The Color Purple*. Even Mem is able to enjoy some peace after she wallops Brownfield.

Secondly, the woman's liberation and freedom can be achieved if the women first realize and then control their sexuality. Celie is an important symbol in this regard. Through Shug Avery, Celie is able to gain awareness on the beauty of sex and takes hold of her destiny. Squeak, by some twist of rape, also liberates herself, and tells Harpo that her name is Mary Agnes (p. 84). After this her career as a musician also takes a positive turn.

Talk of sexual relations between individuals brings us to the lesbian dimension in Walker's fiction. Lesbianism is presented in a very positive light. She argues that it is not only fulfilling, but also liberating to the woman. The lesbian encounter between Shug Avery and Celie leaves the latter in bliss: "It feel like heaven is what it feel like, not like sleeping with Mr. — at all."¹⁹ Here Walker puts a lesbian encounter on the same level with heterosexual encounter as she also does with the encounter between Fanny and Arveyda (p. 396). The sexual encounter is as satisfying to Fanny as it is to Celie, and even more important Fanny discovers her spirit — a long life ambition.

What may be frightening to most men is the apparent inference that the man is not necessary for the woman's sexual satisfaction. Walker does nothing to allay this fear: she actually intensifies the fear through the anecdote of the man who catches his wife in the arms of another woman, and his world disintegrates as he turns to drink after the woman simply chuckled and then left him.²⁰ In "Porn" the husband who desperately attempts to sexually satisfy his wife and fails, feels totally rejected: "He feels himself sliding down the wall that is her body, and expelled from her."²¹ The expulsion is a statement to the effect that the man is not necessary to the woman's sexual gratification. This is an enormously frightening realization to the man who believes that the penis is the ultimate weapon of dominating the woman.

Third, the woman needs a material base if she is to avoid male domination. Celie, through the making of pants, gains the power to talk back to Mr. — and be proud of womanhood: "I'm pore, I'm black, I may be ugly and can't cook ... But I'm here."²² Fanny ultimately controls the men around her through her massage parlour. The harmony that we see at the close of *The Color Purple* has in a way been created by the women's self-sufficiency at the level of the material.

Finally, Alice Walker seems to argue that there is no need to accept the white oppressor's view of the Negro. The advice is revealed by Mem who tells Brownfield that his problem is that he accepts the sorry state which the white oppressor has driven him into: "The thing I done notice about you a long time ago is that you acts like you is right where you belong. *All* the time."²³ What Mem is urging is for Brownfield to abandon his obsession with self-

destruction and stand up against the culture of being abused by the white man. This idea is also articulated by Grange on his return to Baker County. On his return, Grange displays a certain degree of militancy and is ready to fight for what belongs to him: "The fence we put up around it will enclose freedom you can be sure of, long as you ain't scared of holding the gun. The gun is important. For I don't know that love works for everybody. A little love, a little buckshot...."²⁴ What we see here is a man who will use any means necessary to protect his property and his freedom – he will stand up for his humanity.

This is how Alice Walker presents gender relations in her fiction. This presentation, however, has not failed to attract criticism. We will take a look at the points on which Walker's artistic vision has been challenged.

The Color Purple has been criticised as playing into the myth of black people, especially the black male, as brutal and violent beasts. The attacks on Celie by Pa and Mr. — do depict the violence in the Negro family, a situation which makes the family not an institution that protects and nourishes, but one which destroys humanity. Here we can draw parallels with Richard Wright's *Black Boy*. Richard is constantly abused by members of his family.

The important thing to note about *The Color Purple*, however, is that the brutalisation of Celie will confirm to the white capitalists the false notion of the Negro man as *inherently* a violent beast with no brains. The danger of confirming these false notions is that there is a tendency of the confirmation taking attention away from the real issues which result in this kind of behaviour. These issues are the material relations which were created by capitalism as argued out by C. L.R. James and Eric Williams. The polemics of these two thinkers are that the Negroes were the fundamental prop of capitalism through the labour they provided in the slave plantations,²⁵ and that the safety of the whites depends on treating the Negroes as senseless beasts. For the white capitalists *The Color Purple* is important in the sense that this is an apparent admission by the Negro that he is the senseless brute the white capitalist has always been saying he is over the centuries.

Another form of criticism leveled at Alice Walker is that she does not go far enough in her analysis of gender relations. She does not go beyond the gender relations to perceive the material relations on which these gender relations are predicated. Celie is presented as victim of a patriarchal society which is completely oppressive to the woman. Celie's rape is presented in a manner that presents manhood per se as the problem – the man aims to make the woman the object of his desires; she is an object to soothe his painful loins. Celie's forced marriage to Mr. — and Grange's attempts to sell Margaret apparently puts the Negro man on the same oppressive wavelength with the white enslaver. The man has become the new slave driver, with the attendant evils of that position – whipping, rape, mutilation, murder and so on. Thus patriarchy, which is universalized by the Olinka connection, becomes **THE** problem, and not the essential material conditions fostered by global capital. This drives Walker into, through Shug Avery, proffering the notion that women can live without men and are free to enjoy lesbian encounters as well as heterosexual relations with any man they feel like, a

notion which borders on anarchy. The thesis here is that no man is able to understand the delicate problems of the woman. The philosophy tends to ignore Angela Davies's position that during slavery, men and women were exploited and abused as a class and not men as men and women as women: "Black women were equal to their men in the oppression they suffered; they were men's social equals within the slave community; and they resisted slavery with a passion equal to their men."²⁷ In this context Walker's exploration of the African-American woman's experience can be said to be limited in that it does not take full account of the wider context of capitalist exploitation.

To bring this essay to a conclusion, it can be stated that Alice Walker attempts to give prominence to the experiences of African-American women through her fiction. In her account she makes an analysis of gender relations which are skewed in favour of men. She, however, fails to go beyond the gender issue and take a look at the role of global material relations that inform these gender relations.

End notes

¹ Walker, A. *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose*, London, The Women's Press, 1995, p. 13.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 261 – 262.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 261 – 262.

⁴ Davis, A. *Women, Race and Class*, London, The Women's Press Ltd., 1988, p. 23

⁵ Walker, A. *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, London, The Women's Press Ltd., 1985, p. 25.

⁶ Walker, A. *In Love and Trouble*, London, The Women's Press Ltd., 1990, p. 8.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 31, "As steadily as she careened downhill, Jerome advanced in the opposite direction."

⁹ Walker, A. *Meridian*, London, The Women's Press Ltd., 1991, p. 39, pp. 40 – 41.

¹⁰ Walker, A. *The Color Purple*, London, The Women's Press Ltd., 1993, p. 76.

¹¹ *op. cit.* p. 77.

¹² *op. cit.* p. 265.

¹³ *op. cit.* p. 166.

¹⁴ *op. cit.* p. 118.

¹⁵ *op. cit.* p. 199.

¹⁶ *op. cit.* p. 140.

¹⁷ *op. cit.* p. 195.

¹⁸ Breitmann, G. (Ed.) *By Any Means Necessary : Speeches, Interviews, and a Letter by Malcolm X*, New York, 1989, p. 10.

¹⁹ *op. cit.* p. 98.

²⁰ *op. cit.* p. 13.

²¹ Walker, A. *You Can't Keep A Good Woman Down*, London, The Women's Press Ltd., 1991, p. 84.

²² *op. cit.* p. 176.

²³ *op. cit.* p. 95.

²⁴ op. cit. pp. 195 – 196.

²⁵ Williams, E. *Capitalism and Slavery*, London, Andre Deutsch Ltd., 1993, pp. 3 – 29.

²⁶ James, C. L. R. *The Black Jacobins : Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, New York, Vintage Books, 1963, pp. 3 – 26.

²⁷ op. cit. p. 23.

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THE ROLE OF ORAL TRADITIONS IN AFRICAN HISTORY

By

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Abstract

Colonial historians writing on Africa believed that before colonization, Africa had no history. Whenever they wrote about Africa, they wrote own imaginations with no respect for the African past. Africans were less or never consulted in the making or remaking of their history. Their past was therefore left uncaptured because historians could not trust African's word of mouth, which they labelled as superstitious, biased and lacking evidence. I argue for a reconstruction of pre-literate African history from oral traditions. Historical poems and songs that relate to events and depict society's politics and social values must be revisited. Chiefs' genealogies and lists of place names that facilitate the study of migrations, demography and political developments of past societies, are more important now than ever because of conflicts tearing Africa apart. Tales reflecting milestones and religions must be understood in the way they contribute to national stability and identity in contemporary Africa.

Introduction

Eurocentric historians writing about Africa strongly believed that before colonisation Africa had no history. They dismissed the existence of an African history since the African societies did not have any writing. One such historian, Hugh Trevor-Roper declared that in Africa only the European colonisers' activities were fit subjects for proper history- "the rest is darkness and darkness is not the subject of history."¹ Africans were never consulted in the reconstruction of their history because the historian did not trust their word of mouth, which he labelled as superstitious and lacking evidence.

This paper argues for a reconstruction of pre –literate African societies' history from oral traditions. In oral societies all oral traditions had specific functions. Such functions shed light on the ways of life of the societies concerned, thus making it possible for the historian to reconstruct the society's history. Historical poems and songs that relate to events such as deeds of rulers and wars and depict society's politics and social values need to be revisited. Chiefs' genealogies and lists of place names that facilitate the study of migrations, demography and political developments of past societies are more important now than in the past because of ethnic related conflicts tearing Africa apart. Tales reflecting a society's milestones and its religion need to be understood as they contribute to national stability and identity in Africa.

However, the historian should be aware of oral traditions' weaknesses. It is posited in this paper that the flaws can be overcome and therefore are no reason for denigrating the value

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of oral traditions as historical sources. Oral traditions usually extend less than five centuries in the past.² To overcome the limitation, the historian can get supplementary information from auxiliary disciplines. Functionalists regard oral traditions as charters for current institutions. Clan or family oral traditions and recourse to outside sources can verify official oral traditions' authenticity. Lack of chronology makes some critics dismiss oral traditions as sources of history. Nevertheless, historians have ways of establishing chronology from oral traditions. Furthermore, a word of caution is given to the researcher who collects oral traditions. Correct interpretation of oral tradition is necessary. To accomplish that, the historian must be familiar with the culture in which the oral traditions flourish. The researcher should also carry out external and internal criticism of the oral traditions. Once the above tasks are done, the historian can produce an authentic history of the society whose oral traditions he/she has collected.

Definition

Jan Vansina defines oral traditions as verbal messages, which are statements from the past beyond the present generations, and emphasises that the messages must be oral statements spoken or sung.³ These recollections from the past should be commonly known in a given society and should be transmitted over a period longer than the contemporary generation. Joseph C. Miller refers to an oral tradition as a "narrative describing or purporting to describe eras before the time of the person who relates it."⁴ According to Dioulde Laya the oral tradition is the whole of all testimony types verbally transmitted by a people on their past.⁵ This paper will use Vansina's definition as it encompasses the ideas expressed by the other authors and also explains how the messages are transmitted.

Types of Oral Traditions and their uses as historical sources

In oral societies of pre-colonial Africa all oral traditions had social functions as they were meant to transmit everything vital to a society.⁶ So the historian can decipher from the oral traditions important information about the societies concerned. According to Finnegan, historical poems and songs are intended to pass onto the next generation an account of important events as well as to glorify deeds of rulers and their ancestors⁷. Wars and death of famous men are some of the themes of historical poems and songs which are often composed for propaganda purposes. From the poetry and songs, historians can learn about the political events and attitudes of the society concerned. War poetry can also reflect the values relating to war.⁸ Songs are particularly useful to the historian as reliable records of events since they are not generally amenable to alteration because of their wide exposure.

Praise poetry is meant to record the praise names, the victories and glorious qualities of the chief and his ancestors. To the historian such poems are a source of information about social values and ideals prevalent at the time when they were composed⁹. For instance, Zulu praise poetry reflects that the Zulu have always emphasised military exploits. Religious poetry refers to hymns and prayers that are performed on ritual occasions such as praying for rain and ceremonies to do with initiation, marriage or death¹⁰. So information about changes in religion can be deciphered from such poetry.

Vansina asserts that lists of place names, king lists and genealogies form an official tradition intended as a historical record to benefit the posterity of the society concerned¹¹. These are normally pronounced on the state occasions such as receptions at the royal court, national festivals, the installation or death of a chief with the aim of supporting claims to political, social or economic rights. Lists of place names usually give the names of places passed through during a period of migration. The main aim of testimonies of this kind is usually to maintain and defend rights to land. They are the main sources for the study of migrations and for information about demographic structure of the past¹². For oral societies such as those of pre-literate Africa, king lists and genealogies of chiefs are very important. Their function is to prove the continuity of the chieftainship and to justify the occupation of an office by a leader¹³. The historian can obtain from them information about the political and social developments of a chieftaincy or kingdom. He can also use the king lists and genealogies for establishing chronology by providing units of duration used to evaluate how far in the past something happened¹⁴.

Historical tales or narratives according to Finnegan usually give an account of events such as wars, migrations, and establishment of ruling dynasties and deeds of heroes. Their function is to record history as well as provide justification for the continued position and power of the ruling houses and are recited at ceremonial occasions¹⁵. Hence they are useful as sources of information about military, political and institutional history. Tales on tribal history allude to developments such as creation of the state, leading offices in the state and changes in territorial organisation. They also refer to raids, war and territorial conquests¹⁶.

Narratives on a family, clan or village do not usually go very far back into the past, because there are no specific custodians assigned to memorise them. Nevertheless the traditions can contribute in the reconstruction of the history of migrations as well as demographic trends. They can also reflect the economic development of the clans as some relate to trade, trade routes, markets and currency¹⁷. For example the Kuba village of Ibaanc (in DRC) has a praise name, which extols its former market. Other traditions on Kuba clans reveal that techniques of making embroidered cloth came to them from the Pende in the south west from whom the Kuba also obtained new crops in the 17th century¹⁸. Tales on families and clans are also useful as checks on official sources such as general traditions.

Myths are tales, which concern events thought and believed to have happened in the remote past, when the earth was sacred and different from what it is today. They attempt to explain a society and culture in terms of religious causes and their main characters are gods, animals or heroes¹⁹. Their function is to educate people or to warn them not to break the norms of the society. So to the historian myths are valuable sources for the history of religion and beliefs²⁰.

Titles of rulers slogans, proverbs and riddles are another type of oral traditions, which to some extent allude to the history of the society concerned. Titles of rulers or chiefs in many pre-literate African societies were handed down to successive rulers and signified the chief's important status. The historian can use titles as auxiliary sources as the events they refer to require more information to be understood. For example, among the Rozvi people of Zimbabwe,

the title 'Changamire' resulted from a fusion of the name 'Changa' with the title 'Amir' given Changa by local Arab traders who were keen to extend their trade under a friendly patron²¹.

In the case of slogans, their value for the historian depends on the extent to which the original wording has been preserved. Often they can be understood in the light of explanatory commentaries. Proverbs and riddles sometimes contain some historical information, which has to be supplemented by commentaries as most proverbs and riddles are restricted to dealing with the moral norms of a society, the historian can discover what these norms were²².

Commentaries are another type of oral traditions, which are presented in the form of brief pieces of information, which are closely connected with a particular situation and are only transmitted in the context of that situation. They are recited at the same time as the traditions they are attached to. They are designed to explain those parts of a tradition, which a listener may fail to understand. According to Vansina, commentaries are good sources of information about the diffusion of cultural traits and ideas²³.

Overcoming limitations and weaknesses of oral traditions

The validity of oral tradition as sources of history has been questioned due to a number of weaknesses inherent in them. Nevertheless, Africanist historians have pointed out that the limitations can be overcome. The most obvious limitation of oral traditions, pointed out by T. Spear is that they don't extend more than four or five hundred years into the past²⁴. To counteract that limitation, the historian can supplement the historical information supplied by oral traditions with information from auxiliary disciplines. For example, historical linguistics is a good source of information concerning the history of migrations. As the basic vocabulary of a language changes only gradually, comparison of the vocabularies of the different languages can indicate when the differences between them arose²⁵. For example, the languages of Bantu people now found in Central Africa are so closely related that it has been possible to determine when the people split into various groups each speaking a variant of the original Bantu language as they migrated to settle in different regions.²⁶ For instance, the stem -ntu is common in their languages in the word meaning a person; for example muntu (Bemba), munhu (Shona) and muntu (Ndebele).

Functionalists have viewed oral traditions as historical charters which served to validate current political, economic and social institutions. So Spear has observed that oral traditions can be manipulated and twisted to reflect changing circumstances and support current political interests²⁷. Hence their value as historical sources becomes very questionable. To deal with that problem, oral traditions relating to small groups such as families, clans or followers of a cult can be used to cross check the reliability of official traditions²⁸. (It should be noted that official traditions include king lists, accounts of origin of dynasties, land right charters, privileges of chiefdoms and legal customs concerning water, animals and trees). Also connections between figures of one dynasty and the figures of another can be established through wars, marriages or meetings. Thus different traditions can be used to check one another.

Recourse to outside sources is another way of checking the authenticity of oral traditions. If an oral tradition makes reference to a natural phenomenon such as drought, an eclipse or earthquake, a follow up can be made. For example, in 1904 a Belgian historian, Emil Torday listened to the elders of Bushongo people of Congo reciting the past chiefs of their tribe. They referred to a day in the reign of the 98th chief when at noon the sun went out and there was total darkness for some time ²⁹. By studying astronomical records, Torday verified that there was a total eclipse of the sun, which affected that part of the Congo in 1680³⁰. This was not only proof of reliability of oral tradition but also a way of dating them. In other words, if a tradition mentions that an eclipse occurred during the reign of a particular chief and if a number of generations since his reign is known, then the eclipse can be dated accurately.

Other critics have questioned the validity of oral traditions as a source of history on the basis of its lack of chronology. Chronology is essential to history as it makes it possible to distinguish what proceeds from what follows. Emphasising the importance of chronology, Lord Raglan (quoted by Henige) declared, “without precise chronology there can be no history.”³¹ However, Africanist historians such as Jan Vansina and Joseph C. Miller who analysed oral traditions of pre-literate African societies have found various ways of establishing chronology of events from oral traditions.

Genealogies can be used to infer dates for individuals named in them. The dynastic genealogy is particularly useful as the rulers are arranged in sequence from the past to the present. Particular events may be identified with the eras of particular rulers, making it possible to construct a basic historical sequence of events ³². So the history of pre-literate societies can be made from genealogies.

Age-grades are another instrument for determining chronology from oral traditions. As age-grades are usually given names, which are remembered, in their correct sequence, they can be translated into a chronology once a date of initiation is known from writing.³³ It becomes possible to construct a reliable chronology as the grades are fairly fixed in length in each society where initiations take place regularly.

Historians have collected a number of traditions which refer to natural phenomena such as earthquake, a drought, an epidemic and an eclipse. Henige asserts that historians can use these extraordinary events because they can be dated, no matter how long ago they took place.³⁴ Examples are Halley’s comet which appeared in 1835 and an eclipse of the sun in 1680, which are both remembered in Kuba traditions³⁵.

Archaeology can be used in conjunction with oral tradition for corroboration purposes. When there is a link between a site and an asserted event in oral tradition dating can be obtained. For example, a local oral tradition in northern Rwanda concerning the Ndorwa kingdom claimed that two different kings occupied a particular site though only one occupation was visible. Excavation confirmed that there were two occupations one superimposed on the other and dated the occupations in the 18th century, which agreed with genealogical calculation³⁶.

According to Henige, another source for dating oral traditions is the written record of literate societies, which came into contact with traditional societies and recorded information about them³⁷. For instance, Miller who studied oral traditions of the Imbangala of Kasanje (in Angola) found that the Kasanje kings' contacts with the Portuguese active on the coast near Luanda enabled written documents that date their reigns with certainty to be left behind³⁸. From the aforesaid, it is clear that oral traditions have a part to play in the construction of the history of pre-literate African societies. What one reconstructs from oral sources may be of a lower order of reliability but this is no reason to denigrate oral traditions. The researchers may need more interdisciplinary collaboration, but in the end reliability of a higher order can be achieved.

Interpretation of oral traditions

In order to interpret oral traditions properly, the historian who collects oral traditions must be acquainted with the culture in which they flourish. Since particular oral traditions often have specific political or social functions, their transmission can be influenced by their functional importance³⁹. Spear has observed that sometimes traditions frequently personalise whole clans or lineages and cultural statements have a reality equal to that of historical events⁴⁰. So correct interpretation of oral traditions requires extensive knowledge of the culture in which they flourish. The historian has to note who is giving him the oral tradition, his age and position. For example, an aged court official who has served most of his life in the councils of a ruler is likely to present an oral tradition in a different way from that of a young school master. One has to remember that people retell stories they have heard from their elders interpreting them in such a way that they may fit more convincingly with the ideas and conditions of the present⁴¹.

In addition to proper interpretation of an oral tradition, the historian should subject it to external criticism. This involves finding out how the oral tradition has been transmitted, if others have corroborated it and if its content conforms to the possibilities of the state and period⁴². V Such analysis establishes the authenticity of the evidence. Internal criticism focuses on the content of the oral tradition. One has to examine the meaning of the evidence and whether it has changed in its function and to what extent⁴³. So once an oral tradition has been correctly interpreted and its authenticity and reliability established the historian should be able to reconstruct the history of the society concerned.

Conclusion

In short oral traditions are valuable sources of pre-literate African societies' history. Since historical poems and songs reflect important events, the historian can learn from such oral traditions, the societies political and social developments. The population migrations and demography of pre-colonial African societies, which are reflected by some of the oral traditions, help us grasp how colonial boundaries disrupted the traditional boundaries of African polities, thus sowing seeds for the ethnic conflicts that have troubled Africa during the post-colonial era.

From chiefs' genealogies and historical tales on tribes, the scholar of pre-colonial African societies gets to know the lineages, which were the legitimate ruling dynasties of their societies.

One also establishes the community who are the oldest inhabitants of certain territories and also some of the socio-economic strides they made during the pre-colonial era. Oral traditions relating to religion of oral societies contributed towards a sense of national identity. That national identity had a part to play in the development of African nationalism during the colonial period.

Endnotes

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PORTUGUESE SLAVE TRADING IN NORTHERN ZIMBABWE AND THE MIDDLE ZAMBEZI VALLEY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

By

Godfrey Tabona Ncube¹

Abstract

The depredations caused by Portuguese slaving in Northern Zimbabwe and the Middle Zambezi valley remain one of the lesser written about episodes in Zimbabwean history, and there has been a tendency, even among our foremost authors on Afro-Portuguese relations in Zimbabwe, to think that Portuguese slaving only affected areas north of the Zambezi. This traditional assumption needs to be challenged in light of abundant evidence, especially from the large corpus of published primary sources written by contemporary European observers in the nineteenth century, detailing the impact of the slave trade on the northern regions of Zimbabwe bordering the Zambezi. Other traditional assumptions regarding the nature and extent of Portuguese slave trafficking along the Zambezi, and the market for slave exports from Mozambique, also need to be modified in light of more recent, contrary evidence. To begin with, the conventional picture of the complete isolation of the peoples of the Middle Zambezi valley from the outside world, prior to their first contact with Portuguese traders from the East Coast in 1860, needs modification because, it is now clear that there was direct and indirect contact with West Coast Portuguese traders from Angola that preceded them. Secondly, more evidence has come to light showing that the people of the Middle Zambezi had, through their own efforts, been in contact with the East Coast trade for at least 200 years before 1860. Thirdly, it has now been shown by other scholars that the traditional assumption that the demand for Mozambique slaves was generated predominantly by Brazilian demand needs modification, because new evidence now shows that the French islands of the western Indian Ocean rivaled, and might even have replaced, Brazil as the major export market for Mozambique slaves by 1830. Finally, the internal slave trade of Mozambique, comprising the resale of slaves into the interior, i.e. from Mozambique 'up' the Zambezi, in the 1860s and 1870s, needs more scholarly attention because it marked a significant change both in the direction and nature of the Portuguese slave trade with the Middle Zambezi and Northern Zimbabwe

Introduction

Much of what is known about Afro-Portuguese trade relations in the Middle Zambezi is associated with the East Coast Portuguese trade that commenced in the 1860s through its Chikunda agents. Consequently, the conventional picture of the trading relations of the societies of the Middle Zambezi has been that of complete isolation from the outside world prior to the arrival of the first Portuguese trading party from the East Coast in the upper river section of the Middle Zambezi in 1860 in the wake of David Livingstone's second expedition.¹ However, this picture needs to be modified in light of evidence that by the time the earliest Portuguese

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trading party from the East Coast, about which there is any written evidence, reached the upper river in 1860, the upper river area of the Gwembe had been in direct and indirect contact with the West Coast Portuguese trade through its Ovimbundu agents well before it came to be regularly visited by Portuguese traders connected with the East Coast system.² There are also indications that the Nambya and Tonga had, through their own initiative, been in contact with the East Coast trade for at least 200 years before the first Portuguese trading party reached the Middle Zambezi in 1862. Available evidence showing that traders from Zumbo had penetrated the interior as far as Chireya's village in the 1780s using overland routes, and further evidence of overland trade between Sena and the Ndebele state in the mid-nineteenth century, seems to support the view that the Nambya state was in direct contact with the East Coast trade long before that trade ever penetrated directly into the upper and middle river sections of the Gwembe.³

It has also been traditionally assumed of the nineteenth century East Coast slave trade from Mozambique, that the demand for Mozambique slaves was generated predominantly by Brazilian and Cuban demand, with the French islands of the Western Indian Ocean constituting a secondary market. However, new evidence has come to light that challenges this orthodox interpretation by showing that Mozambique was also the major supplier of slaves for the French islands of the Western Indian Ocean or the Mascarenes. There are indications that, contrary to traditional assumptions, the French islands were rivaling and might even have replaced Brazil as the major export market for Mozambique slaves by 1830. Following the abrupt closure of the Brazilian market in the 1850s, Mozambique slave exports were sustained predominantly by demand from the French plantation islands, which imported up to 11,000 slaves per annum, and from Madagascar where the number of East Coast slave imports rose after a lull in the 1840s and 1850s.⁴

Another aspect of the nineteenth century slave trade along the Zambezi that has not received any scholarly attention to date is the phenomenon of the resale of slaves into the interior from Mozambique. Following the fall in the external demand for slaves in the 1870s and 1880s, the Portuguese found it increasingly more profitable to sell slaves back into the interior, for ivory, to the Tonga, Nambya and other groups, where there was a growing local demand for replenishing numbers, following decades of demographic losses to slavers in the earlier part of the nineteenth century, and the loss of large numbers to Ndebele raiders from the 1860s onwards. Reselling slaves into the interior does not seem to have commenced in the 1870s, but appears to have been regularly practiced at different times in the past. For example, when Livingstone reached Mozambique in 1856 after his great trans-Africa journey, he found that the Portuguese regularly sold slaves to the Transvaal Boers in exchange for ivory.⁵ Again, when he visited Tete in 1862, he saw some slaves being sent 'up the Zambesi' for resale.⁶

The West Coast Portuguese Trading Network with Zambesia

The Portuguese had been active on the west coast of Africa long before they established themselves in Mozambique. Their influence and the international trading network it represented spread from Angola into the interior of southern Central Africa through their main agents the Ovimbundu, widely known in nineteenth century literature as the 'Mambari'.⁷ The main quest

of the Ovimbundu was for ivory and slaves, which they traded for cloth and firearms. By the early nineteenth century the Ovimbundu traders had reached the Lozi kingdom, selling firearms for slaves. There is also some evidence that they had reached the Upper River area and the Nambya state by the early nineteenth century.⁸ Evidence of the Nambya state's involvement in trading iron with the Upper River suggests that its iron trade was related to its involvement in international trade. Even as late as 1875, the Nambya state was still subject to occasional Ovimbundu visits.⁹ Thomas Baines observed that Ovimbundu traders came from Angola to Hwange Chilisa's village on the north bank of the Zambezi in the 1860s when the Hwange was a refugee from the Ndebele.¹⁰

The expansion of the Lozi state to the south under Kololo rule gave the Ovimbundu a wider sphere of operation when they renewed trading relations in 1850, after an intermission during the period of Kololo conquest. From 1850 onwards, the Ovimbundu were mostly trading firearms and so great was the Kololo need for them that Sebetwane was prepared to offer slaves in exchange, despite his apparently genuine dislike of the traffic.¹¹ Livingstone first encountered the slave trade in 1851-2 when he penetrated north into the territory of the Kololo chief Sebetwane and found the Portuguese from Angola there. The Kololo told him that until the coming of the Portuguese, the idea of buying and selling human beings had never occurred to them.¹² During Livingstone's travels among the Kololo and the groups they had subjugated on the upper Zambezi in the 1850s, he noted that, in order to satisfy their desire for guns, the Kololo had sold slaves to the Ovimbundu; to Silva Porto, a Portuguese trader from the west coast; and to some Arabs from Zanzibar.¹³ Livingstone noted that these slaves were captured from the east, certainly from the Nambya and Tonga areas because there is evidence that the Kololo raided the Nambya and Tonga in the 1840s and 1850s during their struggle with the Ndebele for control of the Middle Zambezi.¹⁴

Following the resumption of their trade with the Middle Zambezi in the 1850s after the Kololo conquest, the Ovimbundu began to penetrate the Tonga areas and buy slaves in exchange for hoes which were very scarce there in the nineteenth century after the decline of the Nambya iron trade with the upper and middle river areas of the Gwembe in the mid-nineteenth century.¹⁵ This was the reason why the Ovimbundu had little difficulty in obtaining slaves from the Tonga for hoes, which they purchased around Sesheke. Livingstone maintained that the valley Tonga 'would not part with children for clothing, or beads, but agriculture with wooden hoes [was] so laborious that the sight of the [Ovimbundu] hoes prevailed'.¹⁶

It seems that the reason for the decline of the Ovimbundu slave trade with the Middle Zambezi was the southward spread of the Totela or 'Bunduwe' iron trade from the Lozi state to the upper and middle river sections of the Gwembe in the mid-nineteenth century.¹⁷ The Totela iron trade seems to have been initiated by a deliberate political decision by the rulers of the Lozi state, which appears to have been a positive response to the pressures of the Ovimbundu slave trade. Livingstone had suggested to the Kololo, who had an iron industry around the Njoko river, that they should sell hoes to the Tonga in exchange for ivory, which they could then resell to Benguela or Luanda, and thus cut out the Ovimbundu who were beginning to penetrate the Middle Zambezi valley to buy slaves from the Tonga and Nambya in exchange

for hoes.¹⁸ This may explain why the Totela iron, which was clearly good and abundant, only began to be traded outside the sphere of the Lozi state in the mid-nineteenth century. On his return to the Kololo in 1860, Livingstone noted that soon after the Kololo began selling hoes to the Tonga in exchange for ivory, the extensive Ovimbundu slave mart had been closed.¹⁹ Where the Ovimbundu had been able to demand slaves for hoes before the Totela trade began, the most common items exchanged for Totela hoes were goats, chickens and tobacco, although when the hoes were first introduced they were more expensive than this, as ivory used to be demanded.²⁰

Because of its good quality and comparative cheapness, the Totela ivory trade became the most commonly known source of iron for the Middle Zambezi valley in the nineteenth century. Although the iron trade from the Nambya state and the Victoria Falls region continued for some time simultaneously with the Totela trade, it was never able to satisfy the full demand for hoes in the Gwembe and was eventually completely supplanted and reverted to being a purely local industry around the Matetsi river.²¹

The East Coast Portuguese Slave Trading Complex along the Zambezi

The Portuguese had established themselves on the coast of Mozambique in the sixteenth century. They began to make their way up the Zambezi to the Lower River area by the end of the seventeenth century, attracted by the cheap and abundant ivory that the area had to offer.²² The Zambezi, which was unbroken by rapids for almost 500 kilometres from its mouth to the Kebrabassa rapids, formed the best natural trade route into the interior in the whole of East Africa. Moreover, via its tributary, the Shire, it tapped Malawi, one of the major sources of slaves for export.²³ While the Portuguese and their Chikunda agents were able to use the 800-kilometer Lower River stretch of the Zambezi between Quelimane and the Kariba gorge as an economically viable commercial highway by using canoes to transport their trade goods, this was not true of the 400-kilometre stretch of the Middle Zambezi river above the Kariba gorge. There were various obstacles to the navigation of the middle Zambezi river, such as its speed of flow when in flood and the occurrence of rapids and the Kariba gorge which could not be navigated when the river was low, except by fearless Tonga canoe-men. Consequently, regular trade developed along the banks of the Zambezi.

There were two main slave-trading complexes that operated in the interior of Mozambique. The first one linked Mozambique Island with the territories of the Yao and Makua, and stretched as far as the southern Lunda and southern Tanzania. The second one linked Quelimane with its hinterland, extending up the Zambezi river as far as the Gwembe valley, and as far north as the Lunda kingdom of Kazembe, while to the south, it reached the Rozvi Changamire state in Zimbabwe.²⁴ The Portuguese traders largely used overland routes along the Zambezi valley floor and transported their goods by means of slave porters. Any development towards the use of canoes for carrying trade goods was probably inhibited by the cheapness of slave labour for portage and the risks of losing one's trade goods since canoes could be easily upset in the rapids. This development of trade along the Zambezi river brought them into contact with the people of northwestern Zimbabwe. There is also evidence of overland trade routes across the Zimbabwean plateau that brought them into contact with most of the Shona-

speaking areas as far west as Chireya's village in the 1780s. Evidence also exists for overland trade between Sena and the Ndebele state in the mid-nineteenth century. The Portuguese traders established temporary settlements along the Zambezi that served as trade bases.²⁵ The small Chikunda settlement of Nkalanje was the furthest upstream of the trading settlements in the Gwembe and was situated just above the Chete gorge on the downstream periphery of Mwemba's sphere of influence.²⁶ Livingstone learnt that Tonga trading expeditions had been to one such trade base, the feira of Dambarare, before 1855. In the 1890s they had another such settlement at Saba's village.²⁷

The actual slave-trading in the interior was not carried out by the Portuguese themselves but by their middlemen, the *vashambadzi*, who were specialist slave agents of the *prazeros* of Zambesia. The *vashambadzi* were backed by powerful private armies of the *prazeros*, the Chikunda, whose numbers at times reached 10,000 slave soldiers. The Chikunda were used in slaving expeditions and in the escort of slave caravans to the coast.²⁸ The earliest Portuguese trading party to reach the Upper River from the east was the one which followed Livingstone in 1860 and had been sent by Jose Anselmo de Santana. They traveled along the river bank as far as Chete gorge where they purchased ivory, slaves and ten canoes for very small quantities of coarse white beads and cloth. The canoes were used to carry the ivory downstream.²⁹ The Chikunda appear to have spread upstream from the Lower Zambezi after 1862 in the wake of Livingstone's second expedition.³⁰ Like the Ovimbundu, their counterparts in the west coast trade with the interior, the main quest of the Chikunda was for ivory and slaves, which they traded for cloth, and later, firearms. On their first expedition upstream in 1862 they bought a number of good-looking girls in the Middle Zambezi very cheaply.³¹ On his second expedition in the Zambezi valley, Livingstone frequently drew attention to the rapid spread of slavery since his first visit in 1855-6. He thought there had been a significant increase in the trade in the Zambezi region and attributed this to the drive by the Portuguese and Arabs to acquire more slaves for export.³² Later scholarly work has confirmed his impressions. The Tonga are vague about precisely who was buying slaves, some cite the Chikunda, but many merely refer to 'black people from the east'. The 'black people from the east' probably included the Bisa, whose trading ventures were reaching the edge of Tonga country as early as 1856 (according to Livingstone) and involved buying slaves.³³ Before the fall in the external demand for slaves in the late nineteenth century, Portuguese slave traders and their African agents, the Chikunda, had been able to purchase large numbers of slaves from societies along the Zambezi and north-western Zimbabwe in the 1850s and 1860s in exchange for comparatively small quantities of beads and cloth.³⁴

In 1867 Thomas had met Chikunda slave traders from Tete at Sinangombe's village and had learnt from Sinangombe that their visits up the Zambezi river were frequent and that they bought a considerable number of children annually as slaves. The Tonga used to take their ivory and children intended for sale to the Zambezi river bank where they met the slave traders who then bought the children for a few coarse beads.³⁵ Portuguese slave traders from Zumbo and Tete also visited Hwange Chilisa's north bank village annually in the 1860s to buy slaves.³⁶

In 1877 Selous set off from Pandamatenga to chief Hwange's village opposite the mouth of the Deka river and made first hand observations of the depredations of the slave-seeking Chikunda among the Nambya and Tonga on both the south and north banks of the Zambezi. He saw abandoned villages left by the fleeing Tonga, and abandoned fields with crops scorched by the sun and pillaged by wild animals. He observed that many of the huts had been burnt and the grain bins emptied. The few Tonga men he saw walked about in groups for mutual protection, while women were very few since they were especially sought after by the slavers. Occasionally, Selous came across recently raided villages where the smell of burning and rotting flesh was strong in the air and the bodies of the dead, half eaten by hyena, lay in the path at his feet.³⁷ Further downstream, below the Kariba Gorge on the south bank, Selous met Kanyemba, a half-caste slaver whom Selous described as an African with strong Portuguese 'overtones'. Selous noted that Kanyemba was at that time a very powerful figure who virtually controlled the whole Zambezi valley and could muster a slave-raiding force of some 600 Chikunda, each with a firearm. It was these Chikunda who had completed the recent horrible series of raids that Selous had witnessed on his way down the river.³⁸

For all the Portuguese who settled on the East Coast, the easy road to personal wealth was to participate in the slave trade. Although Portugal barred its nationals from engaging in slave trading activities in 1836, this decree was almost completely ignored by the colonial administrators of Mozambique because of the colony's economic dependence on slave exports. Furthermore, the Governors of Mozambique were unable to stop the slaving activities of the *prazeros* because they had a very small colonial force at their disposal, estimated at the start of the nineteenth century to have ranged between 100 and 300 soldiers. The *prazeros*, on the other hand, were unstoppable because they commanded slaving armies of the Chikunda ranging into several thousand men. Moreover, there existed a collusion between the ill-paid Portuguese officials and the *prazeros*.³⁹ Lyons McLeod, the British Consul at Mozambique in the late 1850s, stated that Portuguese officials knew the terms of their appointments, 'a small salary and the opportunity of making a large fortune by the slave trade'.⁴⁰

One Governor was reported to have made 80,000 pounds sterling out of the slave trade in one year. When Livingstone 'opened up' the Shire Highlands, the immediate result was an incursion of Portuguese slavers, one party of which worked for the Governor of Tete.⁴¹ A British Officer in the anti-slave trade squadron expressed his disappointment on finding that the Portuguese Authorities, instead of repressing the slave trade, actually abetted it.⁴²

Numbers

There can be no telling the actual numbers of subjects that societies in the Middle Zambezi Valley and adjoining territories on the Zimbabwe plateau lost to slavers from Mozambique, but a study focusing on the numbers exported from Quelimane can give us a reliable estimate because it is the Quelimane slave-trading complex that operated in the Mutapa state and other north-eastern Shona societies adjoining the Zambezi valley; and extended up the Zambezi river to its middle reaches, thereby coming into contact with the Tonga and Nambya societies of north-western Zimbabwe; and even reached the Changamire kingdom in south-western

Zimbabwe.⁴³ Although the totals of the Quelimane complex include captures from the Kazembe kingdom in south-eastern Zambia, they are still very reliable because they exclude figures of slaves captured from Malawi, Northern Zambia and southern Tanzania, who were exported from Mozambique Island, and therefore belong to the Mozambique Island complex. Maybe another indication of the extent of demographic losses suffered by Zimbabwean societies is the fact that Quelimane, at the mouth of the Zambezi, was acknowledged to be the greatest slave market in Africa by the 1830s.⁴⁴ In 1821 it was reported that there had been a dramatic growth in slave exports from Mozambique and this was reflected in the rise in customs revenue from slaves at Quelimane, from 17% of the total in 1806 to 85% by 1821. It has also been estimate that by 1821 net slave exports from Quelimane sometimes equaled those from Mozambique Island.⁴⁵ By 1830 Quelimane was probably the most important slave port in Africa, exporting about 10,000 slaves annually and perhaps up to 15,000 individuals in more active years.⁴⁶

The number of slaves exported from Mozambique was small until the late 18th and particularly the early 19th century when it developed rapidly due to growing demand, notably from Brazil, which emerged during the Napoleonic Wars as one of the world's major sugar producers, but also from the Western Indian Ocean islands of the Mascarenes. Milburn estimates that 60% of Mozambique slave exports were initially destined for Brazil, with most of the remainder – ranging between 4,800 and 8,000 a year in the 1820s, being shipped to the islands of the Western Indian Ocean.⁴⁷ The dramatic growth in slave exports is reflected by the fact that by 1830 slave exports were responsible for between 55 and 75 per cent of all exports from Mozambique.⁴⁸ From 1800 to 1853 most of the slaves exported by the Portuguese from Mozambique went to Brazil, although from the 1840s onwards this meant running the Atlantic blockade by Royal Navy cruisers following the British decree against the slave trade. Between 1817 and 1818, twelve ships with 4 000 slaves on board sailed from Mozambique for Rio. Between 1815 and 1830 an average of 10,000 slaves a year left Mozambique for Brazil alone, and a further 7,000 for the French islands in the Indian Ocean. When we allow for smuggling, it seems reasonable to suggest that close to 20,000slaves were being carried away from Mozambique each year in the 1820s and 1830s.⁴⁹

This is supported by Campbell who estimates that between 1810 and 1814 over 12,000 slaves per annum were shipped from the ports of Mozambique and Quelimane, and this rose to over 20,000 a year in the 1820s.⁵⁰ As we saw above, by 1830 Quelimane was probably the most important slave port on the African continent, exporting between 10,000 and 15,000 slaves annually. In 1837, the last year for which good figures on the old Portuguese trade are available, the export of slaves from Mozambique to Brazil and Cuba reached 15,000.⁵¹ Curtin estimates that Brazil imported 116,000 slaves from Mozambique and Madagascar, predominantly from the former, between 1817 and 1843, representing approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of slave exports from Mozambique during those years. The majority of the remaining exports would have been shipped to the Indian Ocean islands. Indeed, new evidence is now showing that, contrary to traditional assumptions, the Mascarenes rivaled and might even have replaced Brazil as the major export market for Mozambique slaves by 1830. Gwyn Campbell has shown that between 1820 and 1840 Mozambique became the major source of slaves for the Mascarenes.⁵²

Several factors combined to bring an end to the Brazilian slave trade in the 1850s. On the Atlantic front, British warships entered Brazilian ports to enforce the abolition of the slave trade. At the start of the nineteenth century the trans-Mozambique Channel slave trade was carried out openly as the British, who concentrated their anti-slave trade patrols off the West African coast, had little notion of the extent of the East African slave trade, especially below Zanzibar. An observation has been made that the British were more familiar with the coastal geography of Australia and China than of the 2,100-kilometre coastline of Portuguese East Africa or that of the west coast of Madagascar.⁵³

The British anti-slave trade squadron largely ignored the Mozambique Channel until the 1840s. Not until 1839 did Britain declare the right search Portuguese ships suspected of slaving, and only in 1842 was a naval patrol established in the Mozambique Channel. Even then, rarely as many as three cruisers were employed in the area, and they were generally easily evaded by the captains of slaving ships, who co-operated to establish an effective system of warning signals. The most common boat used for trans-Mozambique Channel slave traffic was the Swahili or Arab captained *beleta* dhow, which could sail as fast as most of the boats possessed by the British, who stood little chance of catching slave dhows until the development of steam in the 1840s. Even then capture was still rare. The greatest contributory factor to the continued success of the trans-Mozambique Channel slave runners was the immunity they gained from British naval searches by flying foreign flags – particularly French and, and from the 1840s, American colours, for France and the United States until the 1860s, refused to grant the British the right to search their vessels. In 1844 the British insisted that ships' flags be verified, but anti-slave patrols could not enforce this measure on ships carrying French colours unless within Malagasy waters, as defined by the 1833 accord.⁵⁴ Despite the Quintuple Treaty of 1841 which gave Britain, France, Austria, Prussia and Russia the right of search and bound them to seize all ships fitted out for slave trading, a treaty the Portuguese were browbeaten into agreeing to in 1842, it was reported in 1848 that there was no significant abatement in the slave trade from Mozambique to Rio. This was because an effective anti-slave trade campaign was prevented by the refusal of the United States and France to agree to the right of search, considering it an infringement of their sovereign rights.⁵⁵

In Brazil itself, public opinion was changing. An epidemic of yellow fever in 1849-50 was attributed to the incoming slaves and there arose an outcry against their continued importation. The result was a considerable decrease in the number of slaves entering Brazil. Whereas 60,000 slaves entered Brazil in 1850, three years later this number had been reduced considerably to 2,000. Between 1853 and 1871 the number of slave imports continued to decrease until the Rio Branco bill of 1871 abolished slavery itself.⁵⁶ But the trade in slaves from Mozambique to the western Indian Ocean islands continued.⁵⁷ Following the abrupt closure of the Brazilian market in the 1850s, Mozambique slave exports were sustained predominantly by demand from the French plantation islands, which imported up to 11,000 slaves per annum, and from Madagascar where the number of East African slave imports rose after a lull in the 1840s and 1850s.⁵⁸ French resistance to the right to search seriously impaired British efforts to end the slave trade on the Indian Ocean front. Livingstone, who

traveled through the Portuguese territories in the 1850s, testified to the way the French tricolor was cynically used as cover by Arab traders in the Mozambique channel, who sneeringly challenged Britain to do something about it.⁵⁹

The Internal Slave Trade. Reselling Slaves Into The Interior

The existence of an internal slave market for Mozambique slaves was first exposed to the outside world by Livingstone, who stumbled upon it in 1856.⁶⁰ The Gaza Ngoni, who settled in southern Mozambique during the turbulent times of the Mfecane in the 1830s under chief Manicusse, were the first group to participate in the internal slave trade with Portuguese river dealers along the Zambezi as they sought to replenish their numbers. Because of the Ngoni willingness to trade in slaves, there developed an aspect of slavery with important implications. For the first time, there was an internal African slave market that avoided the naval blockade that Britain had deployed to bring the slave trade to an end. Once it had been established, this internal slave trade flourished. The Ngoni maintained good relations with the Portuguese who sold them female slaves taken from north of the Zambezi. Other buyers included the Kololo from south-western Zambia, who came down the Zambezi river as far as Zumbo and the Luangwa junction to trade.⁶¹

When the fall in the external demand for slaves made it less practicable to export slaves from the Mozambique coast in the 1870s and 1880s, the Portuguese and their Chikunda agents found it increasingly profitable to sell slaves back to the Tonga and Nambya in the interior in exchange for ivory. The fall in the external demand for slaves coincided with an increasing local demand for slaves among the Tonga and Nambya whose rulers wished to replenish their followers who had been depleted by the slave trade in the 1850s and 1860s, and by the loss of large numbers of captives to the Ndebele in the period from the 1860s onwards.⁶²

In 1876, H. Rowley, a U.M.C.A. missionary, observed that the Portuguese not only exported slaves but also them for ivory 'to a tribe that lived far inland, and who, having been unfortunate in war with the Matabele, had lost to their conquerors most of their women and children'.⁶³ Ovimbundu or 'Mambari' traders from the west had also been able to acquire large numbers of slaves from the Nambya and Tonga in the 1850s and 1860s in exchange for hoes. Selling slaves into the interior marked a significant change both in the direction and nature of the Portuguese slave trade because earlier in the nineteenth century the export trade had flourished.⁶⁴

In 1877 Selous met a Portuguese trader named Simoes at Monteiro's island in the Middle River and observed that Simoes had brought with him several girls whom he wanted to sell for ivory. At Kasoko, which is further downstream, Selous met yet another trader who had just bought two young Tonga girls from Kanyemba and was apparently taking them upstream for resale.⁶⁵ Terorde, a Jesuit missionary in Father Depelchin's party, was amazed at the number of slaves he saw in Hwange's north bank village in 1880. He learnt that the Portuguese and their agents were buying these slaves for small amounts of cloth somewhere up the Kafue and reselling them in the Gwembe valley for ivory.⁶⁶

It should be noted however that the resale of slaves into the interior did not commence following the fall in the external demand for slaves in the 1870s and 1880s. When Livingstone reached Mozambique in 1856 after his great trans-Africa journey, he found that the Portuguese regularly sold slaves to the Transvaal Boers in exchange for ivory.⁶⁷ Also, when he visited Tete in 1862, he saw some slaves being sent ‘up the Zambesi’ where ‘young women were sold for ivory’ while ‘the men and boys were kept as carriers’.⁶⁸ In 1877 Richard Frewen wrote that the Portuguese traders went up to Hwange from Zumbo and Tete to buy slaves ‘to exchange for ivory’.⁶⁹

Although Frewen did not say where they exchanged the slaves for ivory, it is reasonable to suppose that it was within the Middle Zambezi valley or further downstream in the Lower Zambezi valley. Nevertheless, it should be noted that prior to the fall in the external demand, slave traders were probably of little significance as a source of slaves for resale in the interior. Since slaves were used to carry ivory and other goods, they were probably sold in the interior only when their numbers were in excess of those needed in transportation. When this was the case, exchanging some of one’s surplus slaves for ivory was a simple and effective means of eliminating the excess capacity in one’s transportation operation. Many other slaves were employed on prazos or great estates of Mozambique.

Conclusion

The depredations caused by Portuguese slaving in the Middle Zambezi valley remain one of the lesser written about episodes in our history, and there has been a tendency, even among our foremost authors on Afro-Portuguese relations in Zimbabwe, to think that Portuguese slaving only affected areas north of the Zambezi. Bhila, for example, writing in 1982 and using only evidence pertinent to Portuguese-Manyika relations, mistakenly concluded that “the trade in slaves must not be exaggerated because it was never as important an aspect of Afro-Portuguese trade in the south as it was north of the Zambezi river”.⁷⁰ This traditional assumption needs to be challenged in light of abundant evidence, especially from the large corpus of published primary sources written by contemporary European observers in the nineteenth century, detailing the impact of the slave trade on the northern regions of Zimbabwe bordering the Zambezi.

Endnotes

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⁵ McLynn, *Hearts of Darkness*, 201.

⁶ Livingstone, *Narrative of an Expedition*, 406-07.

⁷ H.A.C. Cairns, *Prelude to Imperialism, 1840-1890* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1965) 126.

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- ²¹ Matthews, 'Historical Tradition', 348.
- ²² M.D.D. Newitt, *Portuguese Settlements on the Zambezi*, (Longman, London, 1973) 130.
- ²³ Campbell, 'Madagascar and Mozambique in the Slave Trade of the Western Indian Ocean,' 174.
- ²⁴ Ibid. 176
- ²⁵ Matthews, *Historical Tradition*, 345-6, 383-5, 388-390.
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⁵³ Ibid. 181.

⁵⁴ Ibid. 181-183.

⁵⁵ McLynn, *Hearts of Darkness*, 193-4.

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⁵⁷ G. Campbell, 'The East African Slave Trade, 1861-1895: The 'Southern' Complex' *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 22, 1, 1989, 21-23.

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⁶⁰ McLynn, *Hearts of Darkness*, 201.

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THE DETERMINANTS OF SHARE PRICES IN ZIMBABWE

By

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Abstract

The main thrust of the study was to establish the major determinants of stock prices in Zimbabwe. The study methodology involved the use of questionnaires and interviews. Results from the study show that there are economic, political and social factors that determine stock prices in Zimbabwe. However, economic and political factors seem to be the dominant factors in the determination of stock prices. Social factors were found to be insignificant in explaining the stock prices.

Introduction

The stock exchange has been perceived by many as the backbone for most contemporary economies, serving a critical need of raising capital funds for companies at a reasonably low cost as compared to other sources of finance such as borrowing. The stock exchange serves two critical functions; it provides a critical link between companies that need funds to set up new businesses or to expand their current operations, and investors that have excess funds to invest in such companies, and it provides a regulated market place for buying and selling of shares at prices determined by supply and demand, notwithstanding other macroeconomic fundamentals such as interest and inflation rates.

To meet their short-term cash requirements corporations usually borrow from banks. However, when corporations need long term financing they may sell their ownership interests in the company to the public, or borrow from the public by selling bonds. Stocks exist to enable companies in need of long term financing to sell pieces of their business as stock (equity securities) in exchange for cash. This is the principal method for raising capital other than issuing bonds. These publicly held shares could be traded to other investors on the stock market. The Zimbabwe Stock Exchange (ZSE) has become very important as an investment vehicle for both local and international investors especially after the introduction Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) when borrowing rates increased to levels above one hundred percent. This paper will try to unravel the major arguments of stock prices on the ZSE.

Origins of the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange

According to Zimbabwe Stock Exchange (ZSE), the first Stock Exchange in Zimbabwe was opened in 1896 in Bulawayo. It only operated for six years before it closed.

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The present ZSE was also founded in Bulawayo in 1946. In December 1951, a second floor was opened in Harare. In January 1974 the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange Act was promulgated as Act 27 of 1973 (chapter 198) which formalised the establishment of the present ZSE with its head office in Harare. A revised ZSE Act was published in 1996 as Chapter 24.18

The study also attempts to investigate the factors to be considered by one who wants to invest on the stock market. It has to be realised that there are many arguments that determine the share price or the general performance of the stock market: and these could be social, economic or political. This study, therefore, strives to identify all these factors so that future investors are guided as far as investment on the stock market is concerned.

Why companies go public¹

According to Kelly (1997) a company is likely to seek a listing on the stock exchange for all or some of the following reasons:

- to raise further capital.
- to enable the company's owners to liquidate a portion of their investment.
- to enable public trading in the shares²²

When you buy shares in a company you own part of that company and you may benefit by getting part of the profits of that company as dividend payments. Growth in the value of the company is reflected in the value of the shares that you hold of the company to take place.

- to facilitate the establishment and operation of a staff share option scheme.
- to gain the prestige associated with a stock exchange listing as perceived by investors, customers, suppliers and employees.

Once a company has been listed on the stock exchange it does not necessarily mean that it will permanently remain on the stock exchange. The stock exchange has the right to suspend trading in the shares of any listed company at any time for the following reasons:

- a company may no longer satisfy the minimum requirements for listing, for example it may have become technically insolvent;
- a listed company may have failed to comply with requests by the stock exchange to conform to certain requirements;
- a listed company or companies may become involved in merger, acquisition, restructuring or similar issues likely to materially affect share² prices.

In the year 2004 alone the following companies were suspended from trading on the ZSE for one or more of the above reasons: Barbican Bank, CFX Bank, First Mutual limited, Trust Bank and TZI.

¹ A company goes public by listing on the stock market.

² When you buy shares in a company you own part of that company and you may benefit by getting part of the profits of that company as dividend payments. Growth in the value of the company is reflected in the value of the shares that you hold.

Methodology

The focus of this paper is the determination of stock prices in Zimbabwe. To gather the information that we wanted we used interviews, questionnaires, and archival methods. We targeted the people in the various organisations/companies that are registered on the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange, stock exchange staff, stock broking firms, investment analysts and chief executives. In some instances we engaged people in some informal discussions because if people know that they are being interviewed they tend to withhold some information which they think may lend them into trouble. Information obtained through interviews was not significantly different from the information obtained through the questionnaires although interviews allowed the interviewer to make follow ups on certain points that would have been mentioned by the interviewee. As far as the questionnaires were concerned we had very little problems of people who completely failed to complete the questionnaires and those who gave unclear answers simply because they had no time. Despite these problems the response rate obtained was 76 percent of all questionnaires administered.

Importance of Stock Market

This section tries to explain the importance of the stock market as an investment vehicle for the investors. Very few people in Zimbabwe are aware that they can invest money on the stock market and reap some very lucrative returns through dividends and capital gains. For investors who invest on the market there are of course some risks that they have to live with, for example, the unexpected crashing of the stock market.

According to McGregor (1989) companies usually borrow money from banks in order to meet their short-term cash requirements. However, when they need long-term finance, they may sell their ownership interests in the company by using common and preferred stocks. Moreover, they can also borrow from the public by selling bonds to meet their long-term capital requirements. Stocks exist to enable companies in need of long-term finance to sell pieces of their business as stocks (equity securities) in exchange for cash. The selling of equity securities is the principal method of raising long-term capital other than the issuing bonds. The publicly held shares can be traded to other investors on the stock market, and are in this case, known to be liquid³ (Mayer, Duesenberry and Aliber; 1996). According to Stanlake (1993) company shares represent permanent loans and there are no rights to repayment of such loans. He also noted that in the absence of some kind of stock exchange, securities such as these will be very illiquid and it would be very difficult to find buyers for them. Hence, the existence of the stock exchange solves this problem because it provides a market where holders of shares and long-term securities can always buy and sell them.

A company that has obtained permission to have its shares traded on the stock exchange will find it much easier to raise new capital by making an issue of shares. The stock exchange, therefore, is an essential part of capital market, i.e. market for long-term loans (Kelly; 1997).

³ Shares are said to be liquid if they are readily convertible to cash.

Shauna Croome (2003) states that companies receive money from the securities market only when they first sell a security to the public in the primary market, which is commonly referred to as an initial public offer (IPO). It is in the subsequent trading of these shares on the stock market that investors buying and selling the stock would benefit from the movements in the stock price. The benefits accrue through either the appreciation of the stock price or the dividends that are paid out. Croome (2003) further went on to explain why management and founder members of a given company care about their stock's performance in the secondary market when the company has already received its money in the IPO. He argued that the explanation lies in the fact that management or founder members of a public company tend to own a significant number of shares and also that salaries incentive or stock options for management could be tied to the performance of the company's stock. For these two reasons, management acts as shareholders and thus pay attention to their stock price.

According to McGregor (1989) another main role of the stock market is to act as a barometer of financial health for the companies that are listed. Thus creditors tend to favourably consider companies whose shares are performing very well for financing purposes. This preferential treatment is due to the relationship, which exists between a company's earnings and its share price. Over the long term, strong earnings are a good indication that the company will be able to meet its debt requirements. As a result, the company will receive cheap finance because of the lower risk associated with it.

The Zimbabwe Stock Exchange provides the platform and the means for raising capital for both Zimbabwean and international companies through the issuance of equity, debentures and depository receipts. It also provides investors with the opportunity to buy and sell shares in any company listed on the stock exchange.

The other fact that has to be considered is that a stock exchange has been perceived as the backbone for most contemporary economies, serving a critical need of raising capital funds for companies at a reasonably low cost as compared to other sources of finance such as borrowing (Kelly; 1997).

Determinants of share prices

A total of two hundred people were either given questionnaires to complete or interviewed by the researchers. The findings are not going to give detail what number of people gave what answers because that would unnecessarily make the paper voluminous. This section of the paper, therefore, only summarises the determinants of stock prices that we established after some analysis of the data that we collected. These determinants are hence summarised below.

Corporate earnings

Information on a company's performance and growth prospects is very important in determining a company's share price. Demand increases for the shares that have a high prospect for growth (blue chip shares⁴). The prices of such shares rise much faster than

⁴Blue chip shares are usually highly valued shares in a major company known for its stability to make profits in good or bad times, and with reduced risk or default.

those of companies whose growth prospects are bleak. The expected receipt of dividend income is sometimes an incentive for investing in a given stock, particularly if the yield on the investment exceeds the return offered on other alternative investments like savings accounts. Investors may pay a premium for shares in issue. The less liquid the shares are, the more difficult they are to come across; and one may have to pay a premium in order to get them.

Management

The strength of the management team plays a very crucial role in determining the price of a share. Changes in the management team affects both the risk and returns associated with the counter. If the incumbent management team is perceived to be strong due to its past performance, changes in such a team can result in the dropping of share price and vice versa. The sudden drop in the share price of National Merchant Bank of Zimbabwe (NMBZ) in March 2004 was a result of when the senior managers who left the country due to fraudulent activities they were involved in.

Lawsuits

News of lawsuits against a company can severely affect its share price. Besides the issue of unwanted bad publicity, lawsuits can result in fines, damages and/or withdrawal of trading licences. This is risky for an investor and therefore causes a plunge in the share price.

Mergers and takeovers

Mergers and takeovers can also affect share prices depending on the market's perception of the merits and demerits of a takeover. For example the share price of Century Bank was negatively affected by its involvement in the ENG saga. However, the news of its proposed merger with CFX Bank helped to strengthen the price of its share even before the merger took place. This is because a strong merger partnership brings shareholder value and reduces risk.

De-mergers result in companies unbundling part of their operations (e.g. properties) so as to focus on core business and hence add shareholder value. A good example in Zimbabwe is Zimbabwe Sun group of companies. The share price of Zimbabwe Sun increased from \$20.00 to \$180.00 ahead of the group's unbundling of the properties (hotels) in October 2001 to concentrate on the actual provision of the tourism and hospitality services. This resulted in the birth of Dawn properties, which was subsequently listed on the ZSE.

Market liquidity and stability

When the market is less liquid, there are no funds to buy shares and hence share prices go down especially when supply is high. During financial crises, stock market information is very sensitive and hence share prices are volatile. Stock prices normally decline during the subscription period and when companies announce rights issues⁵.

Stock markets include laws that govern insider trading because this can also lead to share price volatility. Insider dealing is trading of stocks by people within the company who have important information about the direction the company is taking. The public may deduce that

⁵ Rights issue is an offer of additional shares to existing shareholders, usually at a lower price than the current market price.

when the insiders are buying or selling shares of their own companies, they have some important information about the companies that drive them to do so.

Availability of Substitutes

When the market has substitute securities such as loan stocks, unit trusts and treasury bills, the share prices often go down or remain constant. For eight days from the 7th to the 14th of October 2004, most share prices for companies on the ZSE traded at constant prices due to the short term treasury bills that were issued by the central bank during the same period to reduce market liquidity. For example, Old Mutual shares traded at a constant price of \$11800 during that period even after the publication of some impressive results.

Government Policy

Changes or proposed changes in the system of taxation, government spending, monetary policy and in industrial policy (e.g. privatisation) can have an important effect on people's willingness to buy or sell shares. In Zimbabwe the recent problems that were experienced in the financial services sector have had profound effect on the financial counters. According to the Business Herald (5th of October 2004) financial counters are no longer as attractive to the prospective investors as they were in the previous years. Sentiments on the financial counters, with the exception of those that are financially stable reached their lowest ebb in 2004. During the first half of the year financial counters either remained static or plummeted, with at least three firms being suspended from trading on the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange. It can also be noted that each time a monetary policy or a government budget statement is presented the share prices are affected in some way. This clearly demonstrates the fact that government policy and actions impact on the share prices of listed companies.

Macroeconomic fundamentals

Interest rates and inflation also have an effect on share prices. Where real interest rates are negative, investors tend to seek alternatives that yield positive returns and shares are one such alternative. As investors move from the money market to the ZSE, share prices are likely to increase due to increased demand. When investors are assured of positive real interest rates on the money market they are more likely to invest on the money market where returns are guaranteed instead of the stock market where returns are uncertain.

The exchange rate also has an effect on share prices as it affects the companies that either export or import. Devaluation of a currency might have a positive effect on the share price of an exporting company as it improves its competitiveness on international market. However, the companies that import raw materials are negatively affected by devaluation as their production costs automatically go up. On the other hand, companies that produce import substitutes are likely to benefit from devaluation as the imported products become less competitive as compared locally produced goods.

Investor Sentiments

Share price movements are also explained by the perceptions of the investors. For example in a bull market share prices are expected to rise and in a bear market they are expected to fall. Investor sentiments may be demonstrated through the seasonality of stock markets. For instance, share prices are usually anticipated to fall during the festive season. This compels some investors to redeem their shares just before the beginning of the festive season so as not to experience capital losses.

The level of confidence of the investors in the general economy and economic policies of the country also impact on the share prices. For example, the land reform programme, social unrest and policy reversals that were experienced between 1997 and 2001 negatively affected the stock market, as investors were uncertain about the direction the economy was taking. Uncertainties of this nature may also affect the global markets, for example, just after the 11th of September 2001 attack on the USA major world stock markets recorded their lowest volumes of trade.

Technical influences

Technical influences are another factor that impact on share prices. A good example is the ranking of counters according to the performance and the profitability of the companies. Investors tend to regard highly counters in the 'top ten' and these are the companies they would be inclined to invest in. This is a self-fulfilling prophecy because as investors demand such shares their prices continue to go up. For example, in Zimbabwe counters such as Old Mutual, Pretoria Portland Cement, British American Tobacco, Delta and Meikles are some of the counters in the top ten and they are the ones that are popular with investors.

Another technical influence is the use of past share prices to forecast how share prices and stock markets will perform in the future. A company's previous performance may always act as a pointer to its future performance and this guides investors as far as their investment decisions are concerned.

Analyst Reports

Analysts' recommendations on "buy" or "sell" decisions affect prices of stocks in question as investors normally take heed of such recommendations. The public normally accepts the advice given by the analysts since the analysts are specialists in their respective fields.

Conclusion

The main thrust of the study was to establish the major determinants of stock prices in Zimbabwe. This paper also highlighted the history and the importance of the ZSE. The study shows that there are economic, political and social factors that determine stock prices in Zimbabwe. However, economic and political factors seem to be the dominant factors in the determination of stock prices.

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**GLOBAL WAR AND LOCAL ECONOMY: A STUDY OF THE IMPACT
OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR ON SOUTHERN RHODESIAN
TOBACCO INDUSTRY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
MARKETING, 1939-1965.**

By

Constantine Munhande¹

Abstract

The global war that broke out in 1939 was a blessing in disguise for Southern Rhodesia's tobacco industry that had been suffering from various constraints. The Second World War boosted the tobacco industry in the country because it was from then onwards that it claimed its rightful place in the country's agricultural-driven economy. It is argued that government legislation introduced in the tobacco industry in the 1930s against the backdrop of the devastating Great Depression laid the foundation for the future success of the industry from the time of the war onwards. The war situation resulted in a tremendous increase in smoking in Britain, which increased the demand for flue-cured tobacco. This development was unfolding at a time when the country was facing critical dollar reserves shortages to enable her to continue purchasing tobacco from her traditional supplier, the United States of America (USA). It was under these circumstances that Britain turned to the Empire, and Southern Rhodesia in particular which had already shown great potential to produce large quantities of good quality tobacco. This paper therefore explores the tobacco industry in the context of the war with a view to unravel the circumstances in which the industry was able to overcome its problems.

Introduction

The outbreak of the Second World War and subsequent events tremendously transformed the tobacco industry of Southern Rhodesia. The major obstacle facing the industry since 1910 was marketing¹. External and reliable markets were crucial to the success of the industry since domestic consumption for the crop was still very negligible to be of any help. In the light of this, the war was a blessing in disguise and a turning point for Southern Rhodesia's tobacco industry. Conditions of the war made it possible for the country to enter into foreign markets especially the United Kingdom (UK)² that came to be the country's major tobacco market during and after the war.

As the prospects of peace returning to the world became brighter most stakeholders in the tobacco industry of Southern Rhodesia became anxious as they expected the UK to drastically reduce her purchases from the country for American tobacco, which she had relied on before the war. Surprisingly to them, this was not to be. In fact, the industry expanded by leaps and

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bounds between the end of the war and 1965. The dollar crisis that had started during the war intensified³. This development culminated in the signing of the London Agreement between the two countries. While the Agreement assured the UK of a sufficiently large and steady supply of tobacco, it guaranteed Southern Rhodesian growers a large, secure and reliable market for their tobacco over a long period of time. This gave rise to a great measure of security in the industry resulting in a “stampede” to grow the “leaf of gold”⁴

Production rose tremendously making it imperative to find other markets for a growing proportion of the crop. The Tobacco Marketing Board (TMB), through its marketing agents, the Tobacco Export Promotion Council of Southern Rhodesia, vigorously took up the challenge resulting in the penetration of more new markets. This caused “trade wars” between Southern Rhodesia and other players in the industry particularly the USA.⁵

Development of the Southern Rhodesia Tobacco Industry 1910-1930’s

From 1903, the British South African Company (BSAC), which had spearheaded the occupation of the land north of the Limpopo, Southern Rhodesia, began to take a keen interest in agriculture. The Second Rand, which Rhodes had hoped to discover, had not materialized and the country was in the midst of an economic crisis.⁶ Consequently, the company began to experiment with various crops as well as in animal husbandry in a bid to attract settlers who would pay for the land and make profit for the company. It was within this multi-pronged approach to the company’s search for an alternative to the elusive gold that the soils of most parts of Mashonaland were discovered to be suitable for the production of Virginia tobacco. However, from the very early years of the industry, the aspect of marketing the crop proved very difficult, disappointing and at times demotivating to the growers.⁷ The difficulties experienced in tobacco marketing up to 1936 could be summarized as emanating from the lack of a strong organization to centralize marketing and coordinate the various branches of the industry, lack of consistency in quality, type and quantity of the tobacco produced, unregulated production and the domination of the world tobacco trade by the USA.⁸

During this period the industry greatly relied on the South African market. This was facilitated by Southern Rhodesia’s 1902 decision to join the South African Customs Union. Under the terms of the 1903 Customs Agreement, Southern Rhodesian leaf enjoyed a duty – free entry into the South African market.⁹ The agreement stimulated production in Southern Rhodesia, as the prices offered in the Union market were very competitive. However, by the late 1920s this market had been severely curtailed by the post World War One economic recession, as well as the Great Depression. Despite this, South Africa’s role in the early development of the Southern Rhodesian tobacco industry remained crucial. She provided Southern Rhodesia with an external market, which she desperately needed for the take off of the industry

Government legislation in the 1930s

The 1930s were a crucial era in the subsequent success made in marketing Southern Rhodesian tobacco during and after the war until the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI). The legal framework governing the marketing of tobacco, which had been lacking since the

birth of the industry was finally laid down guaranteeing the much-needed orderliness. This process largely hinged upon the government adapting its thinking to the needs of the industry. This took place within the broader government policy of intervention into agriculture and other sectors of the economy to rescue white settlers who were on the brink of collapse owing to the depression.¹⁰

In the case of tobacco three important pieces of legislation passed were, firstly, the Tobacco Levy Act (1933). This Act made it compulsory for all growers who were members of the Southern Rhodesia Tobacco Association (RTA) to pay 1 /20 of a penny per pound on the weight of their tobacco exported by the Association. The funds accumulated were used for the general development of the industry. Second was the Tobacco Reserve Pool Act (1934). This was enacted in the wake of yet another overproduction in the industry. It empowered the RTA to remove from the open market of the Union, Britain and the local market, 20 percent of each grower's crop into a reserve pool to avoid a fall in price by glutting the market. Tobacco so accumulated was disposed of later, usually at lower prices in various overseas markets.¹¹

Lastly was the Tobacco Marketing Act (1935) which led to the formation of the Tobacco Marketing Board (TMB) in 1936. Among its major functions were, to fix delivery quotas to the growers in order to prevent congestion on the auction floors, i.e. the Tobacco Producers Auction Floor and the Tobacco Auction Ltd, to encourage the better handling of tobacco by growers, graders and auctions, to determine surplus tobacco and regulate its disposal, supervise the provision of adequate facilities for handling the crop at various stages of production and sale, assess the Union's duty – free purchases and to encourage a more efficient freight.¹² The orderliness, which prevailed in the country's tobacco marketing system as a result of these pieces of legislation, attracted buyers from all over the world opening up a period of stable expansion for the industry. Both acreage and prices began to expand steadily. Prices rose by over 100% from an average of 7.13d/lb in 1936 to 15.03d/lb by April 1939¹³. By the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, all the groundwork necessary for the success recorded by the industry between 1939 and 1965 had been set.

The war period: 1939 – 1945.

The outbreak of the Second World War brought major changes to smoking habits in most parts of the world, particularly Europe. This expanded the demand for tobacco. This demand in turn forced major tobacco consumers, such as the UK, to look for alternative supplies other than the USA. Prior to the outbreak of the war, the most popular type of smoke was the pipe, which extensively relied on Turkish tobacco. This greatly limited the demand for Virginia tobacco used mostly in cigarette manufacture, which was widely grown in Southern Rhodesia and the USA. War conditions completely changed this established order.

Firstly, under the rigours of the war, the level of cigarette consumption increased sharply.¹⁴ The very nature of the cigarette meant that it was comparatively easier to keep and smoke in the war zone than a pipe. Consequently, the demand for flue cured Virginia tobacco increased tremendously worldwide. This was also partly due to the fact that smoking among women

was on the increase as they entered the job market in great numbers than before. Further, smoking generally began to be increasingly seen as a form of consolation for the various deprivations brought by the war on various sections of the populace.¹⁵ These developments paved the way for the entry of Southern Rhodesian tobacco into the UK and other overseas markets. During the war, the UK's dollar (\$) reserves deteriorated badly and in a bid to improve and halt the worsening of this problem, she began to limit her purchases of tobacco and other commodities from the dollar world, the USA in particular.¹⁶ This was taking place at a time when the demand and consumption of tobacco was on the increase in the UK and other overseas markets.

Southern Rhodesia became one of the UK's largest sources of tobacco supply within the Empire. The Imperial Preference first conceded for Empire tobacco in 1919, increased in 1925 and guaranteed for ten years in 1932 had also encouraged manufacturers in the UK to purchase tobacco from Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. By 1939, UK manufacturers were already making huge purchases from Southern Rhodesia's auction floors. In addition, there was also the 1928 tobacco crisis. This resulted in large stocks of Southern Rhodesian tobacco accumulating in the UK. This unfortunate event helped to convince the manufacturers in London of Southern Rhodesia's capability to supply a large regular quantity of tobacco¹⁷. In the past, manufacturers in the UK had been hesitant to use large proportions of Southern Rhodesian tobacco in their cigarettes because of inconsistency in both quantity and quality.¹⁸ This was, in addition to the fact that manufacturers would not easily change the already established "American Taste" without doing great harm to their business.

During the war period, the UK encouraged manufacturers to turn to Southern Rhodesian tobacco to save the outflow of the much needed and rapidly dwindling American dollars. Customs duty on tobacco from the dollar area into the UK was thereby raised to discourage manufacturers from using American tobacco. On the other hand, the British Board of Trade encouraged the purchase of Southern Rhodesian tobacco by giving her priority shipping quotas. She also conceded a 3d/lb increase in price as a way of stimulating production in Southern Rhodesia to meet the UK manufacturers' needs.¹⁹

Production and marketing arrangements.

In response to the above incentives, tobacco production and prices shot up between 1939 and 1945. The crop changed from its previous status of being a "crop of headache" to one of "gold". The average price for Virginia flue – cured tobacco rose from 10.11d/lb in 1939/40, 18.05d in 1942/3 to 21.78d/lb in 1945/6.²⁰

Compared to the pre-war period, this rate of growth was quite phenomenal when it is taken into account that the country was facing a critical shortage of labour during the war period. Tobacco farming, being very labour intensive, was hard hit. It also offered lower wages and poor working conditions as compared to the booming manufacturing industry that was just "taking off" in the country under the import substitution industrialization scheme during this period. Nevertheless, the industry was expanding so fast that the government took deliberate steps to limit this growth as by 1942 it had become clear that the country risked facing serious

food shortages if tobacco production continued unregulated. As tobacco prices seemed to continue to surge, many farmers diverted their land and other inputs from food crops towards tobacco.²¹ This caused a huge drop in food production. Alarmed by this, the colonial government made efforts starting from 1942 to divert inputs, particularly fertilizer, from tobacco towards food production. Priority of fertilizer supplies was given to food crop farmers. This was reflected by the decrease in the number of growers and production between the season 1941/42 and 1943/44.²²

As the world seemed to be waiting to purchase Southern Rhodesian tobacco, the question of quality became a secondary issue as the Tobacco Marketing Board frankly admitted;

Owing to scarcity of and keen demand for tobacco, the buyers were not as insistent as formerly on turning down bales, which were mixed graded or faulty in some other way.²³

Thus, some farmers became very reluctant to spend their resources and energy on improving quality when, "every leaf of tobacco could be readily sold irrespective of its quality".²⁴ Whilst buyers were doubtlessly critical of the poor quality crop offered, they indirectly perpetuated the problem throughout the war period. By offering good prices for low-grade tobacco, they promoted quantity rather than quality. This was, however, against a background of very limited choices.

The increase that took place in production necessitated changes in the marketing of the crop between delivery from the farmers to the auction floors and its export. The two auction floors then, the Tobacco Producers Floor and Tobacco Auctions Ltd, failed to handle the large volumes of tobacco from the growers. Transport facilities from both the growers to the auctions and to the sea were also failing to cope with the volume of tobacco. Congestion on the auction floors was further exacerbated by the reduction of the selling duration per day consequently affecting weekly sales. This was in direct response to labour shortages of managerial staff on the auction floors.²⁵ A considerable percentage of their labour force that comprised mostly the whites had been recruited to serve in the war.

When it became apparent for the first time in 1939 that auction floors would not be able to cope with large volumes of tobacco, the Tobacco Marketing Board introduced ad-hoc measures to deal with the crisis. It increased the bale weight until it reached 224 pounds in 1945 from 150 pounds in 1939.²⁶ To ensure conformity by growers, the Board imposed a minimum bale weight of 180lbs. Any grower who supplied a bale below this minimum was charged a heavy fine. Further, the rate of sale on the floors increased from 391 bales a day in 1939 to 482 in 1940 and 500 by 1945 respectively.²⁷ However, these were measures still inadequate to resolve the crisis and new measures were sought. Most outstanding among these were delivery quotas introduced in 1941. As soon as the warehouses had approximately 800 bales of tobacco each on hand, quotas were put in force. These were worked out for each grower according to his tobacco acreage during that season and on his average yield per acre for the previous two seasons.²⁸ Any bales that were sent in excess of the quota were immediately returned to the farmer at his own cost.

Although the quota system doubtlessly, faced much criticism from those farmers who wanted to dispose of their entire crop at once when prices were "very good", the Board had done its

homework to the best of its capacity. The system of delivery quotas enabled all the growers to obtain an equitable share of the market price at all times. This was achieved by spreading their quota sales throughout the season to allow each grower to obtain for his produce the average seasonal market values. These quotas were only lifted each season when deliveries to the floors and tobacco in stock were within the handling capacity of the auction warehouses and transport capacity.²⁹

The Auction System: Laws and regulations

Since parties to buying and selling of tobacco were aimed at obtaining the best possible bargain, it meant that conflict was inevitable at one time or another. The grower on his part was concerned at getting the highest possible price for his crop while the buyer also looked forward to obtaining the best grades of tobacco at the lowest possible price. In an endeavor to minimize conflicts that could arise in the selling process, the TMB laid down some rules and codes of conduct to be followed in the event of one party being unsatisfied with the sale.³⁰ It represented a neutral body that could be approached freely for arbitration by any discontented party. An independent businessman or a senior civil servant conversant with both sides of the industry chaired the Board. One such regulation passed was that, no complaint could be entertained from either party when selling was still in progress. The grower could not dispute the price offered for his crop while the auction was still in progress. This same rule applied to the buyer who could also not inspect his purchase and lodge a complaint if not satisfied while the auction was still in progress.³¹ Complaints and arbitrations were only allowed after the auction. This was essential for maintaining order on the floors, which was crucial for attracting buyers.

When the auction sale was completed for the day, both buyers and growers could then inspect their tobacco and prices respectively. The grower or the auction floor representatives examined the bales individually to decide whether the price offered was fair. Should the grower decide that the price was not fair, he/she was free to reject the price by “crossing” the ticket of sale. In such an event, the bale was removed to the storage area and re-booked for sale at a future date. The same procedure also applied to the representatives of tobacco merchants. They inspected their purchases and if they found a bale deficient in any respect, they could appeal to a TMB arbitrator to cancel the sale.³²

Nesting³³ was the major problem that buyers encountered. To stem the problem, the Tobacco Amendment Act 1955, section 17, imposed a heavy penalty for a grower who so packed his tobacco. For the first offence the fine was £10 and £20 for each subsequent offence.³⁴ A similarly heavy penalty was imposed on buyers who made false reports of purchasing nested tobacco. According to sub rule 1 of the 1955 Tobacco Marketing Amendment Act,

Any buyer who makes a report, which in the opinion of the Board is frivolous or vexatious, the buyer making such a report, shall be liable to a fine payable to the Board.³⁵

When all parties were satisfied, the merchants were obliged to settle their accounts not later than half an hour before the closing of banking hours on the day following the sale. As a result

of these laws and regulations the process of tobacco selling on the auction floors went smoothly with minor disruptions.

The post war period to 1965

The end of the Second World War signaled the beginning of an even much brighter period for the industry. The U.K dollar shortage crisis which had started during the war, got worse. The effect was a rush for Southern Rhodesian tobacco, which increased competition on the auction floors. Throughout the post-war period to 1965, the average price for tobacco on the auction floors was 30.0d/lb.³⁶ This was in stark contrast to the war period during which the average price received by growers was about 19.0d/lb. For the first time in the history of Southern Rhodesia, the value of tobacco exceeded that of gold in 1946. Until then, gold had been the major foreign currency earner for the country.³⁷

Owing to the good prices obtained in the post-war period, there was a rush to grow tobacco. Farmers who had been producing other crops or were engaged in other branches of farming such as ranching were switching to join the tobacco bandwagon. Immigrants also came from other parts of the continent and overseas for the specific purpose of growing tobacco. The returning ex-servicemen who took up land under various settlement schemes also went for the “leaf of gold”. Thus, tobacco growing extended its operations well beyond the recognized tobacco areas (mostly areas surrounding Salisbury). Areas like Karoi, Kwekwe, Mvuma, Chaka Block and Umguse among others started to produce tobacco.³⁸

The number of immigrants settling in the country increased quite considerably between 1946 and 1950 from 9120 to 16 179.³⁹ Although quite a sizeable percentage of these immigrants, doubtlessly, settled in the country's urban areas where they were readily absorbed into various sectors of the fledging economy, a fairly large proportion of them went into tobacco farming. It is no surprise therefore that the number of tobacco growers surged from about 800 in 1945 to 1160 in 1946, 1778 in 1948 and over 3000 by 1965.⁴⁰ Production figures also firmed in direct response to this increase in the number of growers. During the growing season 1945/6, about 41 740 520 lbs of flue-cured tobacco were produced in the country. The next season it jumped to over 57 440 740 lbs.⁴¹

The London Agreement

The above development was only possible because of the UK dollar crisis. Its persistence and intensification in the season 1946/7 prepared the ground for talks between the representatives of the RTA and the British manufacturers. The talks culminated in the signing of the London Agreement in 1948.⁴² For the sake of obtaining tobacco from Southern Rhodesia, the UK manufacturers represented by the TAC (Tobacco Advisory Committee), committed themselves to purchase from Southern Rhodesia large quantities of tobacco over a long period. The UK Committed itself to these long period agreements in order to dispel any doubts among the RTA that it was temporarily interested in Southern Rhodesian tobacco. This won it the confidence of the RTA, which gave them priority supply.

In the agreement, the UK agreed, firstly to purchase each year over the next five years, two – thirds of Southern Rhodesia’s flue-cured tobacco. Secondly, to purchase 40 million pounds of the Southern Rhodesian crop should there be a drop in the UK consumption. Lastly, it gave an assurance that the crop would fetch not less than 29d/lb (100 percent profit for growers).⁴³ On its part, the TMB also endeavored to comply with the spirit of the agreement. Pressure was put on the government to increase its budget on settler agriculture, a large chunk of which went towards tobacco, especially research.⁴⁴ According to Palmer, during the period 1945 to 1965 over £12 million was spent on settler agriculture each year compared to only £2 million made available to African agriculture.⁴⁵ A further testimony to the TMB’s commitment to the agreement was the introduction of export controls from 1948 to 1952. These export controls limited the quantity of tobacco which other buyers could export. This measure, however, had the detrimental consequences of limiting competition on the auction floors, which in turn suppressed prices. It also prevented the ‘active’ pursuit of new Tobacco markets since the UK and other priority markets swallowed up almost the whole of the Southern Rhodesian crop.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the London Agreement was a big flip to the development of the Southern Rhodesian tobacco industry as F. Clements and E Harben observe,

The agreement gave them (Southern Rhodesian growers) a long corridor of time down, which the industry could look to its future. It removed the doubts that British manufacturers had merely a short-term interest in the Southern Rhodesian tobacco industry.⁴⁷

Other markets

The UK was, however, not the only market for Southern Rhodesian tobacco. Despite being the most important one, Southern Rhodesia also sold her tobacco to other markets all over the world. For instance, the European Common Market (ECM) was its second most important market after the UK. This partly explains why the Federation (1953 – 63) was so vociferous when the USA supported an ECM duty proposal, which would have prejudiced Federal tobacco into that market. In 1959, the market (ECM) absorbed over 32 million lbs of the Federation’s Flue – cured tobacco.⁴⁸

By the 1960’s it was estimated that the Federation was exporting tobacco to more than 50 countries scattered all over the world. Among them were Canada, Singapore, Hong Kong, Nigeria, the British West Indies, Austria, Belgium Congo, Denmark, Algeria, Angola, Norway, Mozambique, and Switzerland.⁴⁹

This spectacular expansion of the Southern Rhodesian tobacco market was however, not achieved harmoniously. There were conflicts as Southern Rhodesia penetrated some of these markets hitherto dominated by these old players. The USA became the Federation’s major ‘enemy’ in this regard. As Southern Rhodesia and other members of the Federation mastered the art of producing the “leaf of gold“, export markets, particularly overseas, were increasingly and successfully penetrated. Most of these markets were initially dominated by the USA but as production surged in Southern Rhodesia, significant portions of them were progressively entered as well. This became the major bone of contention between the federation and the USA. America could not simply watch while these markets shrank.

Between 1947 and 1961, the USA lost about 15 percent of her share in the UK market. Conversely, the Federation recorded approximately an equal percent share gain in the same market.⁵⁰ This was not surprising in the context of the war and post war British dollar crisis that forced the British to pursue a “policy” of limiting purchases from the dollar world. This policy shifted the UK’s tobacco supplies to the sterling area hence the increase of empire countries’ tobacco exports to the U.K.

The imperial preference was another contributory factor to the conflict. This was demonstrated by the USA’s call for Britain to abolish the preference as her share of exports to the UK fell while that of her rivals from the sterling area firmed through the 1950’s to the early 1960’s. However, the imperial preference did not end except for Southern Rhodesia when Ian Smith declared UDI in 1965. There was also a protracted war between the federation and the USA over the ECM in the early 1960’s. By then, the ECM had become the Federation’s second most important tobacco market after the UK. It was absorbing over 40 million lbs of all types of tobacco produced within the federation and over 30lbs million of flue – cured Virginia tobacco. It was therefore within the context of this achievement that the federation tried to resist anything which could negatively affect it in this market. The Federal Ministry of Commerce and Industry expressed the sentiments of everybody involved in the industry when it noted that:

Since countries of Western Europe already form an important export market for Federal tobacco, alteration in terms of access to the market is of considerable importance both in the present and the future, especially having regard to the expansion taking place in the industry.⁵¹

The above statement was made after the ECM had issued a new import duty proposal. If it had been implemented, the proposed duty would have greatly prejudiced the entry of Federal tobacco into ECM while at the same time giving great advantage to US tobacco. The proposal was to have a common tariff wall against all tobacco not produced within the countries of the ECM and their associated overseas territories.⁵² As a result of disadvantages in the proposed system, the federation resisted its implementation.

In addition to these conflicts with the USA, there were also occasional but minor conflicts with the Union of South Africa. These conflicts had their roots in the 1930 Customs Agreement in which the union could determine the quantity of Southern Rhodesian duty free leaf to enter the Union. This caused a lot of problems and complications in Southern Rhodesia’s trade relations with the UK in the 1940’s. Whenever there was a drop in tobacco production in the Union, she easily made up for the deficit by raising the quantity of duty-free tobacco to allow more tobacco into the country. This adversely affected other buyers on the auction floors. Because of the duty-free privilege, the union buyers afforded to pay considerably higher prices than other competitors thereby creaming off the crop to the detriment of others.⁵³

In 1944 when union buyers again took the cream of tobacco out of the market, the UK tobacco interests made it clear to the TMB that “if the same position occurs again the UK would lose interest in Southern Rhodesian tobacco”.⁵⁴ In the light of the dollar shortage already discussed, this was purely an empty threat, which was shortly confirmed by subsequent

events. During the 1946/7 season, the Union again declared a duty-free quota of over 3 million lbs considered by southern Rhodesia to be very capable of disrupting trade relations with the UK. The UK did not abandon Southern Rhodesia even though the Union refused to lower its quota. A satisfactory compromise was only reached in 1947 under a new convention signed between the Union and southern Rhodesia. Under its provisions southern Rhodesia had the right to limit the quantity of the Union `s duty-free quota.⁵⁵

Conclusion.

This article has demonstrated how conditions of the Second World War made it possible for Southern Rhodesian tobacco to enter foreign markets, especially the United Kingdom (UK) which came to be the country's major tobacco market during and after the war. With the end of the war many in the industry expected the UK to drastically reduce purchases from Southern Rhodesia in favour of American tobacco, which she had greatly relied on before the war. This did not happen. Instead, the industry expanded by leaps and bounds between the end of the war and 1965 creating a firm foundation for the country's economy.

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THE ROLE OF THEATRE IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: A STUDY OF DRAMATIC PERFORMANCES ON THE CITY OF GWERU

By

Wiseman Magwa¹

Abstract

This article examines the perception of the residents of the city of Gweru with regards the usefulness of theatre in social, economic and political spheres. Findings of the study are based on data gathered from 400 participants. In the study, the questionnaire and the interview techniques were used as the main data gathering instruments to collect information from both the literate and non-literate community members. Processing of collected data was both qualitative and quantitative. Results show that dramatic performances play a very important role in shaping community thinking, hence the researcher recommends theatre to be used as a vehicle of communication in matters pertaining to health, culture, politics and economy.

Introduction and Background

Although drama has proved to be a very effective communicative tool, it seems not to be given enough recognition in many African countries (Zinyemba, 1986; Breitinger, 1984). This is evidenced by poor funding by governments and a general poor image of drama in society. Despite this negative image, drama, according to Barber et al (1997) plays a part in the development and reinforcement of human ideas. African drama has an indisputable social function and it is according to Traore (1972), a mirror of African life and it is highly responsible for social change and is also a key agent in disseminating new ideas to society.

Much controversy surrounds the notion of whether the various forms of performance activities found in traditional African society may rightly be considered as drama or theatre. Many scholars assert that theatre or drama exist when a human being pretends for artistic reasons, that he or she is someone else (Little, 1986; Etherton, 1982, and Jones 1976). Drama becomes theatre when performance is done in front of an audience. The argument was perhaps first prompted by Ruth Finnegan who asserted that drama in Africa hardly existed before the arrival of European settlers in the later nineteenth century (Chinyowa, 1998). Africans were regarded as having no tradition of drama or theatre (Kerr, 1995). Many Europeans treated Africa as a 'tabula rasa' with no theatrical tradition. This denigration of African culture led to direct attacks on indigenous performing arts by colonialists. The arrival of the Cecil John Rhodes sponsored Pioneer Column in July 1890 should be regarded as a bad omen for indigenous Zimbabwean theatre. Rhodes and his other European settlers harboured myths

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that led them to regard Africans as 'non-cultured' in great need of a "civilising mission" (Chinyowa, 1998:77). Spurred on by these settler paternalist notions, colonial cultural programmes were introduced in order to make Africans adopt Western values and beliefs. What used to be learnt from traditional games was now replaced by the school classroom, reading books and playing Western games. Children gradually lost touch with indigenous modes of cultural expression and socialisation as they began to identify more and more with Western modernity.

Western Religion was strongly opposed to the continuation of African rituals, ceremonies and other cultural practices, as these were a threat to missionary proselytisation. Missionaries therefore preached, not a modification of African ritual practices, but their uprooting (Zinyemba, 1986). As a result of Western missionary influence, children's dramatic performances were gradually replaced by Bible based passion plays. Ngugi (1986) says it was cultural imperialism by the West, that curbed the free development of the national traditions of theatre rooted in the ritual ceremonial practices to the African peasantry.

When Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980, dramatic performances became known and wide spread in most of the country's provinces. More than one hundred theatre groups were registered with the Zimbabwe Association of Community Theatre (ZACT). Most of these groups presented their shows in and around major towns during the week and weekends. They performed in converted assembly halls, community centres, in the yards of bars or at street corners. Some were professionals; others semi-professionals and many were just talented amateurs (Breitinger, 1994).

The aims of some groups were merely commercial, that is, to use theatre as an income generating activity, while others staged their shows to campaign for AIDS prevention, health education, good farming habits or road safety, just to mention a few. In Zimbabwe, the government, through its ministries (Health and Education) and international organisations (WHO, UNICEF, UNESCO) has turned to theatre to launch campaigns to educate the population in both urban and rural areas. AIDS in particular, has been the topic of several campaigns of educative theatre.

However, it is sad to realise that most African governments are the most inhibiting factors in the development of theatre. Theatre groups are not free to express political ideas using drama some there is too much censorship of plays through the legislative arms of the government. It is also worth noting that the Zimbabwean government, does not provide the financial resources necessary for the promotion of drama. Most of the support for the performing arts in Zimbabwe so far comes from the Scandinavian countries through the benevolence of such non-governmental organisations such as Norwegian Development Agency (NORAD), Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). These non-governmental organisations help by way of sponsoring workshops for actors and in most cases organising drama festivals at the district, provincial and national levels.

Another background to a poor image of drama in society is that the profession has often been considered useless and unworthy of the attention of a mature adult who should have more important concerns. It has been labelled not merely frivolous but evil. Plato elaborated on the above-mentioned view in his Republic when he dismissed drama from the ideal state, on the grounds that it so often portrayed unworthy sentiments and actions morally detrimental to the members of society (Dorsh, 1965). For these reasons, this study was carried out to examine drama in terms of its role in socio-economic change and political consciousness in Gweru urban communities.

Objectives

The study was directed by the following objectives:

1. To identify and discuss the main concerns of theatre groups in the city of Gweru.
2. To examine the perceptions of community members with regards to the usefulness of theatre in changing people's attitudes and habits.

Methodology

In this study, the population comprised of drama performers, church leaders, political leaders, councillors, teachers, lecturers, nurses, farmers, children, school leavers, industrial workers, lawyers, doctors and non-working members of the Gweru urban communities. The decision to use people from different social classes was based on the fact that the group was large enough to give more representative information on the role of drama in shaping community thinking.

The sample size for the study was four hundred (400) participants. From each of the fifteen (15) suburbs, only twenty (20) respondents were chosen to fill in the questionnaire. In addition to the questionnaire five (5) respondents were interviewed from each suburb to get information not covered by the questionnaire. Interviews were conducted for both the literate and semi-literate classes.

The population used in this study was a heterogeneous one consisting of more than ten (10) social groups that have been listed above. The other reason for choosing a mixed population was to get an evaluation of the role of dramatic performances from different sources. If drama is effective, then it must have an impression on most of these people represented by the different classes in the population.

In this study, the population was divided into two (2) broad classes namely the literate and semi-literate community members. Those with a fairly high level of literacy such as teachers, lecturers, doctors, nurses, artisans, policemen and lawyers just to mention a few, constituted the literate group. The semi-literate group was composed of the rest of the members without at least 'O' level nor professional training. The literate group filled in the questionnaire that had concepts that an illiterate or semi-literate person could not comprehend. The semi-literate and the illiterate groups constituted the population used for interviews.

The study was conducted in Gweru urban which has both low and high-density suburbs. The suburbs in the city are Mkoba, Mambo, Ascot, Mtapa. Nashville, Senga, Athlone, Harben

Park, Northlea, Gweru East, Southdowns, Riverside, Ivone, Lundi Park and Ridgemont. The reason for choosing these suburbs was that there was a sizeable and mixed population that was ideal for the study.

Procedure

The researcher visited the suburbs and sought help from community leaders to identify those who belonged to the literate social group, so that they could fill in the questionnaire. Selection of interviewees from each suburb was stratified. Again the researcher asked for help from the community leaders to be able to identify people representing the different social groups. The groups that needed representations in the interviews were the following: church leaders, politicians, school children, nurses, drama performers, industrial workers, school leavers, doctors, lawyers and non working members of the community.

Processing of collected data was both qualitative and quantitative. Simple quantitative methods of data processing and analysis were used such as log tables. However, the researcher in most cases would describe in detail the results obtained by the different instruments.

Percentages and frequencies were also used to analyse data. In an effort to process information from statements that required some ranking to be done, ranks 1 to 3 were considered to be indicating a positive attitude. The agree, slightly agree and strongly agree categories were considered to reflect a positive response whereas the categories disagree, slightly disagree and strongly disagree were considered to reflect a negative response. Information collected from both the questionnaires and the interviews was processed qualitatively and quantitatively without use of the computer.

The responses in both the questionnaires and the interviews showed very little differences between communities that are found in high-density suburbs. The same situation prevailed in low-density suburbs. Because of this, the researcher collapsed information from the 15 suburbs into two main categories, high density and low-density suburbs. High-density suburbs in this research were: Ascot, Ivone, Mambo, Mkoba, Mtapa, Northlea and Senga. Low-density suburbs in the study were Athlone, Gweru East, Harben Park, Lundi Park, Nashville, Ridgemont, Riverside and Southdowns.

Results and Discussions

Objective 1 - The main concerns of theatre groups in Gweru.

Data with regards to this objective were presented and discussed as follows:

Table 1 – Drama is sometimes political in nature*N* = 300

Type of community	Agree	Disagree
Low Density	74 (24,7%)	66 (22%)
High Density	90(30%)	70 (23,3%)
Totals	164 (54,7%)	136 (45,3%)

Table 2 - Socio-economic issues are some of the concerns of African theatre.*N* = 300

Type of community	Agree	Disagree
Low Density	134 (44,7%)	5 (1,7%)
High Density	145 (48,3%)	16 (5,3%)
Totals	279 (93%)	21 (7%)

The above figures show that dramatic performances in the city of Gweru deal with political and socio-economic issues. The results in Table 1 show that a total of 164 (54,7%) people out of a sample size of 300 participants agreed that theatre groups visiting suburbs in Gweru dramatise political issues. In Table 2, a total of 279 (93%) agreed on the questionnaire that some of the concerns of theatre groups are social.

All participants (100) who were interviewed agreed that social issues were the main concerns of most theatre groups. The social problems identified were prostitution, corruption, witchcraft, divorce, marriage, religion and cultural decadence. Health themes such as AIDS, S.T.D and Kwashiorkor were also mentioned as concerns of the theatre groups.

The research findings from both the questionnaire and the interviews assert that in Gweru, drama is not just empty entertainment in the City of Gweru.

Objective 2 - Perceptions of community members with regards to the usefulness of theatre

Data for this objective were presented and discussed as follows:

Table 3 - Dramatic performances by theatre groups are very effective in promoting community awareness.

N = 300

Type of Community	Agree	Disagree
High Density	159 (53%)	3 (1%)
Low Density	127 (42,35%)	11 (3,7%)
Totals	286 (95,3%)	14 (4,7%)

An analysis of figure in Table 3 reveals that 286 (95,3%) of the respondents agreed that community theatre groups are very effective in promoting community awareness. In Gweru East, 15 out of 20 participants strongly agreed with the above statement. In Ascot, Athlone, Mambo, Northlea and Senga, there was no one who disagreed with the fact that theatre is an effective tool to change society.

Results of the interviews were similar to those of the questionnaire since 80 out of 100 of those interviewed affirmed that performances in Shona or Ndebele were more effective than those in English. When participants were asked to rate their level of satisfaction, from the education they got from performances by theatre groups, that use indigenous languages, the majority indicated that the level of satisfaction was very high. A breakdown of the responses got showed that 255 (85%) of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied by the education they got from performances by indigenous theatre groups. It is interesting to note that respondents from low-density suburbs had people in the very low to slightly low satisfactory category. This means that drama in indigenous languages has a slightly limited effect in changing the thinking of people residing in low-density suburbs.

Conclusion

The findings of the study have shown that theatre plays a very important role in shaping community consciousness. The research clearly exposed to expose the main concerns or themes of dramatic performances in the City of Gweru. Furthermore, the findings of this study have proved that dramatic performances, which use indigenous languages, are very effective in shaping community thinking. Such performances, it has been proved in the study, are more effective than those in English and other foreign languages.

The study findings concur with Culp (1971) and Seda's (1999) views that say drama never exists in a vacuum. It is a part of human affairs. According to these authors, dramatic performances play a part in the development and reinforcement of human ideas and this came to be true in the findings of this study. The research results also agree with Traore's (1972) says African drama has an indisputable social function. He goes further to say drama is a mirror of life and this point was reaffirmed in this study. What was said of Africa (Ibid) is true of the City of Gweru. There is always a close affinity between theatre and society and it is only the African languages that can truly mirror African societies. The research findings also revealed that the use of indigenous languages in drama has been found to be more effective than using foreign European languages particularly in high density suburbs of Gweru.

Recommendations

1. The City of Gweru should use drama as a development tool for political, economic and social conscientization.
2. Actors and actresses need to be trained in order to improve quality of their performances. The Theatre Department at the Midlands State University should be approached with a view to assist in the training of actors.
3. Theatre groups in the City should be funded. The National Arts Council of Zimbabwe and non-governmental organisations should help in this regard. Money is required to transport performers from one community to another, buy props and costumes for use during performances.
4. The Gweru City Council should build more community halls especially in the low-density suburbs.
5. Theatre clubs in Gweru should make an effort to use the two indigenous languages, Shona and Ndebele, to communicate their messages to the people. Plays that are predominantly Shona tend to exclude those who speak Ndebele. There is therefore need for actors to be bilingual.
6. Entrance fees paid by audiences to watch plays in community halls should be reduced to a minimum. Many people fail to watch drama because of the exorbitant fees charged by groups that perform in community halls.

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UNDERSTANDING SERVICE FAILURE AND COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT IN MARKETING ORIENTED ORGANISATIONS: A REVIEW

By

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Abstract

Although marketing-oriented organizations have customer satisfaction as a major goal, it is difficult (if not impossible) to provide 'zero defects' services. Service failures can and do occur. This is largely due to the nature of services, especially in high contact service encounters. If service failures cannot be avoided then organizations must have clear service recovery strategies to prevent customer defections. Organisations must be able to solicit customer complaints and properly handle these complaints to keep the customer satisfied. This paper reviews existing literature on service failure and complaint management in marketing-oriented organizations and identifies the strategies that organisations can use to keep the customers satisfied after experiencing a service failure.

Introduction

The basic principle in marketing is to satisfy the customer in order to enhance organizational performance. In practice not all customers are satisfied and even marketing –oriented organizations cannot guarantee 'zero defects' service every time.

Therefore some service dissatisfactions may be inevitable. Even in the face of these service failures, some organizations are able to retain their customers, and even increase their market share and profitability levels. This is because they are able to handle customer complaints effectively to the point that this will 'have an impact on customer satisfaction, repurchase intentions and the spread of word-of-mouth,' Ennew & Schoefer (2003).

If it is impossible to avoid service failure and dissatisfaction, then it becomes increasingly important for organizations to understand how to manage such occurrences and minimize their adverse effects.

This paper provides an overview of existing research relating to service failure and complaint management.

Service Failure

Service failure arises when customers experience a dissatisfaction because the service was not delivered as originally promised or expected. In effect, then, service failure arises from

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the customer's perception of a service experience and not from what the organization believes it has provided. Services failures can be classified as 1) service delivery failures, 2) failure to respond to customer needs and requests and, 3) unprompted and unsolicited employee action (Bitner, Booms & Tetreanault, 1990).

Service delivery failures

This category consists of three types of failures:

- Unavailable service- this refers to services normally available that are lacking or absent, for example, fully booked hotel.
- Unreasonably slow service- relates to services or employees that customers perceive as being extraordinarily slow in fulfilling their function. For example, lengthy queues at the enquiries counter in a bank.
- Other core service failures- this category is broad and reflects the various core services offered by different industries. For example, food service, baggage handling.

Failure to respond to customer needs and requests

This category involves responses to special needs and requests of customers, for example, dietary, psychological, language or social circumstances. Preparing a meal for a vegetarian would count as a special request.

Unsolicited and unprompted employee action.

The third type of service failure arises from employee behaviours that are totally unexpected by the customer. Ennew and Schoefer (2003) identify the categories of this group as 1) level of attention, 2) unusual actions, 3) cultural norms, 4) gelstat, and 5) adverse conditions.

Negative levels of attention to customers pertain to employees who have poor attitudes, ignore a customer and have behaviour inconsistent with an indifferent attitude. The unusual behaviour subcategory includes employee actions such as rudeness, abusiveness and inappropriate touching. The cultural norm subcategory refers to actions that violate cultural norms such as fairness and equality. The gelstat subcategory refers to customer evaluations that are made holistically as in the case of a customer who evaluates a holiday resort dissatisfying without identifying any specific incidents that cause this dissatisfaction. Finally, the adverse condition subcategory covers employee actions under stressful conditions, for example, customers are impressed by an employee who takes effective control of a situation when all others around him are 'loosing their heads'.

Organisations need to identify and understand the type of service failure they experience so as to identify an appropriate recovery strategy and to develop future policies to limit the occurrence of such service failures.

Understanding Customer Complaints

Complaints are a natural consequence of any service activity because "mistakes are an unavoidable feature of all human endeavour and thus of service delivery" (Boshoff, 1997). The process of putting the situation right is service recovery (Berry & Parasuraman, 1991).

Customer complaints are probably the most effective way of collecting information to put the situation right (Ennew and Schoefer, 2003). Unfortunately many customers do not complain following a service failure, but do engage in activities such as negative word-of-mouth (infect others with negative reports) and brand switching (defection) (TARP, 1986). This means that many organizations may miss out. It is recognized that complaints are necessary to institute a recovery. Without complaints a firm may be unaware that problems exist and unable to appease unhappy customers.

Singh (1990) identified four complaint response groups namely, passives, voicers, irates and activists. Passives fall below average on intentions to complain to any source. Voicers actively complain to service providers but show minimal interest

In providing negative word-of-mouth irates have a high tendency to complain to service providers and less likely to engage third-party actions. Finally, activists are customers who score above average on all complaint dimensions.

Factors influencing customer response styles

Customer response style is influenced by market factors, seller and service factors, and consumer factors (Ennew and Schoefer, 2003).

Market factors

In competitive markets with many sellers, dissatisfied buyers do not necessarily voice their complaints because they can easily exit and go elsewhere. The time and effort it takes someone to speak up is unlikely to pay off and brand switching is simpler. A monopoly market, in contrast to a competitive one, may actually increase complaining because customers are captive and defecting to another supplier is not a possibility; complaining is the only chance for improvement.

Sellers and service factors

Dissatisfied customers are more likely to complain to companies with a reputation of being responsive to complaints (Day & Landon, 1977). They are more likely to complain if the service is complex, expensive or considered important (Ennew and Schoefer, 2003) and tend not to complain about low-involvement purchases (Day and Landon, 1977).

Consumer factors

Many researchers concur that complainers occupy higher socio-economic levels in society (Singh, 1990; Moyer, 1984), higher income, education, and social involvement give them the confidence and motivation to speak up when they feel wronged. Consumer beliefs and attitudes have been associated with complaining behaviour. For example, persons who perceive that the marketing practice is unfair are likely to complain (Airman, Rajendra & Rhode, 1978). Consumers who attribute the problem to someone else and not themselves are also likely to complain (Richins, 1983).

Personality factors may also be involved in consumer complaining. Assertive people are more likely to complain whereas submissive persons are more likely to keep quiet (Bolfing, 1989) Emotions also influence consumer response style to a service failure. Some consumers blame the company or the employees for service failure. Such customers are likely to complain. Those customers who see the cause of the problem as situational (no one to blame) feel powerless to complain (Stephens & Ginner, 1998). Some customers just keep quiet because they empathise the employee who causes the problem (Stephens and Gwinner, 1998).

Managing customer complaints

While Gronroos (1990) contends that service recovery is concerned with the productive handling of complaints in order to resolve the problem a customer has with the organization, Gummerson (2002) sees recovery as more than settling a claim but as a restoration and strengthening of a long-term relationship. Bell & Zemke (1987) proposed five ingredients for recovery (complaint handling). These are:

- Apology- this must be first person apology rather than corporate apology.
- Urgent reinstatement-this is the gallant attempt to put things right even if it is not possible to correct the situation.
- Empathy- this is the feeling for customer's plight.
- Symbolic atonement- form of compensation that includes not charging the service or offering future service for free.
- Follow-up-this is the call to ascertain that the customer is satisfied with the recovery process.

Feinberg, Widdows, Hirsch-Wyncott & Trappery (1990) also suggest that successful service recovery should include the following:

- Acknowledgement of the problem.
- Explanation of the reason for failure.
- Apology where appropriate
- Compensation

Au & Hui (2001) concur with suggestions by Feinberg, et al (1990) but add a fifth dimension that is voice. They argue that service recovery can occur if customers are allowed to express themselves fully to relevant personnel.

On the issue of reinstatement and compensation, Gummerson (2002) talks of seeking to 'delight the customer' through overcompensating the customer. Bitner, et al (1990); Feinberg, et al (1990) and Boshff (1997) suggest that dissatisfaction does not result from service failure (as most consumers do accept that things can go wrong) but from the organisation's response to the service failure.

Given that between 5 and 10 percent only of the dissatisfied customers choose to complain (Tax & Brown, 1998), it is important for organizations to create an environment that encourages consumers to complain and to react appropriately to then complain behaviour (Davidow & Dacin, 1997).

Some complaint soliciting strategies are:

- Setting up suggestion and other systems that maximize the customer's opportunity to complain. These include having
 - toll free numbers
 - outbound telemarketing activities
 - suggestion boxes
 - online suggestion and complaint forms.
- Going beyond the concept 'the customer is king' to 'the customer is partner'. Once the customer is treated as partner, then a win-win relationship is developed.

Characteristics of a good complaint management process

Johnston (2001) describes a good complaint management process as one characterised by:

- having clear procedures
- provision of speed response
- consistency of response
- having a single point of contact for complaints
- keeping the complaint informed
- having follow-up procedures to check with customers after resolution
- using measures based on cause reduction rather than complaint volume reduction.

These complaint management process measures strengthen the customer-organisation (seller) relationship

Benefits of excellent complaint management

Excellent complaint management can lead to levels of cumulative satisfaction that are higher than existing prior to service failure. Effective complaint handling can lead to higher levels of customer loyalty, increased repatronage (Smith & Bolton, 1998), higher level of customer retention and higher profitability index (Johnston, 2001).

Collier (1995) and Smith (1998) have noted that customers who experienced service failure told nine or ten individuals about the poor service experience, whereas the satisfied customer only told four or five individuals about their satisfactory experience.

Excellent complaint management will increase not only overall satisfaction but also positive word-of-mouth (Swanson & Kelly, 2001). This means that customers who were recovered successfully recommend the company to others.

Loyal customers may lower marketing costs since retaining customers is usually significantly cheaper than attracting new ones (Peters, 1987).

A key benefit of complaint management is that complaints can be used to support the drive for continuous improvement by focusing managerial attention on specific problem areas (Slack, Harland & Johnson, 1998)

Good systems to reduce complaints include 'doing things right first time'. This calls for employee empowerment. Employees need to have control over work situations. This leads to less stress, and in turn job satisfaction, organizational commitment, better job performance and health and this will have a direct impact on the organisation's performance.

Conclusions

The nature of services is that few organisations, if any, can offer 'zero defects' services. Service failure occurs when a service fails to live up to what was promised or what the customer expected. Customers understand that service failure can occur.

The customer complaints will then serve as the main indicator of service failure. What is significant in customer satisfaction is how organizations manage the service recovery process. Some customers do not complain. They may simply decide not to purchase from the organisation or they engage in negative word of mouth. Organisations need to actively encourage their customers to complain by adopting systems and procedures that allow constant flow of information between customers and the organization. The organization also needs to have a good complaint management process, which is characterized, by having clear procedures, consistency of response, keeping the customer informed and follow-up procedures after service failure resolution.

A proper management of the customer complaints leads to customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, increased repatronage, customer involvement in positive word-of-mouth activities, increase in market share and profitability levels.

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**AMANDA HAMMAR, BRIAN RAFTOPOULOUS, STIG JENSEN, (ED)
ZIMBABWE'S UNFINISHED BUSINESS: RETHINKING LAND, STATE
AND NATION STATE IN THE CONTEXT OF CRISIS, WEAVER PRESS,
HARARE, 2003.PP 316, ISBN 0 7974 2241 2**

By

Percyslage Chigora

The 'Land Question' in Zimbabwe is central to the current political and economic crisis. The book discusses how the land question has affected the constructions of the state, citizenship and nationhood in postcolonial Zimbabwe. To achieve this objective the book is divided into nine chapters that give a critical analysis of the relationship of the questions of land, state, nation and citizenship.

The first contribution by Amanda Hammar and Brian Raftopoulos set out the tone of the book by discussing the crisis in Zimbabwe. They contend that the crisis is a multi-dimensional one whose teleology should not be linked to one event or single historical trajectory. The multiple origins of the crisis is traced from the 1980s starting with the uneven resource distribution which triggered the dissident menace in Matebeleland and the Midlands provinces; the adoption of the ESAP programme, coupled by the 1991-2 devastating drought; government corruption; unplanned compensation of war veterans; extra-parliamentary decision by Mugabe to engage in the DRC conflict and the spontaneous land invasions of commercial farms. The authors conclude by arguing that the questions of land, state, nation and citizenship are inseparable.

The second chapter by Eric Worby is a critique of the importance and compatibility or incompatibility of two concepts of sovereignty and development in the question of Zimbabwe's modernity. Worby contends that Mugabe and ZANU (PF) have been using their power to safeguard their personal aggrandisement under the façade guise of sovereignty.

Jocelyn Alexander traces some shifts in official and popular discourses over land from the 1980s. The government inherited the highly centralised government and because of the policies of reconciliation and moderation that it had espoused, did not question the inherited Rhodesian state's structures. Resettlement was done with emphasis put on technical and economic feasibility thus shifting away from the liberation war rhetoric of reclaiming the lost lands to a discourse cast as rational and scientific. Thus the 1980s created a profound relationship between the state, ZANU (PF) and citizens, asserting the prerogative of a modernising state – a top-down development not bottom up restitution.

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Amanda Hammar chronicles the re-emergence of ‘war veterans as a significant political category in local governance. Notions of competing ideas about what could or should constitute ‘normal’ government are examined. This ‘normal’ government is linked to ideological visions and political projects. The chapter focuses principally on rural local government and its continued disruption principally by war veterans. This is often done with the complicity or in some cases explicit participation of senior politicians and arms of the state. The chapter also analyses the post colonial practices in the (re)making of local government by addressing the development problems and the tensions in terms of rule – that Mugabe uses force against subjects who refuse to be governed. It concludes by analysing the economic recession in Zimbabwe which unmasked the new Rural District councils’ inability to raise their revenue and interference from politics.

Nelson Marongwe questions the widely accepted perception that a land conflict in Zimbabwe is about the large-scale commercial farming sector. He argues that there are many other struggles over land and other natural resources taking place. The chapter sets out by arguing that the present land conflict draws from the fact that Zimbabwe’s land reform programme between 1980 and 1999 has not done well in acquiring high value and land distribution in the agriculturally productive natural regions 1-3. Marongwe discusses the land occupations of 1998 and 2000 in Zimbabwe making reference to three types of peasant mobilisation that could have driven them; independent class action, guided political action and fully spontaneous amorphous political action.

Blair Rutherford critically analyses the tradition of ‘belonging to the farm(er)’ as it is used on one hand, by the anti-colonial and African discourses and on the other hand by human rights and liberal democracy. To explain this two pronged tradition, Rutherford points out that the African nationalists actually perceive farm workers as inherently exploited by white farmers and thus should be emancipated from their bondage. For Rutherford, this kind of politics has disempowered the farm workers by losing their jobs, failing to benefit from land redistribution, and more importantly stripped them of their citizenship status.

Brian Raftoplous in chapter seven analyses how the ZANU (PF) government has articulated the Zimbabwean crisis, parochially on the terrain of ‘the land question’: that only the ‘land is the economy and the economy is the land’, demonising the human rights as a white minority concern and the deployment of war veterans to state structures to entrench this authoritarian regime thus assaulting central and local government. Raftoplous explores the decade beginning 1990 as the decade when ZANU (PF) government took a major policy shift from socialism to economic liberalisation. The policy led to the worsening of the majority of people’s standards of living leading to President Mugabe’s major political challenges and having to re-assert his political legitimacy through coercive means. The chapter analyses the unorthodox methods used by Mugabe to strengthen his weakening position; sanctioning land occupations, violence, draconic laws, media oppression notwithstanding that these methods did a major body blow to Mugabe’s legitimacy as state leader.

Mandivamba Rukuni and Stig Jensen bring in other dimensions to the crisis that is of governance that has mutated to food insecurity. The chapter discusses land, agriculture and natural resources as essential and key to national development. Drawing from historical experience of inefficient resettlement policy in Zimbabwe, the two argue for the granting of land tenure rights to those that benefit from a systematically executed land reform.

The last chapter of the book is by Ben Cousins. He discusses that the Zimbabwean crisis is complexly linked to the regional and continental dimensions Ben derives this conviction from the fact that the political past of Southern Africa are more or less similar and that land restitution and redistribution are imperatives for political, social and economic stability. Because most Southern African countries got their independence through struggles, the concept of democracy itself is contested. Ben Cousins contends that a vital condition for recovery is the extension of the struggle for democracy as well as the adoption of development policies that bring real reductions in poverty and equality.

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