

## **The legal basis for community engagement and empowerment in Zimbabwean museums: a case study of the Mutare Museum**

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### **Abstract**

*This position paper deals with issues of community engagement and empowerment in museum management and activities with specific reference to the Mutare Museum in Zimbabwe. It is largely informed by documentary analysis of available heritage legislations and policies. It is observed that international frameworks and the Constitution of Zimbabwe have provisions for the involvement and empowerment of local communities in heritage issues. Unfortunately, the current heritage legislation used by Mutare Museum does not have provisions for community involvement in museum management and activities. Therefore, we recommend an enabling legal basis for community engagement and empowerment in Zimbabwe, which can be achieved by aligning the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe Act Chapter 25.11 of 1972 with the international framework for management of heritage.*

**Key words:** community, engagement, empowerment, heritage legislation, museum

### **Introduction**

This paper was developed from a presentation given at the Mutare Museum Golden Jubilee Symposium held on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2014 under the theme; ‘Zimbabwe Museums of the Future: Engage, Empower and Experience’. The widely held view among heritage practitioners is that communities in Mutare are not fully participating in heritage and museum matters (Chauke, 2003; Chirikure & Pwiti, 2008; Chirikure et al., 2010). Museums in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular, were introduced as part of the colonial process and as such are largely viewed as irrelevant alien institutions (Fogelman, 2002; Chaterera & Nyawo, 2013). Unlike other western introduced institutions like the church that became widely accepted among the indigenous communities, museums have remained elitist and a preserve of the few. According to Ambrose and Paine (2006), museums have an important role in socio-cultural and economic generation as well as political and corporate benefits to communities that they serve. Therefore, museums and their communities are in a constant process of engagement in response to social and economic transformations at local, national and

global levels. Some have argued that there is a need for museums to stay relevant by responding to pressing social and conservational issues such as population and sustainability, social justice and indigenous rights (Kelly, 2006).

In this paper we sought to establish whether Mutare Museum is involved in community engagement and empowerment of the surrounding communities. A museum without visitors does not serve its purpose to humanity; that of preserving culture, promoting cultural identity and other societal values. Community participation works well if it is aligned with active negotiation and commitment together with a focus on shared power and ownership. In this paper we use the Mutare Museum as a case study to establish challenges and prospects for effective community engagement and empowerment. According to Pikirayi (2011), the term community is a fluid concept, which is quite problematic to apply in the fields of archaeology, museums and cultural heritage management. The term 'community' is one of the most elusive and vague terms in sociology (Abercrombie et al., 2000 cited in Watson, 2007). A community can change its appearance to suit different circumstances and purposes (Brent, 2009). This paper uses the term community to refer to those groups of people with a special attachment to the museum.

This paper uses the term engagement as defined by CDC (2009, p.9) to refer, 'to the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the wellbeing of those people and can take many forms, and partners can include organized groups, agencies, institutions, or individuals'. Empowerment refers to the process of involving the community in every museum activity, including decision making processes therewith. Empowerment can encompass many activities which include among others the involvement of stakeholders in the initial planning stages of developing an exhibition or designating a site as a protected site, the community has to appreciate probably why the site is protected and how they will collectively work with the museum to protect it.

#### *Background information to community engagement and empowerment*

Issues of community engagement and empowerment in the management of both natural and cultural resources have become topical in post-colonial sub-Saharan Africa (Chirikure & Pwiti, 2008). Previously disadvantaged communities have been demanding equitable ownership of natural resources like land, minerals and wildlife for economic sustenance. Post-colonial governments have attempted to level the playing field by reversing policies and legislations that promote inequality and marginalisation in the spheres of politics, economics, culture, religion and education (Shizha & Kariwo, 2011). In Zimbabwe, programmes like Communal Areas

Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) were established to empower communities to manage and conserve their wildlife (Child, 1996). The Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act 14 of 2007 (IEE Act) was also promulgated to allow indigenous people to benefit from the proceeds of economic activities carried out within their communities (Murombo, 2010; Chowa & Mukuvare, 2013). The Zimbabwean government subsequently initiated community ownership schemes to allow local communities to have a stake in mining industries in their area (Chowa & Mukuvare, 2013; Mabhena & Moyo, 2014; Matsa & Masimbiti, 2014). It is against the background of these developments that heritage professionals are increasingly reaching out to local communities to assist them in the management of heritage places and running of museum activities (Chauke, 2003). During the Mutare Museum Golden Jubilee celebrations delegates were asked to address the following questions: Who should be engaged and empowered by museums? Why is it important to engage and empower certain groups of people? How should the identified groups be empowered and engaged? Are there any legal frameworks to inform this empowerment? Engaging and empowering the communities enable them to have a sense of belonging, identity and ownership of cultural resources.

The Mutare Museum has sought to fulfil its mission statement by engaging and empowering communities in its activities. In the post-independence era, the Museum has attempted to rebrand its vision, mission and core values to be in synch with aspirations of post-colonial indigenous people of Zimbabwe. The vision of the Mutare Museum is to guarantee a secure future for Zimbabwe's heritage and the mission statement is to provide excellent heritage management services that promote an understanding and appreciation of that heritage within Zimbabwe and beyond. According to Simon (2010), some of the reasons why museums should engage communities include; giving voice to and being responsive to the needs and interests of local community members, providing space for community engagement and dialogue and helping participants to develop skills to support individual and community goals. Unfortunately, current approaches in museum administration in southern Africa continue to follow the dictates of out-dated colonial legislation (Pikirayi, 2011).

We are critically aware of the major differences in community empowerment initiatives that have taken place in the mining industry or land reform programmes and empowerment in museum and heritage issues that we are discussing in this paper. When it comes to museums empowerment will not easily translate to direct economic benefits as is the case in the other scenarios. The International Council of Museums (ICOM) states that "a museum is a non-profit making, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment" (Ambrose & Paine,

2006, p.8). Since museums are not for-profit making organisations, they are not expected to generate excess revenue and depend on the central government or donor community for their continued existence (Collett, 1992).

*Comparative analysis of legal and policy frameworks for museums and heritage management*

The United Nations (UN) defines community development as, “a process designed to create conditions of economic and social progress for the whole community with its active participation” (Braden & Mayo, 1999, p.192). It is a broad term given to the practices of civic leaders, activists, involved citizens and professionals that improve various aspects of communities. Community development thus seeks to empower individuals and groups of people by providing them with the skills needed to effect change within their communities. These skills are often created through the formation of large social groups working for a common agenda. UN Member States have an obligation to ensure that communities are adequately empowered. United Nations Education and Scientific Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has developed Conventions that guide State parties on how to empower and engage communities in cultural resources and heritage management. Zimbabwe is a signatory to some of these conventions that include the World Heritage Convention of 1972.

UNESCO Cultural Landscape Management Framework has six guiding principles one of which is relevant to local empowerment and engagement (Mitchell et al., 2009). This principle states that people associated with the cultural landscape are the primary stakeholders for stewardship. The principle according to Mitchell et al. (2009) is based on the argument that cultural landscapes have been shaped and given value by people over time and consequently, it is important to renew each generation’s commitment to stewardship. In some cases, it is descendants or members of associated communities who continue to manage the landscape; while in other cases, in the absence of direct owners, this responsibility is conducted by other individuals, organizations, or government agencies. In most cases there is a diversity of stakeholders hence the critical need to engage key people and organisations during the entire management process. This is particularly important when there is a management entity such as a government agency that does not have a long term association with the cultural landscape or its communities and traditions.

Another UNESCO initiated international framework that has community engagement enabling provisions is the Nara Document. The Nara Document in Article 8 states that: “responsibility for cultural heritage and the management of it belongs, in the first place, to the cultural community that has generated it, and subsequently to that which cares for it”.

Heritage is fast becoming a global human rights issue (O'Keefe, 1999; Silverman & Ruggles, 2007; Merrell, 2010). When museum or heritage professionals exclude communities in their activities they will be depriving people of their fundamental human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) which was adopted by UN in 1948 ushers in fundamental human rights that should be enshrined in legal systems across the world. It includes civil and political rights such as the right to life, liberty and economic and cultural rights (Charlesworth, 2010). Some of the provisions of the UDHR were given treaty status in two major human rights covenants on the UN's International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) adopted in 1966. These are increasingly being recognized to have immense relevance to the management of cultural heritage (Logan et al., 2010). Article 15 of the latter article affirms that State parties to the Covenant 'recognize the right of everyone... to take part in cultural life'. UDHR and the two Covenants are sometimes referred to as the 'International Bill of Rights' (Charlesworth, 2010, p.23). Consequently, Mutare Museum communities should be empowered by state based systems to have a say in the management of heritage and engagement in museums as failure to do so implies denying people their fundamental rights.

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) categorised human rights issues associated with cultural heritage as one of seven 'new and complex global pressures' impacting negatively on conservation outcomes (ICOMOS, 2008, p. 5). According to Logan et al. (2010), it is essential for those who participate in heritage conservation projects to understand the broader economic, political and social context of their work. For example, official heritage interventions can be driven by many motives including political agendas which at their worst, can undermine rather than strengthen community identity, cultural diversity and human rights as was the case in colonial Rhodesia (Pwiti & Ndoro, 1999).

The supreme law in Zimbabwe, the Constitution, in section 63 (b) provides every person the right to participate in the cultural life of their choice. It further provides for individual rights in environment in section 73 (b) where the environment should be protected for the benefit of present and future generations, through reasonable legislative and other measures that (i) prevent pollution and ecological degradation (ii) promote conservation; and (iii) secure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting economic and social development. The constitution also provides for public access and involvement in the parliament as provided for in section 141. This section ensures that interested parties are consulted about Bills being considered by parliament. This is very pertinent to this paper as the public is given the opportunity to make inputs whenever a new legislation is being formulated or repealed. Unfortunately the NMMZ Act of 1972, the cultural heritage

legislation in Zimbabwe, remains elitist hence it excludes communities from the active management of the heritage.

The Zimbabwean Constitution in section 174 (b) provides for customary law courts whose jurisdiction consists primarily in the application of customary law. Customary law courts are suitably qualified to try heritage disputes arising from Mutare Museum communities. Hence, using the courts that communities understand is one way of mollifying them. Most museums deal with issues that can be accommodated by customary law, for example, intangible heritage as well as contestations over ownership of heritage landscapes. Therefore, traditional dispute solving mechanisms are preferable when dealing with clashes of traditional nature. A large number of cultural landscapes and heritage sites fall under the jurisdiction of customary law courts that are administered by Chiefs. There is need to align the NMMZ Act with the new constitution of Zimbabwe that is now making it mandatory for communities to be involved in museums and heritage issues, specifically in terms of the conservation, preservation and economic benefit of cultural resources. However, the current NMMZ Act of 1972 is silent on how local communities can and should be engaged, thus creating a gap. In practice, museums have just been approaching the community in a manner it deems fit and there is no systematic approach (Schmidt & Pikirayi, 2016). Communities through traditional leadership, such as chiefs, need to be empowered and engage in heritage related issues through the provisions of section 282 (1) of Zimbabwe's Constitution. In this Section, traditional leaders, within their jurisdictions, are expected to take measures to preserve the culture, traditions, history and heritage of their communities, including sacred shrines. In light of this, Part IV, sections 21, 22, 23 and 24 of NMMZ Act should be aligned with the constitution. The current NMMZ Act, however, vests too much authority in the Executive Director of NMMZ and Mutare Museum Regional Director at the expense of private and public owners of land as well as the general community.

Cultural Policy of Zimbabwe (2007) states that Zimbabwean people should have the right to develop, access and enjoy culture and all its manifestations. One of the aims of the cultural policy is to come up with programmes that will promote the appropriation, participation and consumption of our arts, heritage and culture. The policy advocates the decentralisation of museum from towns to rural areas. Museums should not be a preserve of major towns but should be built in all centres be they urban or rural and at significant national monuments in order to fully exploit their functions (Cultural Policy of Zimbabwe, 2007).

#### *Mutare museum and its community*

Having looked at the legal and policy frameworks that should inform the engagement and empowerment of communities we now turn to the case study of the Mutare

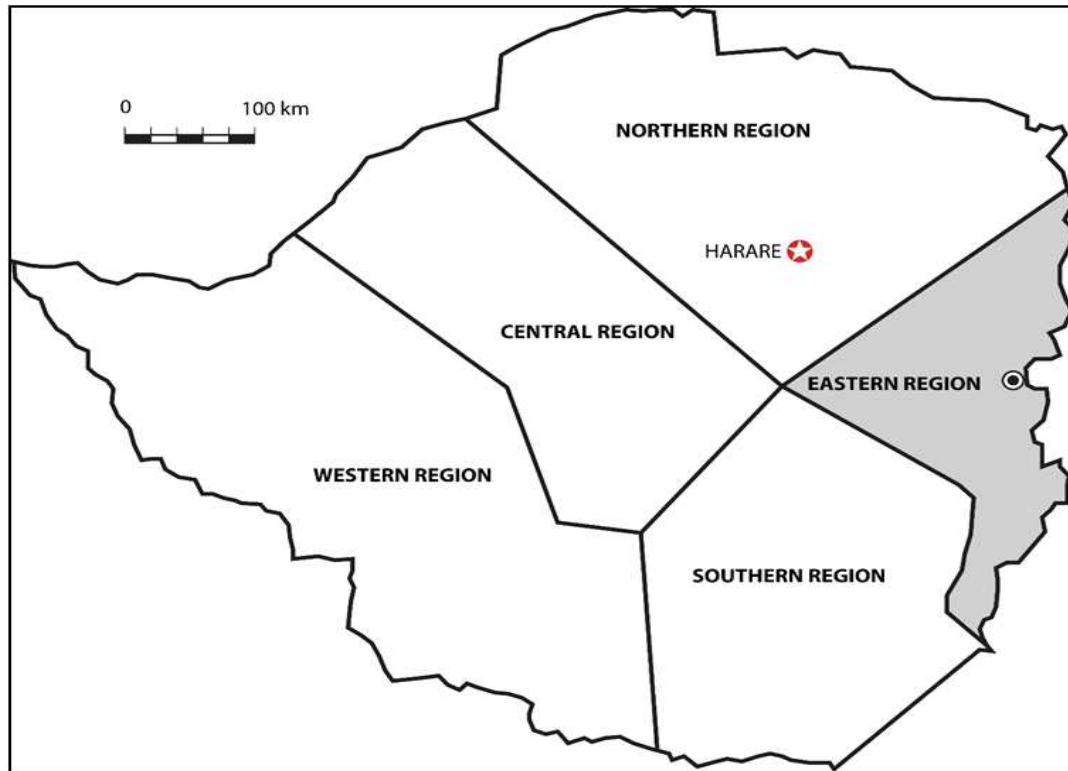


Museum of Transport and Antiquities. Currently, NMMZ has five administrative regions with a 'Regional Museum' in each region. The Mutare Museum covers heritage sites and communities in the Eastern Region (see Fig.1). This is the third oldest national museum to be officially opened in 1964 in the then Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. The idea to establish this museum was first conceived in 1953 by members of the Manicaland Branch of the Southern Rhodesia Hunters and Game Preservation Association who subsequently established the Umtali Museum Society (Murambiwa, 1999; Broadley, 1974; Jackson, 1974). Since the idea to establish the museum was initiated by a Hunter's Association, the museum has a large collection of ammunition or fire arms mostly pistols. The museum also houses a large collection of road transport ranging from animal drawn wagons, early tractors, trains to vintage cars. As such from its inception the Mutare Museum was largely meant to service the needs of the minority white settlers in the then Umtali.

It remains difficult to define and/or identify the community that should benefit from the engagement and empowerment with Mutare Museum. Heritage professionals have grappled with the criteria to use in defining and identifying communities that they should serve. Museum professionals sometimes, create and identify communities to suit their programmes and for other purposes. Chirikure and Pwiti (2008) advance the idea that problems associated with defining a community are linked to the question of who is indigenous in any given area. The existence of complex communities with varied interests makes it difficult to define a museum community as interests change over time. This scenario has sometimes diminished the basis for engagement and empowerment.

It is important to define the community that comprises Mutare Museum. With its location in the urban area the local community around the Mutare Museum is made up of people from different ethnic groups and races. The Mutare Museum community comprises schools, researchers, war veterans as well as people in surrounding villages. Business associates especially those using Mutare Museum property that is Kopje House National Monument, such as the Zimbabwe Open University and the National Gallery of Zimbabwe are also regarded as part of the museum community. As a result of the need to fundraise, a new kind of community has been born at the museum. The museum is now attracting churches that hire the museum auditorium for their church services every week. The relationship with schools is largely educational as the museum offers schools the platform to address different aspects of their curriculum. The other important museum audience in Mutare are the war veterans who are stakeholder at the Provincial Heroes shrine as they assist in the upgrading graves and the overall development of the shrine. The Local Board Committee members comprise one or two municipal representative according to the NMMZ Act and any other people of

high standing in the community. The chairperson of such a board automatically becomes a member of the National Board of Trustees of NMMZ.



**Figure 1:** Map of Zimbabwe showing NMMZ's five administrative regions and location of the Eastern Region that is administrated from Mutare Museum.

During the post-independence era the administration at Mutare Museum has developed various programmes to empower and engage indigenous communities. The most prominent programme is the one between the Bangure communities in Buhera rural area and the museum (Chipangura, 2015). The museum coordinates a cultural festival celebrating the vaHera culture at Matendera National Monument. This has aided the management of the monument in terms of conservation and perpetuation of cultural identity for the community. The museum in collaboration with the Buhera Rural District Council has participated at international fairs like Zimbabwe International Trade Fair (ZITF) and Sanganai/Hlanganani Travel Expo. The Mutare Museum has engaged communities around Ziwa cultural landscape in Nyanga by supporting the community's agricultural show (Mupira, 2011; Chiwaura, 2012). The agricultural show is no longer held at Ziwa National Monument due to some challenges. There was an outcry that the museum was trying to steal the limelight at the agricultural show. However, the



museum is making efforts to have this agricultural show back on track. Despite the challenges, the agricultural show was beneficial to both the community and Mutare Museum. The show enhanced the spirit of competition, strengthened social ties and enhanced the communities farming skills through exposure to a wide range of farming implements, inputs and knowledge. The agricultural show also raised heritage protection awareness among community members. The Mutare Museum has also developed some working relationship with visual artists in Penhalonga at Nurse's Memorial Monument. The museum signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the visual artists, where it was agreed that the museum would offer an operating area whilst the artists assisted with the maintenance of the grounds.

The Mutare Museum once developed the concept "Friends of the Museum". The "Friends of the Museum" was a voluntary association of people willing to support the museum that was established in 2002. However, by 2004 the association remained ineffective as a result of lack of interest by the community in the City of Mutare (Mupira, 2016). According to the Marketing Officer at the Mutare Museum, in the City of Mutare the museum has developed relations with artists, the National Gallery of Zimbabwe and Zimbabwe Open University. However, most urban residents in the City of Mutare seem not to be interested in museum activities may be due to a number of reasons (Lloyd Makonya personal communication).

For the Mutare Museum to survive, it is supposed to prioritise community engagement, empowerment, participation and involvement. By proactively and systematically working towards improving the levels of involvement, the outcomes are more likely to suit local circumstances, ensure community 'ownership', and increase the sustainability of the concept of engagement and empowerment. However, developing and maintaining the participation of stakeholders can often be a challenge requiring various strategies and considerations (Chirikure & Pwiti, 2008; Chirikure et al., 2010). This may require clear legislative intervention which defines operational guidelines. The legislation also ought to strengthen the relationship between the museums and the local communities in order to create a sense of ownership.

## **Conclusion**

The Mutare Museum has partially engaged and empowered surrounding communities in Manicaland Province in the absence of enabling legislative framework. The museum has gone beyond the current legislative framework by appointing a traditional Chief on the Local Committee Board of Directors, clearly indicating its intention to engage and empower communities. However, the museum has good prospects of engaging and empowering communities within rural areas in which most of the heritage is found.

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## **Nature of benefits derived from support groups of people living with HIV and AIDS in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe**

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### **Abstract**

*The study sought to assess the nature of benefits derived from support groups of people living with HIV and AIDS in Masvingo Province. A survey was conducted with 300 support group members. Cluster sampling was used to select participants from Gutu, Zaka, Bikita, Chivi and Masvingo districts of Masvingo Province. A questionnaire was used to collect data which were analysed using Stata version 11. The study revealed that members benefited from support groups by realising improved livelihoods, increased incomes and changed reception from their communities. However, these benefits were being derived more by the most active members of the groups, who were mostly female. Recommendations were made.*

**Key words:** Benefits, HIV and AIDS, support groups, Zimbabwe

### **Introduction**

The HIV and AIDS epidemic has had devastating effects world-wide, leading to deepening poverty, pressure on health services and increased vulnerability among the hardest hit populations (Weiler, 2013). In Zimbabwe, the prevalence of the pandemic has declined over the last decade. The most recent demographic health survey (Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey ZDHS, 2010-11) estimates that 15% of people aged 15 to 49 are currently infected with HIV as compared to 18% who were reported as infected in the ZDHS 2005-06 (ZimStat & ICF, 2011). Changes in risky sexual behavior contributed to the decline of Zimbabwe's HIV and AIDS prevalence (Gregson, Gonese, Hallet, Taruberekera, Hargrove et al., 2010; ZNASP, 2011), because a small decrease in the number of people with more than one partner has potential to break the transmission chain (Morris & Epstein, 2011; ZDHS, 2010-11).

It has also been highlighted by other scholars that high mortality and falling HIV and AIDS incidences are attributed to have been the main causes of HIV and AIDS prevalence decline between 1997 (29.3%) and 2007 (15.6%), (ZNASP, 2011; ZimStat & ICF, 2010-11). As a result, it is important to capitalize on the gains that have been made through the inclusion of all stakeholders through the multi-stakeholder approach



that is promoted by the Ministry of Health and Child Care in Zimbabwe (Ministry of Health and Child Care (MoHCC), 2016). In doing this, one of the key stakeholders that have been identified are the People Living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHIV) themselves (NAC, 2011). The possibility to utilize PLHIV in the fight against HIV and AIDS was difficult before the creation of support groups for people living with HIV and AIDS.

The increase in the number of support groups in Zimbabwe since the early 1990s has been driven by People Living with HIV (PLHIV) themselves, especially women living with HIV and AIDS. Auxillia Chimusoro and colleagues set up support groups to share the experiences of living with HIV under Batanai HIV and AIDS Support Organization (BHASO) which was formed in 1996 in Masvingo town, and many more people joined forming several other groups for purposes of maintaining the groups' effectiveness as well as reaching out to more people (NAC, 2011). BHASO now works with over 100 support groups for PLHIV in five districts namely Gutu, Zaka, Bikita, Masvingo and Chivi (NAC, 2011). At present, support groups reach over 60 000 new people with messages on HIV and AIDS every year across Zimbabwe (PEPFAR, 2013). The Zimbabwe National Network of People living positively (ZNNP+) register shows that the number of people registered with support groups in Masvingo province, including old and new members was just over 30 000 in 2011, of which 23 786 were women (NAC, 2011).

#### *Benefits of support groups for PLHIV*

Literature shows that there are some studies that have been done to show certain benefits of support groups of PLHIV. A study in the United States of America by Bateganya, Amanyiwe, Roxo and Dong (2015) found that support groups for people living with HIV and AIDS provide an opportunity to disclose one's HIV status. In South Africa, research done within support groups and on HIV and AIDS risk found that the groups provided supportive relationships of trust and those individuals who benefit from these, tend to have control over their own decisions as a result of better self-esteem (Pronyk et al., 2008). Research that has been conducted with support groups in Manicaland in Zimbabwe has also revealed the groups' capacity to increase HIV and AIDS competency in communities (Campbell, Skovdal, Madanhire, Mugurungi, Gregson & Nyamukapa, 2011). Other studies have reported on the potential of support groups as a platform that reduces women's vulnerability to HIV and AIDS (Gregson, Mushati, Grusin, Nhamo, Schumacher, Skovdal, Nyamukapa & Campbell, 2011).

Islam, Merlo, Kawachi and Lindstrom (2006) who did a literature review on support groups found that within community groups, supportive relationships may also be

created among members who depend on one another for psychosocial support, financial assistance or even spiritual assistance. These benefits from fellow members are not only derived from continued inter-relations, but also from deliberate and organized sessions of group discussions that usually characterize such groups (Helliwel & Putman, 2004).

### *Purpose of the study*

This study sought to investigate the nature of benefits derived from support groups by people living with HIV and AIDS. It is important to bring out the benefits of being in a support group for PLHIV because the groups are providing an opportunity to fight stigma (Mburu, et al., 2013). Also, bringing out the benefits derived from being a member of a support group assists in motivating those PLHIV who are in doubt about the usefulness of joining those groups.

## **Method**

### *Research design*

The study utilised a cross sectional survey design in order to be able to generalise the results from the selected sample population (Creswell, 2014). In this study, the breadth and depth of a cross-sectional survey (Creswell, 2014) helped in providing a description of the trends in benefits derived by members of support groups. The research design employed was useful in providing information on associations between variables (Gray, 2014). The research adopted a quantitative approach which allowed for data to be collected for a large sample.

### *Sample*

The data for the study was collected from the five districts in which BHASO is currently working with support groups for PLHIV namely Zaka, Masvingo, Gutu, Chivi and Bikita. Three hundred support group members aged between 15 and 79 years participated in the study with only 48 of them being male. A simple cluster sampling method was used by picking the names of support groups from a hat choosing 31 support groups so as to get a third of the number of support groups reported by NAC (2011) to be in the province. After selecting the support groups to be included in the study, respondents from each selected support groups were randomly identified by way of picking names from a hat. A maximum of 12 members were chosen from each support group since some of the groups had less than 12 registered members.

### *Instrumentation*

A structured questionnaire was used to collect the data. The questionnaire had three sections on demographic data, psychosocial support and socio-economic support gained from support groups. The questionnaire had structured questions because the researchers wanted to restrict the responses of the respondents to the issues under investigation as well as to limit the time spent during the administration of the questionnaire (Gray, 2014). Questionnaire validation was done by the research team through a pilot study which was carried out among support groups in Masvingo district as is recommended by Bless et al. (2013). Those who participated in the pilot study did not take part in the main study.

### *Data collection procedure*

The administering of the questionnaires was done by BHASO field officers who worked with support group members in the districts after under-going a two day training which was provided by the researchers. The field officers distributed the questionnaires to the respondents and allowed them a few hours to respond to them. Time taken to complete the questionnaires varied between an hour and two hours forty minutes.

### *Data analysis*

Data were analysed using Stata version 11 to obtain descriptive information giving details on the nature of benefits derived from support groups by members living with HIV and AIDS. Data that were analysed were presented using percentages, tables and figures.

### *Ethical considerations*

Ethical clearance for the study was obtained by Batanai HIV and AIDS Support Organisation (BHASO) from the Medical Research Council of Zimbabwe. This clearance covers all research and community engagement work done under the auspices of BHASO. All respondents were guaranteed that their responses would be maintained in confidentiality and informed consent was sought from respondents before they participated in the study.

## **Results**

The purpose of this study was to assess the nature of benefits derived from support groups of people living with HIV and AIDS in Masvingo Province.

**Table 1** *HIV Status and Reason for Joining Support Group*

	Males	Females	Total
HIV positive	39	199	238
Don't know my status	3	1	4
Sole breadwinners	32	130	162
<b>Reason for joining support group</b>			
I knew I was HIV positive	29	154	183
I suspected that I was HIV positive	6	32	38
I lived with a person who was HIV positive	4	43	47
No response given	9	23	32
Have managed total disclosure of HIV positive status	24	111	135

The results in Table 1 show basic information on the respondents in the study. Almost 80% of the respondents were HIV positive. The majority of the respondents had joined support groups because they knew they were HIV positive. The table also shows that below half of both the males and females who were living with HIV and AIDS had managed to disclose of their HIV positive status.

*Emotions of HIV positive members before joining a support group*

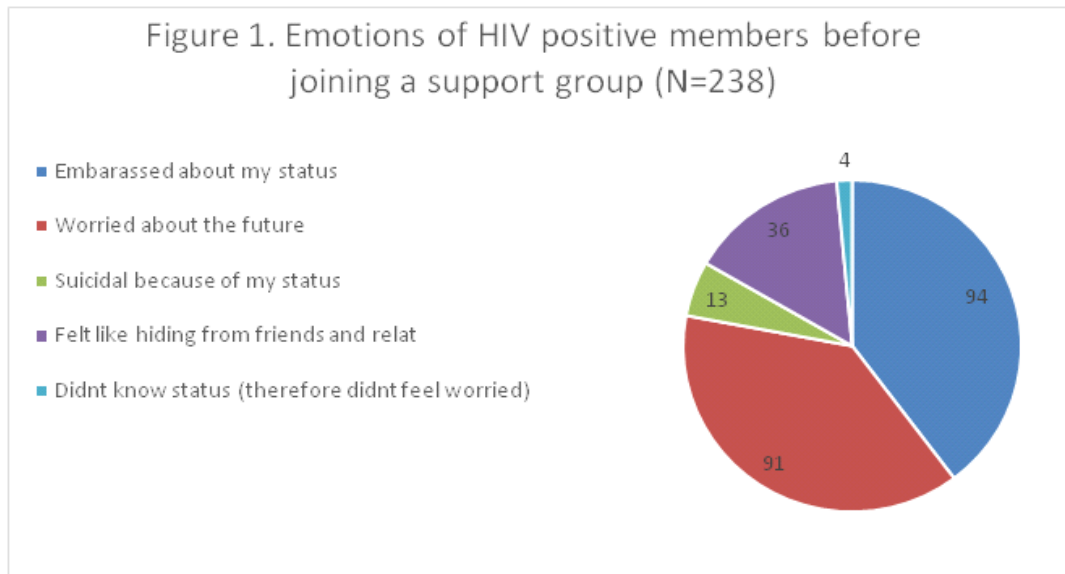
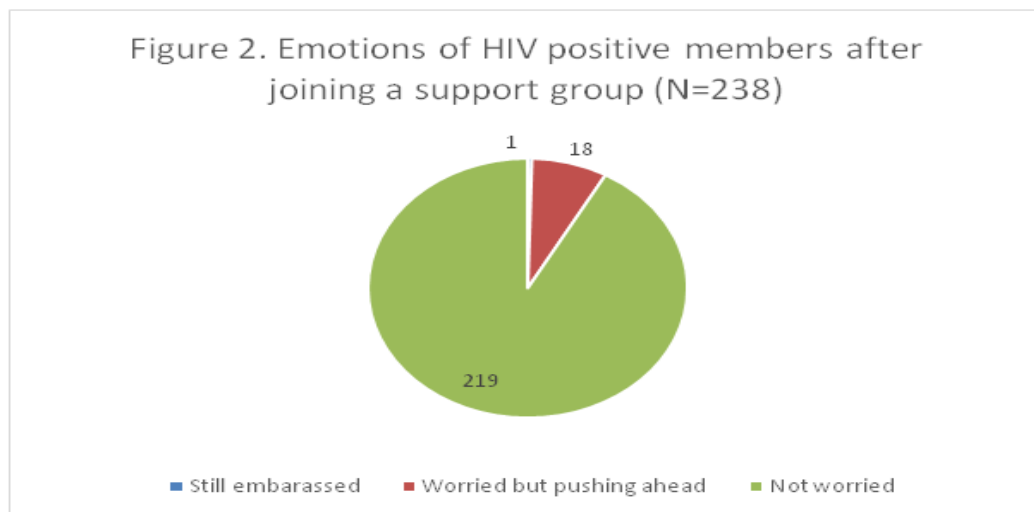


Figure 1 shows that before joining support groups, the majority of the respondents (78%) were either embarrassed of their HIV positive status or worried about their future. A further 15.3% showed that they felt like hiding with shame and sadness. The most worrisome group were the 5.3% who were contemplating suicide as a result of discovering or suspecting that they were HIV positive.

*Emotions of HIV positive members after joining a support group*



The majority (91.87%) stated that they were no longer worried about their HIV positive status and no longer viewed it as an embarrassment nor did they feel that it was the end of the world. The number of people who were still feeling worried about their future with HIV and AIDS had gone down from 38% of the sample to 23%. Only one respondent still felt embarrassed of their HIV and AIDS status.

*Relationship between psycho-social support (PSS) service type and intensity of benefit derived*

Those support group members who enjoyed more than one psychosocial support service, reported that they had not only accepted their HIV positive status, but they also improved in Anti Retro-viral Therapy (ART) adherence, and were able to disclose their HIV status. Group oriented provision of information, such as awareness training programmes proved to provide less benefits as compared to information provided directly to the individual. The majority of the participants received both group oriented services as well as individualized services, and it was such members who derived the most benefit.

Interestingly, those members who had reported that they received professional counselling once, (mostly from the testing and counselling Centre) seemed to have derived very low benefits. This was unlike those who received counselling followed up with psychosocial support services including receiving follow-up assistance from community based caregivers.

*Community's views on support group members*

**Table 2** *Community's View of Individuals Living with HIV and AIDS Due to Support Group Membership N=238*

	Frequency	Percentage
I am now appreciated by my children	6	2.5%
I am now appreciated by my partner	9	3.78%
I am now appreciated by my community	47	19.7%
I now appreciate my importance to my family	48	20.2%
Everyone in my community now has a positive perception of me	171	71.8%
My community has a negative perception of me	2	0.8%
Nothing has changed	5	2.1%



Table 2 shows that generally support group members felt an improvement in the perceptions of the community towards them in spite of their HIV and AIDS status.

**Table 3** *Involvement and Benefits from Support Group Income Generating Projects*

	Yes	No	Total
Has your involvement in the following IGP improved your ability to cater for your family?			
Microfinance	24	0	24
Contributor (mukando)	35	9	44
Livestock pass-on	27	1	28
Irrigation scheme	0	1	1
Buying and selling	12	0	12
Other	1	0	1
Total	99 (93%)	11 (7%)	110 (100%)

The majority (93%) of support group members involved in IGP stated that they had realised an improvement in their ability to cater for their families.

## **Discussion**

The main purpose for carrying out this study was to assess the nature of benefits derived from support groups of people living with HIV and AIDS in Masvingo Province.

### *Gendered nature of benefits derived from support groups*

This study revealed that women dominate support group membership and structures and as such, they tended to reap greater benefits from the support group. The lower participation of men in support groups for PLHIV is probably explained by men's weaker health seeking behavior (Gregson et al., 2011). This is unfortunate, considering the significant importance of support group membership for PLHIV to lead positive lives (Campbell et al., 2013; Gregson et al., 2011; Skovdal et al., 2011).

The involvement of more women in support groups, including those who were HIV negative, can be explained by the fact that they are usually the ones who care for the sick in households. On the other hand, men tend to fail to identify the importance of support groups because they play a less intense role in the care of the sick. A feminisation of care provision to HIV positive people can be noted.

The study revealed that more women than men disclosed their HIV positive status. This finding relates to Skovdal et al.'s (2011) view that men find it harder to disclose their status to their entire social circle. This failure to disclose by men, militates against positive living principles and limits men's ability to tap the benefits that support groups can give them. In a similar vein, Campbell et al. (2013) note that studies in Manicaland highlight that men tend to be a bad influence to each other, while women are usually a good influence to each other.

### *Support groups and benefits to members*

This study found that members in support groups were part of IGPs. IGPs provide individuals with an opportunity to improve their lives as well as to cater for their families. As a direct result, the members feel that their lives are valuable to their families. The availability of such livelihood programmes within support groups also provided members with nutritious food to cater for their dietary requirements. Projects such as livestock pass-on were known for providing participating families with food items as well as with supplementary incomes (Gillespie, 2006). These benefits empower families to not only cope with HIV and poverty, but to also mitigate the chances of future infection for other family members.

Improved adherence to HIV and AIDS treatment is another of the benefits that members derive from being in support groups. As a result of the PSS that members receive from within the support groups, they become more resistant to stigma and begin to appreciate the importance of adhering to treatment. Tarwirei (2005) found that in Mabvuku and Tafara suburbs of Harare, 83.3% of respondents living with HIV opted to join support groups among other things in order to gain support in coping with HIV and adhering to treatment.

## Conclusion

Evidence from this study shows that support group membership has a positive impact on the lives of PLHIV who are members in support groups. The benefits that members derived from support groups included access to IGPs, psycho-social support services as well as uptake of health care services. The benefits were more evident among females than males.

## Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- Efforts should be made to increase men's membership and participation in support groups for PLHIV so that they may also benefit from them.
- More people who are not HIV positive should be encouraged to become members of support groups in order to increase support groups' influence of reducing stigma and discrimination in communities.

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## **'If you don't swim with us you are a pig': Experiences of children with albinism living in a rural area in Zimbabwe**

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### **Abstract**

*The research explored the problems that children with albinism face in adapting to rural life as well as their experiences of and reaction to stigma. The participants of the study were 7 students living with albinism drawn from three schools in Gutu District of Masvingo Province in Zimbabwe. In-depth interviews were conducted with these 7 students and thematic analysis was used to analyse the responses. The study established that rural life poses a challenge for children with albinism in that they could not participate in activities that are done by other children like herding cattle, fetching firewood, swimming in the river and cooking using open fire. This leads to their isolation. The participants revealed that they were subjected to various forms of stigma and discrimination. In reaction to stigma, children reported that they sometimes cry, became angry and prayed to God. The research recommends increased education, advocacy and protection of the rights of pupils living with albinism so as to combat stigma, discrimination, mocking and isolation.*

**Key words:** albinism, stigma, experiences, rural area

### **Introduction**

The physical disabilities that come with albinism lead to the stigmatisation of children with the condition (Kagore & Lund, 2005). Children with albinism have low visual acuity, photophobia (sensitivity to bright light), may experience nystagmus (involuntary oscillation of the eyeball) and strabismus (misalignment of the eyes or squint). The child's social interaction is compromised as a result of low visual acuity. Due to the condition, children may not be able to initiate play activities or to respond appropriately (King, Jackson & Oetting, 1994). Johnson, Christie and Yawkey (1999) noted that children as young as two and a half years show discomfort with physical differences. Young children are aware of stigmatising attitudes towards them. Most of the researches that have been done in Zimbabwe mainly focus on the adult population (Baker, Lund, Nyathi & Taylor, 2010). Some studies on children with albinism have focused on participants in urban settings in areas like play and interaction (Javangwe & Mukondyo,

2012) and myths surrounding the condition (Baker et al., 2010; Machoko, 2013). From the literature search no study on the experiences of children with albinism in rural Zimbabwe was found.

It has been noted that the prevalence of albinism differs from one country to another (Lund & Gaigher, 2002). In the USA, one person in 17,000 has some type of albinism (Wan, 2003). Prevalence of albinism in Zimbabwe and South Africa was estimated to be approximately one in 4000 (Lund, 2001; Lund & Gaigher, 2002). A UNICEF report estimates that the prevalence of albinism in Zimbabwe could be around 0,03% or more (UNICEF 2003). According to Makumbe, at least 60% of people living with albinism are located in rural areas in Zimbabwe where some are subjected to inhuman treatment (NewsDay, 2011) and are classified as disabled (Lund, 1996). Research has shown that people with albinism in Africa, live in settings where the majority of the population is black, uneducated and poor and most people do not know what albinism is (Braathen & Ingstad, 2006). This is the basis of the stigma that they face and which greatly hinders their participation and interaction.

Stigma has been defined as a socially constructed attribute that is heavily discrediting and is based on what society believes to be abnormal (Goffman, 1963; Green, 2009). Goffman (1997) defines a stigmatised person as someone who possesses undesirable characteristics that are not within the normal characteristics in the category to which he belongs. This person is thus reduced in the minds of society from a whole and normal person to a tainted, discounted one. Davis (1997) asserts that society coins its definition of normalcy and this creates a problem for those who are disabled who fail to fit into these categories. When prejudice turn inwards, it result in self-discrimination. Miller and Major (2000) states that stigma, prejudice and discrimination result in low self- esteem leading to depression in the lives of the concerned people. It has been noted that stigma and discrimination demean the social identity of the concerned people. In similar light, Perlick et al. (2001) define self-stigma as the internalisation by the concerned person of their perceptions of discrimination. It is important to be aware of the stigma that children with albinism who live in rural areas face so as to help enhance their wellbeing and adjustment.

Stigma against people with albinism occurs at both institutional and structural levels (Link & Phelan, 2001). Access to social services like education and health has been curtailed among persons with OCA (Oculocutaneous albinism) because of stigma and discrimination. Some parents hide their children at home (Baker et al., 2010). According to Corrigan and Watson (2002), there are three ways of understanding stigma namely stereotypes, discrimination, and prejudice. Stereotypes can be viewed as learned social knowledge structures by individuals of a social group. Corrigan and Watson (2002) contend that these stereotypes are viewed as “social” because they are

a representative of collectively agreed notions of groups of people. It is important to note that people can efficiently generate impressions and expectations on stereotyped individuals such as people living with albinism. On the other hand, prejudiced individuals tend to endorse negative stereotypes and consequently develop negative emotional reactions. Allport (2000) states that unlike stereotypes, which are beliefs, prejudicial attitudes involve an evaluative component which is generally negative. For the current study therefore it will be important to note how children with albinism react to stigma. This is crucial as it will greatly help in identifying maladaptive behaviours that could be reactions to stigma.

Paul (2000) notes that children living with albinism face both physical and attitudinal barriers within their learning environment. These psychological challenges are widely recognised as a hindrance to achievement of people living with disabilities (Rao, 2004). One of the psychological challenges that children with disability face is stigma. The high school dropout rate of pupils living with albinism is a result of the negative attitude and stigma attached to them by the society, teachers and schoolmates who give them derogatory names which authorities do not control within the school context (Miller & Major, 2000). In light of the above sources of stigma, this study sought to probe into the rural children's experiences of stigma.

As given by the social interactionist theory (Goffman, 1963) society has the yardstick for normalcy and this is used to mark the stigmatised as bad. Stigma is demeaning and the person carrying the stigma sticks out from the rest of the people. The stigmatised person is viewed as abnormal, different and inferior. The stigmatised and the normal may change their interaction patterns and try to avoid each other (Goffman, 1963). The person with albinism therefore may face rejection from the society as he/she is labelled as abnormal therefore leading to a spoiled identity. These negative beliefs and attitudes from other people may be internalised by the affected person and greatly impacts on his/her psychological wellbeing (Deal, 2007) and may lead to family breakups (Baker et al., 2010). Due to rejection people with albinism end up believing that they are outcasts and they really struggle to prove that they are worthy people (Phatoli, Bila & Ross, 2015).

People try to make sense of experiences by coming up with various myths (Baker et al., 2010; Lee, Lee, Chiu & Kleinman, 2005). Myths surrounding albinism contribute to the stigmatisation of those who have the condition. In Malawi it is believed that if a pregnant woman looks at a person with albinism she will give birth to a child with albinism. To avoid this myth from coming true, pregnant women are supposed to spit on the ground whenever they meet a person with albinism (Braathen & Ingstad, 2006). In Malawi albinos are thought to be non-humans, it is believed that they are ghosts and that they do not die. In Cameroon people believe that an albino does not die but

just disappears only close members attend the funeral which is kept a secret and morning is prohibited (Baker & Djatou, 2007). It is important to be aware of the myths surrounding a particular condition as this has a heavy bearing on the forms of stigma that individuals face. In the current study it is crucial to get enlightenment from children with albinism who live in rural areas so as to appreciate their circumstances.

Albinism has been associated with various superstitions beliefs. It is believed that sex with people with albinism is a cure for AIDS (NewsDay, 2011). In a study by Baker et al. (2010) a woman living with albinism in Zimbabwe reported that the general belief in the country is that one becomes an albino after sleeping with a tokolosh (evil spirit) or sleeping with a white man. People also believe that albinism is a punishment from God to the parents for a wrong doing. A study in Venda, South Africa also found out that people believe that albinism is caused by evil. The belief is that a snake that is supposed to protect a woman during pregnancy may have turned away from her (Baker et al., 2010). Superstitious beliefs heavily contribute to stigma and this study therefore is important as it will try to bring to the fore experiences by rural children – a setting where cultural and superstitious beliefs are rife.

#### *Aims of the study*

The aims of the study were to explore the constraints that children with albinism face in rural areas of Zimbabwe, the forms of stigma they experience and their emotional reactions to the stigma. There is a paucity of research focusing on the lived experience of children with albinism in rural areas of Zimbabwe. It is therefore anticipated that this study will fill part of this gap in literature.

## **Method**

#### *Research design*

The study used a qualitative phenomenological design which Mennabb (2010) defines as a scientific method that entails observing and giving a description of the behaviour of a subject without influencing it. This research approach is usually connected with the social constructivist paradigm which prioritises the socially constructed nature of reality. A phenomenological research was used to tap into the participants' lived experiences (Meisenbach, 2009). The goal of this study was to learn from the experiences of children living with albinism in a rural setting. In-depth interviews were used to collect data from a sample of seven children living with albinism at three schools in Gutu district.

### *Participants and setting*

The participants of this study were living with albinism at three primary schools in the Gutu District of Masvingo Province. Purposive sampling technique was used to aid the identification and selection of information-rich participants. The participants' demographic information is shown in Table 1 and pseudonyms were used.

**Table 1**

*Participants' Demographic Information*

Pseudo Name	Age	Class	Gender
Ruth	11	5	F
Clive	8	3	M
Molen	10	5	F
Grace	11	6	F
Robin	9	4	M
Andrew	14	7	M
Evans	10	5	M

Table 1 shows that seven pupils (female = 4; male =3) took part in the study. Their ages ranged from 8 to 14 years and school grades ranged from 3 to 7.

### *Instrument*

In depth interviews were used by the researchers to gather data. The interview guide was constructed and verified by experts in child studies and probes were used in line with research questions. The interview guide had nine open ended questions which covered the following issues: challenges of rural life for the participants, how they reacted to stigma as well as the coping strategies that they employed. Probing was done when some responses seemed vague. Altogether seven interviews were completed with each lasting an average of one hour.

### *Data collection procedure*

Appointments for interview were made with the school head, the teacher and the participants a week prior to the interview date. Participants were interviewed at their respective schools after lessons. The interviews were conducted individually by the researchers. Audiotapes were used to record the conversations.

### *Ethical issues*

Ethical clearance for the study was sought from the university by the first author. Clearance to visit the schools was sought from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education provincial offices. All students agreed to participate in the study without being coerced. Passive parental consent was obtained. The teachers at the school acted in loco-parentis and they gave consent on behalf of the students. Participants were assured of confidentiality. They were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Anonymity was maintained by the use of pseudonyms.

### *Data analysis*

Data were analysed using thematic analysis. Interview summaries were done for all recorded information. The six phases of thematic analysis were followed which are :- familiarisation with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes among codes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). Cross cutting themes were identified throughout the data and these were written as the main themes.

## **Findings**

The results of the study were grouped into three subheadings- problems in adapting to rural life among children with albinism, forms of stigma experienced by children with albinism and emotional reactions to stigma by children with albinism.

### *Adapting to rural life among children with albinism*

Children who took part in this study reported that living conditions in rural areas were harsh and they sometimes failed to adapt, this also contributed to being stigmatised. Sometimes they could not take part in activities with other children because of their condition. Below are some of the excerpts from the children that point to lack of participation in activities.

*Some children go to the bush to herd cattle. Most of the times I stay at home because the grass cuts my skin leading to bad sores that take time to heal.*



*Some think I am lazy but my parents understand my condition and give me work to do at home as others go into the forest to herd cattle (Robin).*

*When others go to the forest to fetch fire wood I can't join them since I react to a number of trees. My skin turns red when I get into contact with certain types of plants. I am really worried of what I will do when I grow and get married. I will not be able to fetch firewood for my family. I will be a useless mother. I just wish I had life in town (Grace).*

*I can't be near the fire. I can't be near too much heat. I just can't stand it. In winter when others gather around the fire I have to go to sleep because I can't stay near the fire. My eyes swell as a result of smoke and my skin turns dark brown. I have to avoid fires as much as possible. My mother bought a gas stove which I use for cooking (Molen).*

*Some children go to swim in the river. I can't join them because whenever I go to the river I get skin rash which is very itchy. I just accompany my friends to the river. Some children who do not know my problem laugh at me and say that if you don't swim with us you are a pig (Clive).*

It is important to note that most of the stigma that children with albinism face emanates from their failure to engage in various activities with their condition being the limiting factor. Rural living then becomes difficult as some of the expectations and the living conditions do not favour people with a condition like albinism.

#### *Experiences of stigma among children with albinism*

The study participants reported various forms of stigma that they faced. These included name calling, bullying and stigma related to their incapacitation.

*Name calling* - Participants reported that they were called by various derogatory names by their peers. They said that they were regarded as worthless people by fellow pupils and were given bad names. Most of these names pointed to the fact that they were weak and not human. Names ridiculed the participants about their skin colour and other disabilities that they had. The following are excerpts from the participants that showed the stigmatizing names that they were given by their peers:

*They call me musope (a white person) and they say I don't think. Whenever I try to give advice to my fellow pupils they say musope can't say anything sensible (Andrew).*

*Some people call me murungudunhu (a fake white person). They don't understand my condition and they say how does it feel to be a white man among blacks (Evans).*

*Some students at my school used to call me hochi (white pig) until I reported the matter to the schoolteacher and they were severely punished (Ruth).*

*Those who don't know my condition call me munhu akamenywa (a human being whose skin has been peeled off). They say this most of the time. It is painful to be given such kind of names. They say I am cursed just like the pigs in the bible. Sometimes I believe them because of the daily challenges that I come across in my life (Clive).*

*People refer to us as ghosts or spirits of the dead, who because of bad behaviour, have been punished by God and sent back to the world. They laugh at me saying wakazvarwa midzimu yakatsamwa (you were born the time your ancestors were angry). Others say you are a peeled onion; this hurts me a lot (Grace).*

This shows that pupils living with albinism are subjected to ridicule and derogatory names at the school. Much of these words are used to portray negative attitudes which fuel stigma against people with albinism.

**Bullying:** - The study participants reported that pupils living with albinism are subjected to bullying and harassment at school. Fellow school mates were reported to be hostile to pupils living with albinism. They face torture, insult and harassment by their peers at school. The extracts below show that children with albinism are bullied.

*Some students always try to make me angry so that I can fight with them. They say fake white man can't fight. I usually leave the place because I know that by fighting I will develop sores that will be difficult to heal. When I move away, they say that I am a coward (Evans).*

*Some children say my skin is too soft such that they feel like touching me all the time. So even when I am walking students just come to feel my skin. They say it's like a banana. I am afraid that I might end up being sexually abused (Molen).*

*Look at my right ear, (showing the researcher a scar on his ear) someone bite me here at school. I am sure he wanted to pull it off. He said he wanted to prove that I could feel pain (Robin).*

Thus students with albinism are bullied by other pupils and in many cases as result of their condition they cannot defend themselves.

*Stigma related to disability:* - Study participants reported stigma that was related to their disability. They said this was most hurting as they were excluded as a result of their physical challenges.

*My friends say we don't want an albino in our team because he can't see properly. He will let the ball pass by and we will not win the game. So I can't join their soccer team (Clive)*

*Sometimes I am told that I cannot be in the team because I will melt in the sun as the games were being played outdoors. This really hurts me (Molen).*

*I sit in the front of the class because I can't hear properly. My class mates laugh at me and say that I am the other teacher because only teachers sit at the front (Robin).*

*Some say we can't play with him because we might get albinism (Evans).*

*I don't want to fight with people because I fear bruising my skin. Usually when I get an injury it takes time to heal. My colleagues do not know why I avoid fights and they always say I am a coward because I refuse to fight. I just keep quiet when people provoke me to anger (Andrew).*

#### *Reactions to stigma among children with albinism*

The study participants reported various emotional reactions to stigma. Some participants said they become angry, some reported that they cry most of the time while others said they just move away and pray to God. The extracts below portray how children with albinism react to stigma.

*Most of the time I play alone. Even when going home I walk alone because I feel no one likes me (Jane).*

*During lunch I will be sitting under the gum tree while others are playing because they do not include me in their activities (Clive).*

*Sometimes I become so angry with God for giving me this condition. No one is willing to be identified with me and this really hurts (Evans).*

*Sometimes I feel angry and I cry when teased. No one seems to care (Molen).*

*I always ask myself if God really exists. Why did he create me like this? I am not happy at all. Why is it that I am an albino while others are not? I asked my mother but I could not get any meaningful answer. I discovered that she knows very little about this condition (Ruth).*

*I think too much about my condition. It seems there is no day that passes by without feeling sorry for myself. I always wish if only I did not have albinism my life was going to be better off. Sometimes I am so bored with people's reactions to my condition so much than I feel full and skip meals I feel like not talking to people even my siblings. I feel life is meaningless sometimes (Grace).*

## **Discussion**

The study revealed that children with albinism have problems adapting to rural life. This in turn limits their participation and further contributes to their isolation. Vergunst, Swartz, Mji, MacLachlan and Mannan (2015) noted that people living with disability in rural areas face barriers to access to health care. Low income and poverty exacerbate these problems.

Participants reported that they were called insulting names that portrayed them as inhuman. Participants with albinism reported that they experienced stigma as a result of their disability. Similarly Braathen and Ingstad (2006) in their study in Malawi found that people with albinism were called *muzungu*, yellowman and *napwere* (a pea which is light brownish in colour and wrinkly when dry). The physical appearance of persons with OCA has exposed them to stigma and discrimination resulting in psychosocial challenges (Mtetwa, 2012).

Discriminatory behaviour and violence towards pupils living with albinism was reported in the current study. Participants reported having been physically abused by fellow pupils because they were seen as valueless and weak people. This finding is in line with what was reported by Parle (2012), who stated that people living with albinism face social discrimination in the community, giving accounts of being physically attacked by others in the neighbourhood and their property being vandalised.

Myths surrounding albinism as reported in this study contribute to the stigmatisation of people with albinism. People try to make sense of things by coming up with various myths (Baker, Lund, Nyathi & Taylor, 2010). In Malawi it is believed that if a pregnant woman looks at a person with albinism she will give birth to a child with albinism. To avoid this pregnant women are supposed to spit on the ground whenever they meet a person with albinism (Braathen & Ingstad, 2006). Also in Malawi albinos are thought to be non-humans that they are ghosts and that they do not die. In Cameroon people believe that an albino does not die but just disappears and only close members attend the funeral which is kept a secret and mourning is prohibited (Baker & Djatou, 2007). These studies just like the present study show various myths about albinism.

In a study by Baker et al. (2010), a woman living with albinism in Zimbabwe reported that the general belief in the country is that one becomes an albino after sleeping with a thokolosh (evil spirit) or sleeping with a white man. A study in Venda, South Africa also found out that people believe that albinism is caused by evil. The belief is that a snake that is supposed to protect a woman during pregnancy may have turned away from her (Baker et al., 2010).

The study participants reported that as a result of the stigma that they face they usually isolate themselves and sometimes they ask God why they were made that way. Similarly NewsDay (2011) reported that people with albinism are usually isolated and children with albinism are not allowed to mix with other children since it is believed that albinism is contagious. Participants in a study that was carried out in Ghana (Barke et al., 2010) reported that they experienced large social distance because they were living with albinism. They further said that they faced rejection by friends because friends seemed to fear being associated with albinos.

Due to ostracism, stigma and discrimination faced by pupils living with albinism, they experience anger frequently. Pupils' living with albinism who took part in the current study said they experienced anger at themselves and towards others for injustices associated with their condition. This is in tandem with discoveries by Machipisa (2002) and Gronskov and Nielson (2007) who aver that people living with oculocutaneous albinism experience anger at themselves or others for perceived injustices or losses associated with their condition.

#### *Limitations of the study*

The study used a small sample of seven participants, therefore the results cannot be generalised to all children with albinism. The study was also context specific as students were drawn from one rural district in Zimbabwe. Sweeping conclusions cannot be drawn in such a case. Despite these limitations, the study helped to shade light on the experiences of children with albinism who live in rural areas.

#### **Conclusion**

In considering the problems faced by children in adapting to rural life it can be noted that they cannot participate in certain activities due to albinism. While other children are enjoying these activities, children with albinism are usually isolated and lonely. Stigma related to the children's physical disabilities was also reported in the current study. Emotional reactions like crying and anger were reported by the study participants.

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## **Influence of entertainment and communication technological changes on high school students' social skills and academic performance in Masvingo, Zimbabwe**

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### ***Abstract***

*The study examined how entertainment and communication technological changes influence high school students' social skills and academic performance. The enquiry was a case study with a total of thirty-three participants. Twenty high school students were purposively sampled from a population of about five hundred students. Three teachers who taught the students and ten parents were part of the sample. In-depth interviews and open-ended questionnaires were the data collecting tools. Data were analysed narratively. The findings indicated that most students had negative social skills through their everyday interactions with communication gadgets. In addition, the study revealed that students displayed anti-social behaviours that had negative impact on their social skills and academic performance. Recommendations were made on reducing the impact of entertainment and communication technological changes on high school students.*

**Key words:** academic performance, high school students, social skills, technological changes, Zimbabwe.

### **Introduction**

Technological developments have advanced the world over, with negative influences and changes to family structure and lifestyles (Hatch, 2011). Some twenty or so years ago, it was difficult for an ordinary Zimbabwean citizen to access a landline telephone (Shafika, 2007). Now, because of technological changes, most rural and urban schools have internet facilities which are for the purpose of learning (science and technology) and social networks (Shizha & Kariwo, 2011). In Zimbabwe, the government subsidised rural electrification programme that enhanced the use of entertainment and communication technologies such as satellite TV, DVDs and CDs. Use of such technologies has caused high levels of acculturation since the globe has been reduced to a village (Hattie, 2012; Sharif & Mohammadi, 2007). Regardless of the degree of exposure, sex, age, culture and home background, the effects of technology on social

skills cannot be underestimated. This may mean the degree and severity of influence vary but the level of influence on social skills cannot be ignored.

The use and adoption of new entertainment and communication technologies is much more complex and may be challenging in developing countries such as Zimbabwe, as mentioned in several reports for developed countries (Pirnay-Dummer, Ifenthaler & Spector, 2010; Subrahmanyam, Kraut, Greenfield & Gross, 2000). Most children develop positive social skills through their everyday interactions with adults and peers, so spending more time on entertainment and communication gadgets may adversely affect their contact with their significant others (Sharif & Mohammadi, 2007). Parents and significant others like teachers and peers play a pivotal role in the development of positive social skills. The development of effective social skills is essential to smooth relationships and interactions as well as optimal academic performance (Zins, Weissbert, Wang & Walberg, 2004). Hence this study sought to establish the influence of entertainment and communication technology on social skills and consequently academic performance.

Social skills are an integral part of human development and are central to this study. They have been described as a set of competencies that a) allow an individual to initiate and maintain positive social relationships, b) contribute to peer acceptance and to a satisfactory school adjustment, and c) allow an individual to cope effectively with the larger social environment (Walker, 1983, p.27). Thus, successful learning requires students to interact closely with teachers, peers and parents contrary to communicate with screens or gadgets only. Furthermore, Manwa (2013) asserts that the social environment influences academic performance. Social skills can also be defined within the context of social and emotional learning thus developing caring and concern for others, establishing positive relationships, recognising and managing one's emotions, making responsible decisions, and handling challenging situations constructively and ethically (Preston, Wiebe, Gabriel, McAuley, Campbell, Ron & Yoshimura, 2003; Zins et al., 2004). This is particularly important considering the role social skills play in maintaining a positive school environment and enhances academic performance.

In Zimbabwe, students' daily use of computers is increasing both at school and at home (Ndlovu, 2015; Shafika, 2007). Although students spend more time watching television than using computers, use of home computers and smart phones is growing rapidly, adding to their total "screen time" which refers to time spend looking at the front panel of any entertainment or communication device or gadget. The school or home environment can therefore affect a child's ability to learn and develop good or bad social skills (Spector,2013; Sharif & Mohammadi, 2007; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Cantor & Wilson, 2003; Subrahmanyam et al., 2000). Good social skills are

crucial to successful functioning in life. They enable people to know what to say, how to make good choices and how to behave in different life situations. The degree to which individuals, especially adolescents, possess good social skills can influence their academic performance.

Excessive use of entertainment and communication technologies by students has an impact on their behaviour (*unhu/ubuntu*). It is important to note that technology can have negative and positive impact on social interactions and behaviour (Hattie, 2012; Kirsh, 2006; Cantor & Wilson, 2003). Society may be on a social mutiny, such that it is important to redefine socially appropriate and acceptable behaviours (with regard to digital or virtual interaction). Thus, research has shown that the society is at a point in history where very few people have given critical thought to new social realities created by technology and what those realities mean for the individual and society at large (Foster & Bussman, 2007; Davood, 2005). For example, watching television provides little opportunity for meaningful interaction with others. Watchers simply sit and swallow what is presented to them without having to react to another person. This can perceptibly have serious effects on people's behaviours because viewers are not practising how to communicate and deal with other people (Kirsh, 2005). Research on the associations between problematic internet use and psychological vulnerabilities indicates that internet use was correlated with depression and anti-social behaviour (Kim, Ryu, Chon, Yeun, Choi, Seo & Nam, 2006), low self-esteem (Fioravanti, Dettore & Casale, 2012) and anxiety (Durak & Senol-Durak, 2013). These factors are very critical to academic success.

Television is another technology to which researchers have mixed feelings with regard to social skills and social lives (Celik & Celik, 2015; Durak & Senol-Durak, 2013). Some researchers, such as Durak and Senol-Durak (2013) believe spending a limited amount of time watching decent programmes can strengthen families and friendships while others believe that television ruin social values in populations since it may be very difficult to monitor the channels watched by students. Exposure to what is on television channels can have some other grave effects on students' social lives. For example, exposure to television which shows sexual activities may increase the possibility of teenage pregnancy and delinquency (Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Goldberg, 1995; Sithole, Manwa & Manwa, 2013). Also seeing violent channels and other manners of lasciviousness may lead to problems in society such as juvenile delinquency as students may think that such behaviour is acceptable (Fioravanti, Dettore & Casale, 2012; Zillman & Weaver, 1999). Students may imitate what they see and develop behaviour disorders thereby becoming socially and academically affected as well as being maladjusted.

### *Theoretical framework*

This study incorporates Vygotsky's social development theory in order to analyse the views of participants. The major theme of Vygotsky's theoretical framework is that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. Vygotsky states that

Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (inter-psychological) and then inside the child (intra-psychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals (1978, p.57).

Vygotsky's suggestion about the impact of technology on social skills and consequently academic performance applies to this study. More specifically, this perspective helped to interrogate how perceptions on the use of technology among students, teachers and parents influence social skills. This is in line with the aspect of Vygotsky's theory that the potential for cognitive development depends upon the "zone of proximal development" (ZPD): a level of development attained when children engage in social behaviour. The theory states that full development of the ZPD depends upon full social interaction. The range of skill that can be developed with adult guidance or peer collaboration exceeds what can be attained by a student alone. Thus, Vygotsky's theory is an attempt to explain consciousness as the end product of socialisation. Kozulin, Gindis, Ageyev and Miller (2003) and Vygotsky (1978:56) explain that social skills are entirely involved in people's lives and life skills are used every day, a condition common to both the benefits and concerns of technology. Thus, its gestures represent an interpersonal connection between individuals.

The objective of this study was to establish the influence of entertainment and communication technological changes on social skills and academic performance of high school students.

## **Method**

### *Research Design*

This research used a case study in order to find out how the entertainment and communication technological changes influence high school students' social skills and academic performance. According to Creswell (2014), a case study involves an exploration and description of an event, people or individuals. High school pupils are a peculiar people who are in a special environment. Denscombe (2007) posits that a

case study focuses on one (or just a few) instances of a particular phenomenon. This implies that the related factors under study when studied together give the distinctive character of a case study. A case study was chosen because of its strengths of intensively gathering data which is rich of detailed descriptions of the situation under study. As such, case studies emphasise the “richness of data” from the real life experiences of participants (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2011). The influence of communication technological changes in this circumstance is an experience that affects high school students.

### *Sample*

The present study used a sample of thirty-three (33) participants. Twenty participants which comprised ten female and ten male high school students were purposefully selected from a population of about five hundred students from the chosen high school. Ten parents and three teachers of the chosen students who were forthcoming were also purposively sampled. According to Creswell (2014), purposive sampling increases the utility of data collected from the participants. With regard to the sample size, this study was cognisant of Creswell’s (2014) suggestion that a case study should involve a limited number of individuals (1–40). With a smaller sample size, the researchers were able to collect much detail from each individual.

### *Instrumentation*

The current study lends itself to the use of in-depth interviews and open-ended questionnaires to collect the data from high school students, teachers and parents. Denzin (2012) asserts that open-ended questionnaires allow the participants to answer the questions without fear of being associated with the information they have provided. The open-ended questionnaire was administered by the researchers and all participants were able to fill in and return the questionnaires. Marshall and Rossman (2011) affirm that questionnaires combined with interviews are done in order to have some checks and balances so as to improve on the trustworthiness of the study. Credibility as a factor of trustworthiness was accomplished by engaging with the participants through in-depth interviews. Dependability was ensured by collecting and accurately recording data. The in-depth interviews were chosen because they allowed great flexibility in the questioning process and the opportunity to probe for additional information through supplementary questions. In-depth interviews allow the interviewer to discover the respondent’s feelings and perspectives on issues concerned (Guion, Diehl & McDonald, 2012; Wiersma & Juss, 2008). The open-ended questionnaire, as a data collection tool was also selected for this study because of its ability to capture the views, opinions and feelings of participants without bias from the researcher.

### *Data analysis*

Data were thematically analysed. Emerging themes were presented and analysed according to research questions (Cohen & Manion, 2007; Sidhu, 2003).

### *Ethical issues*

Research ethical issues were observed at all stages of the research study with particular attention to consent and confidentiality (Creswell, 2014; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). All the participants voluntarily participated in this study. Anonymity was enhanced by using codes during data collection. The codes were used on all participants such as student (S), parent (P) and teacher (T). The essence of anonymity in research is that information provided by participants should in no way reveal their identity (Gilbert, 2011; Silverman, 2010).

## **Results**

The study examined the influence of entertainment and communication technology on high school students' social skills and academic performance.

### *Influence of entertainment and communication technological changes on social skills of high school students*

The responses from students, teachers and parents indicated that changes in entertainment and communication technologies led to social isolation among students, internet addiction, aggressive talking back to parents and teachers, cyber bullying, immoral behaviour and poor eating patterns. The following excerpts per category of respondents confirm these findings:

#### *Students' responses*

*I don't feel like talking to people these days, I enjoy watching lots of action movies (S1).*

*I am so used to the internet that I can't do without it (S5).*

*These days I am not on face book because my colleagues black painted me through electronic social media, in fact, I am really depressed (S3).*

*Technology is bad, I feel pit for myself being a mother at this age. My parents asked me to come back to school. ... I used to chat with my friends sending each other pornographic pictures (S9).*



*I have grown too big because I used to buy most of the advertised foods. My problem is that I am failing to stop eating them (S19).*

#### *Teachers' responses*

*Social disconnectedness is the order of the day due to infrequent social interaction. Most students show that there are no intimate relationships between them and their peers (T1).*

*Our children are no longer respectful. They are aggressive when communicating with adults even in their written language. It is so pathetic (T3).*

*As a teacher, I have observed that students who drop out of school due to early teen marriages were always on social media (T2).*

#### *Parents' responses*

*My daughter is preoccupied by the internet such that she has very little communication with our family members, acquaintances or friends. She wilfully avoids physical contact with her siblings (P1).*

*Most adolescents are no longer courteous in their responses to their parents (P4).*

*Early and unwanted pregnancies are on the increase. This animal which is called technology has exposed our children to HIV and AIDS, STIs and immoral behaviour through pornography (P9).*

*My children's favourite foods are expensive, highly processed and some are difficult to find locally because they like what they see on TV (P10).*

Entertainment and communication technologies were reported by a few participants as having positive effects on social life. The following excerpts confirm this finding.

*The television enlightened me because I didn't know that my friend was engaging me into devilish activities. My parents had to take me to our local Pastor for deliverance prayers (S15).*

*Some students who are exposed to social media may make informed decisions on choice of friends (T1).*

*Influence of entertainment and communication technological changes on academic performance*

Entertainment and communication technologies were reported to have a more negative than positive influence on high school students' academic performance. Students tend to spend more time using electronic gadgets and in turn develop anxiety, depression and low-esteem due to poor academic performance. The study also established that the use of entertainment and communication technologies is advantageous to disciplined students who use them for self-directed study and refreshment time. The following excerpts per category of respondents confirm these findings:

*Students' responses*

*I always develop examination anxiety because I spent most of my study time watching movies (S11).*

*I feel so depressed when I fail to do what I see on television (S12).*

*I failed my mid-year examinations due to overuse of social media and that affected my self-esteem (S17).*

*Teachers' responses*

*I have pupils whom I know who wisely use internet to get information which broaden their minds like getting answers for their home-works (T1).*

*Most students who spend most of their time on social media get very anxious towards examinations due to lack of revision (T3).*

*Most students who get into the classroom depressed usually lack good concentration span. This negatively affects their academic performance (T2).*

*I have pupils whom I know who wisely use internet to get information which broaden their minds like getting answers for their home-works (T1).*

*Parents' responses*

*I am very worried about the time my children spent watching TV or on social media because they get so anxious when they write examinations (P4).*

*I have experienced that entertainment and communication technologies lead to depression as a result of watching horror movies. Depression negatively influences academic performance (P7).*

*My daughter is always searching for information related to schooling and that enhances her academic performance (P1).*

## **Discussion**

The study focused on the influence of entertainment and communication technologies on high school students' social skills and academic performance. Most teachers and parents reported that changes in entertainment and communication technologies led to social isolation among students which has been defined as a state of near complete lack of contact between an individual and society. This finding supports Jennings and Greenberg (2009) who also found out that most adolescents are easily carried away with entertainment and social media such that they tend to forget that there are siblings and parents. According to Newman and Newman (2011), social isolation can be an issue for individuals of any age, especially adolescents as they develop from childhood to young adulthood physically, socially and emotionally. These developmental changes coupled with social isolation have been seen to impact on physical health like headaches, stomachaches and increased drug abuse. These effects on health negatively influence social skills which enhance acquaintances and connectedness.

Social skills were noted by most participants to help students to navigate everyday interactions such as exchanging greetings and holding conversations with their significant others, starting friendships and maintaining them as well as asking for help and instructing others. This was not so in this study probably because most students spent a lot of time using technological gadgets thereby limiting opportunities to learn social skills from others and sharing their own knowledge and skills. Research has revealed that social skills are a product of social interaction (Matsushita & Muramatsu, 2006).

The study also revealed that entertainment and communication technologies resulted in internet addiction, which disturbed the transmission of norms and values of society. This finding resonates with that of Young and de Abreu (2011) who talk of anti-social behaviour resulting from loss of control of internet use. Excessive use of the internet may result in losing control of his/her life. This is the darkest side of entertainment and communication technology that students do not have time to socialise with their parents, peers and teachers. Over half of the twenty parents and teachers who participated in this study believed that dependence on and use of technology is eroding students' literacy skills.

Talking back to parents and teachers in a hostile manner was rated as having high negative influence on proper communication skills. This was coupled with use of abusive language and violence both at school and at home. Students may fail to bow down when talking to adults as they will be imitating what they have seen in electronic media and even their communication skills are alien and far from the expected cultural values. Disrespect is the order of the day as they imitate characters and use words they

see and hear from these technologies. Responses from both interviews and questionnaires showed that both parents and teachers were no longer able to train adolescents the basic social skills regarding communication as some were said to ignore adults when talking to them. This behaviour is contrary to the Bible verse in Proverbs 22 verse 6 which says, “Train up a child the way he/she should go while still young, so that in adulthood, will not depart from it.” This is different to today’s ways of life because children at a very tender age are exposed to all sorts of technologies so that media become the trainer not parents or teachers. It also emerged from this study that the issue of poor communication was aggravated by choice of TV channels and websites. The aforementioned negative influence of entertainment and communication technologies on students’ behaviours is consistent with Celik and Celik (2015)’s observation that acculturation through social media erodes norms and values of a society.

Cyber bullying also emerged from students themselves as a social problem. This shows that some students were socially embarrassed by entertainment and communication technology. Thus, according to Schurgin O’Keeffe and Clarke-Pearson (2011), cyber bullying can cause intense psychosocial outcomes which consequently affect social skills development in adolescents.

Another quandary was that most female adolescents had developed immoral behaviours with some leading to teenage pregnancy, STIs and HIV and AIDS as a result of exposure to entertainment and communication technologies. This finding is consistent with Fioravanti et al. (2012) and Kirsh’s (2005) findings from developed countries which found a high rate of teenage pregnancies due to watching pornography.

This study also revealed that students’ eating patterns had been influenced by entertainment and communication technology. Students envied and admired advertised foods despite their adverse effects on health. Traditionally, meals would be taken as a family at home while interacting with family members which in this context seemed to be a thing of the past.

It also emerged from this study that entertainment and communication technologies have a positive influence towards the development of adolescents’ social skills. Some of the participants indicated that knowing about one’s environment through social media may bring an awareness of what can befall an individual or community. Such awareness is very critical as people will be watching out for such problems as the rampant acts of “satanism”. This alertness from social media indicates that technology help students know what is around them and may significantly help them develop positive social skills.

The study also revealed that entertainment and communication technological changes had differently impacted on students, with some failing to do school work as they were carried away with what they saw on internet or televisions while others got useful information which enhanced their academic performance. This finding is consistent with Preston et al. (2015) and Wertsch (1985) who found out that adolescents exposed to technology tend to perform better in their academic work. Similarly, other previous studies have reported that technology can be used to widen students' knowledge and may improve their academic performance (Spector, 2013; Otsui, 2011; Kirsh, 2006).

Low-esteem, anxiety and depression were other emotional behaviours which parents and teachers cited as psychological problems which were due to student's overuse of entertainment and communication technology. These are very important attributes to learning because they affect the inner-man and consequently academic performance (Woolf, 2010). It is very difficult to concentrate on school demands if one has anxiety or depressed.

## **Conclusion**

This study concludes that entertainment and communication technologies have a negative influence on social skills and academic performance of students to a greater extent. Exposure to entertainment and communication technologies leads to acquisition of poor social skills low academic performance.

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made on the basis of the findings from this study:

- The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and other stakeholders may need to address the technological changes and help teachers and parents take advantage of incidental learning which teaches and reinforces appropriate social skills and behaviours.
- Future studies may need to be carried out to establish the influence of other technologies besides entertainment and communication technologies.

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## **Forms and motivation of plagiarism by first-year students at a Zimbabwean university: Implications for teaching Communication Skills**

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### **Abstract**

*This study investigated forms of plagiarism committed by university students as well as motivation for the plagiarism. Students and lecturers at one Zimbabwean university participated in the study. The sample for students comprised 300 randomly selected first-year university students and 18 lecturers who were purposively sampled. A questionnaire and structured interview were used to collect data from students and lecturers, respectively. Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis were used. The forms of plagiarism identified from both students and lecturers included non-acknowledgment of internet sites, cutting and pasting other students' work and copying previously submitted and marked assignments. The study revealed, from both students and lecturers, that students' plagiarism was sometimes intentional and at other times unintentional. Recommendations were suggested to reduce plagiarism by students.*

**Keywords:** plagiarism; communication skills, university students; academic integrity, Zimbabwe.

### **Introduction**

The issue of honesty pertaining to academic integrity is an integral calculus in the quality assurance matrix of universities, the world over (Kaufman, 2008; Bretag, 2013). For most upcoming tertiary institutions, including those in Africa, academic integrity among the ever-swelling student populations remains a thorny issue (Mwamwenda, 2006). Declining academic integrity has often led students to engage in acts of academic dishonesty such as plagiarism (Chireshe, 2014). According to Bretag (2013), academic integrity involves credible scholarship whereby both students and lecturers acknowledge other scholars' intellectual contributions. Academic integrity is, therefore, all about being an honest and responsible contributor to knowledge generation and interrogation (Bretag, 2013). This means that students, especially those who are assessed basing on research-based assignments need to be honest and acknowledge the ideas of other scholars they engage with in their academic essays.

Globally, researchers are concerned about the perceived increased cheating in education (McCabe, Trevino & Butterfield, 2001; Martin, 2005; Rettinger & Jordan, 2005; Batane, 2010). This pattern, observed in institutions of higher learning, appears to be linked to the easy access to information technology (Ma et al., 2007; Maruca, 2003; Wideman, 2008). In response to this, however, institutions of higher learning, world over, have adopted anti-plagiarism policies that discourage intellectual dishonesty and non-attribution of sources (Green, 2002). This study's focus on various forms of plagiarism and their motivation necessitates the embrace of the University of Melbourne's explanation of plagiarism, whose examples include, among others, "paraphrasing another person's work with minor changes, piecing together sections of the work of others into a new whole; submitting an assignment that has already been submitted for assessment in another subject" (University of Melbourne, 2005). This citation evokes the cheating going on amongst students, casting plagiarism as both unethical and curtailing creativity and innovation. This time around, however, plagiarism could also be aided by the computer.

As this study intimates, some Zimbabwean first-year university students find themselves 'cheating' and/or plagiarising other people's work when submitting assignments (Shaw & Tizora, 2012). This cause for concern calls for an in-depth and systematic study for the forms of plagiarism the students commit and the motives behind. The choice of first-year students here does not imply that plagiarism is unique to this group but that this could be their first encounter with the demands of scholarly research and writing after high school. These new students' views, as well as their lecturers' would therefore be sought such that the Communication Skills lecturers, particularly, may map out ways to deal with the scourge of plagiarism.

The study comes at a time when access and use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and internet has fairly increased in Zimbabwe, augmented by Zimbabwe's President, Robert Mugabe's 2005 national computerisation programme (Ministry of Information Communication Technology, Postal & Courier Services, 2015) and the advent of cellular phone internet provision by Zimbabwe's mobile phone operators among them Econet, Netone and Telecel. The study assumes that this increased access may have encouraged some students to continue to plagiarise, despite the availability of programmes such as the Turnitin, Ephorus, Ithenticate and Google Plagiarism detector software (Karabag & Berggren, 2012; Maruca, 2003; Forster, 2002; Garwe & Maganga, 2015; Chinamasa, 2012). This study, however, intends to unravel other forms of plagiarism apart from digital plagiarism and their motivation.

In Zimbabwean universities, as elsewhere in the world, academic integrity is threatened by instances of academic dishonesty such as plagiarism (Chireshe, 2014). Though plagiarising students could have a number of reasons, among which are pressure to

obtain good grades, ignorance and lack of enough time to tackle difficult assignments (Kaufman, 2008; Klein, 2007), such behavior needs to be nipped in the bud. This paper believes that ameliorating plagiarism could begin with studying its forms and motivations among university 'freshmen'. This could be so since plagiarism may not affect the academic integrity of the plagiarising students in particular only but the academy in general as well. When Howard (2007, p.3) opines that "a sense of doom hangs over the academy as the spectre of "Internet plagiarism" threatens to undo the entire educational enterprise" she encapsulates the apprehensions of most educationists towards plagiarism. However, while scholars such as Howard (2007), Howard and Watson (2010) and Zwagerman (2008) train their lenses on 'internet shoplifting' they tend to overlook the apparently less dangerous copying of others' assignments that happens among fellow students themselves.

The problem becomes worse where the majority of the high-school-graduates entering university might not have a strong background to computer literacy and might lack general research and citation skills. At non-English universities such as in Zimbabwe, students are suddenly expected to interrogate and synthesise ideas that are written in English. This might encourage students to plagiarise whole passages written in that barely understood English. As Mason (2009, p.1) observes, English could be a 'nonnative', second or even third language, for some. Howard (1999), while discussing the originality of words, however, argues that the problem of plagiarism becomes more complex in a world where the language we use is not ours alone. She further notes that since language is free-floating "we all patch-write, all the time. There is no "my" "own" language; there is only the shared language, in its shared combinations and possibilities" (Howard, 1999, p. 91). Drawing from her argument, there is hardly any originality but only perfected plagiarism. As such, it might be more fruitful to coach students on the proper acknowledgment, research and attribution skills than to penalise their amateur plagiarism.

Furthermore, the apparent positive correlation between information technology and plagiarism raises moral and ethical questions. Ma, Wan and Yu (2008, p.198) conceive both high school and college students as part of a peculiarly internet generation who spend most of their time on the internet, browsing and chatting. Such a scenario presents educators with both "opportunities and challenges" for learning. The biggest challenge, however, is that "more and more young people at school are practising cheating, and things are getting worse each year." This suggests a decline in educational ethics, a decline which needs to be addressed promptly. In universities alike, "digital cheating and plagiarism" is facilitated because the internet both promotes and provides cheat web sites, "digital paper mills", where students can pay and download already prepared answers (Maruca, 2003). Ma et al. (2008, p.199) cite a 2005 Center for Academic

Integrity research where “77% of students thought cutting and pasting one or two sentences from online without appropriate citations was not a serious issue.” All this evidence buttresses the view that plagiarism may not be an inherent weakness in dishonest students but some habit that develops alongside technological revolutions and improved access to ICT.

University students are, however, sometimes tempted to manually copy the assignments of their classmates or those assignments previously submitted and graded for similar courses. Kaufman (2008) suggests that situational factors such as the size of the class may tempt the students to plagiarise. This could be where the university students assess their chances of not being caught plagiarising by a lecturer, since, because of the large student numbers, student assignments are divided among the different lecturers manning the course for marking. In her category of breaches to academic integrity Bretag (2013, p. 1) includes “inappropriate collusion, theft of other students’ work, paying a third party for assignments.” All these acts of plagiarism suggest that plagiarism takes many forms and could be motivated by different reasons.

The peculiar contexts that individual students find themselves in could encourage plagiarism. Generally, parents in Zimbabwe live to send their children to school (Chetsanga in Hastings, 2009). As such, students are expected to graduate with good grades. However, fear of failure may land students in a moral dilemma. Students may thus find themselves becoming more interested in the grade than in their individual intellectual development and engagement with knowledge (Klein, 2007). This may be because the stakes are so high for the student to pass; the parent expects passes, the institution is tough on mediocrity, and peers may not accept failures. Klein (2007, p.99) captures this utilitarian factor thus:

If the focus is to achieve the greatest results, the ethical consideration in the process may be overlooked, [...]. If earning a grade or degree is considered the greatest good to an individual or the family of the individual, perhaps choosing to plagiarise in order to achieve the grade is the option a utilitarian learner will choose.

This means that students may plagiarise in order to satisfy overwhelming expectations from institutions, family and peers. Academics are, therefore, encouraged to avoid offering value judgments regarding students’ plagiarism but to cautiously address this moral problem together with them.

It is against this background that this study sought to investigate the forms and motivation of plagiarism by first year students at a Zimbabwean university. Among the questions raised by this study are; 1) What are the different forms of plagiarism by first-year university students? and 2) What motivates student plagiarism?

## **Method**

### *Research design*

A case study was used. The case study, which enabled the researcher “to explore an issue or problem using a case as a specific illustration” (Cresswell, 2013, p.57) was considered ideal because of its capacity to address the ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions of contemporary problems (Gray, 2014). The design enabled the researcher to explore the forms and motivation for plagiarism by students and using a single university ensured greater depth to the phenomenon under study (Cresswell, 2013).

### *Sample*

Three hundred first year students (female: 43 %; male: 57%) and 18 lecturers were randomly and purposively sampled from the Faculties of Education and Arts. The eighteen lecturers taught Communication skills to first-year university students.

### *Instrumentation*

A questionnaire was administered to the three hundred students while the eighteen lecturers were interviewed to gather information on the forms and motivation of plagiarism. Among other reasons, the questionnaire was chosen for it catered for the large numbers of student respondents and also guaranteed their anonymity (Gray, 2014). The questionnaire allowed respondents to comment on forms of plagiarism as well as their motives for plagiarising. Interviews were chosen for the smaller sample of lecturers especially because they allowed the researcher to ‘enter’ into the lecturers’ ‘perspectives’, something which might have been impossible with a questionnaire or observation (Patton, 2002). The interviews enabled the interviewees to comment on the nature of plagiarism and related motives and the implications to the teaching of Communication Skills. Both sets of respondents targeted through these instruments, therefore, comprised participants who had “stories to tell” (Cresswell, 2013, p.155; Patton, 2002) and who could “purposefully inform an understanding” (Cresswell, 2013, p.157) on the researcher, of the existing forms of plagiarism and their motivation.

### *Data Analysis*

Data were analysed through descriptive analysis and thematic analysis for questionnaire and interview, respectively. The numerical data gathered from the questionnaire were summarised and organised according to a frequency distribution table that revealed meaningful patterns (Bless, Higson-Smith & Sithole, 2013) and the narrative data from interviews were thematically analysed into recognisable patterns and emerging links (Patton, 2002).



### *Ethical issues*

The researcher followed ethical considerations on confidentiality and informed consent of the participants. The researcher informed the participants that they were involved in the study of a worthwhile scholarly purpose. He also assured them that they were free to withdraw, even after they had signed the consent form (Cresswell, 2013). This was done because a code of ethics (Bless et al., 2013) was required in order to avoid infringing on the rights of participants and for the avoidance of physical or psychological harm to participants.

### **Findings**

This section presents the findings of the study which sought to establish the forms and motivation of plagiarism among first-year university students. The forms of plagiarism are presented first and the motives, later. The data were presented in tabular form and through continuous narratives. In Table 1, the common forms of plagiarism students committed were indicated against the actual number of respondents from a total of 300 respondents as per the questionnaire administered.

### *Forms of plagiarism*

**Table 1**

*Forms of Plagiarism Reported by Students (n=300)*

<b>Forms of plagiarism</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Total</b>
Ever used information from internet without crediting.	267 (89.0%)	33 (11.0%)	300 (100%)
Ever used computer to cut and paste from someone's assignment.	94 (31.3%)	206 (68.7%)	300 (100%)
Ever copied sections of another student's assignment.	128 (42.7%)	172 (57.3%)	300 (100%)

Table 1 shows the data collected through the questionnaire from student respondents. It shows that the forms of plagiarism include non-acknowledgment of internet sites, copying previously written answers and cutting and pasting portions of other students' essays. The table shows that the most prevalent form of plagiarism at the university is non-acknowledgment of internet sites, with 267 respondents, followed by copying already written answers, with 128 respondents and, lastly, cutting and pasting someone else's response with ninety-four respondents - which are 89%, 42.7% and 31.3% - respectively. Of significance is not the high frequency of cheating but simply its existence among university students who should be acclaimed as the nation's trusted elites, upon whom society should look up to for moral and ethical direction.

Asked to comment on the forms of plagiarism their students committed all the eighteen lecturers stated that they had encountered widespread incidences of plagiarism in their students' essays. Lecturers noted that the most recurring forms of plagiarism included cutting and pasting information from internet sites, sometimes observable in students' submitting of documents with different font sizes for marking, lifting of information from printed resources without full acknowledgment, as well as copying whole chunks of information from fellow students' answers. The lecturers' responses supported the students' responses as reported in Table 1 .

#### *Motives for plagiarism*

The following section presents the respondents' explanations of the motives for plagiarism. The students' comments are reported first and those of the lecturers' are reported second. The report format for the students' responses follows the order of the open-response questions on the questionnaire.

#### *Using information from the internet and not crediting the author and reasons for doing it –*

Student respondents (89%) offered diverse reasons for using information from the internet without crediting the author. Some noted that they sometimes plagiarised since their motives were to prove to their friends that they were equally intelligent, in a context of high pressure to score highly. Some of these students thought that to collect and connect ideas from the internet and then re-present them impressively as their own was being smart. As noted in their comments, this group of students thought that to acknowledge borrowing demonstrated weakness and lack of confidence, therefore, they did not. There were, however, other students who stated that they plagiarised because of complete ignorance about the need to credit internet sources and because of an inability to interpret and paraphrase texts. Yet, there were others who noted that they plagiarised in order to meet the assignment submission deadlines.

Such students complained that more time was needed for new students to master the Communication Skills lecturers' explanations on the art of citing internet sources, particularly so, since the language of the texts seemed too complex for them. The underlying motive which seemed to encourage all these students to plagiarise, was, however, the fear of failure.

One student expressed his experience of encountering university assignments for the first time in the first semester as daunting and frustrating, thus: "I came here only 3 weeks ago yet I am already expected to submit 7 well-researched assignments in seven different courses at once. I have no option, but to edit essays by previous groups for submission." This statement suggests that the student felt that there was insufficient time for him to do 'scholarly' justice to all assignments, simultaneously.

One response which suggested that some students did not cite because of lack of knowledge of internet sources which are credible, went thus: "It is difficult, even if you want to, because some 'relevant' sources that 'open' don't have the names of the authors, publication dates nor the page numbers." This suggests the need to teach students on how to select credible sources and record cite details before leaving a website in order to avoid plagiarism.

It was, however, noted that some students would deliberately adopt other people's viewpoints. As noted earlier, students endeavored to impress their colleagues, parents and lecturers through plagiarising. Related reasons were that information from the internet was free and unclaimed, especially that obtained from blogs, Wikipedia, and answers.com, thus, could be incorporated without attendant attribution. Other responses also noted that there were sites which "did not" present the author's names, dates of publication and page numbers, thereby encouraging students to claim authorship. Such responses show that there was a mixture of wrong and uninformed actions.

#### *Cutting and pasting from someone else's assignment and reasons for doing it*

The majority of the ninety-four respondents (Table 1) who acknowledged cutting and pasting other students' assignments cited the limited time in which to carry out thorough research and construct a completely coherent individual assignment as a contributory factor to plagiarism. One respondent observed:

*Block Release lectures start at 8am and continue uninterrupted to 8pm every day. Meanwhile, the library closes at 4 pm during early semester time. For all the lectures we attend, we are still expected to submit researched assignments. All this forces us to 'cut and paste', especially for typed assignments.*

An interesting work ethos was revealed in the following remark:

*We work as a team in order to score highly, each member of the team researches on a different assignment and then we play around with the information and paraphrasing on the computer during the editing. Working as a team actually reduces stress and anxiety over non-submission of assignments.*

The responses here indicate that plagiarism and cheating went on casually among students but seems to have been exacerbated by time pressures associated with new university programmes, as well as lecturers' demands.

#### *Copying material from another student's assignment and reasons for this behaviour*

It emerged from the study that a number of students (128) had copied other students' assignments. Copying began as a desire to just get how it is done (copier) by reading through a colleague's answer, as well as collusion by the one who is copied, who may not have had the opportunity to assist the friend to construct his or her own response. This means that colleagues' turning a blind eye to other students' research weaknesses motivated such colleagues to breach academic integrity. This often resulted in a scenario where two or more students worked so closely in an assignment to the extent of submitting an almost, or a complete word-for-word assignment to be marked by the same lecturer. This might not be so much a case of not believing that their action could be discovered, but that of not perceiving any wrongdoing in the deed. Another reason given for copying suggested that lecturers recycled assignment questions, year-after-year, thus encouraging students to copy or re-use former students' assignments they popularly referred to as 'zvitunha', meaning readily available 'dead' assignments.

#### *Heavy work load assigned by lecturers and nature of assignment*

A number of students (114) revealed that they sometimes plagiarised in order to fulfill the heavy demands set by their lecturers. Students complained that lecturers' demands to have different assignments submitted at the same time put students under undue pressure, with many research-based assignments to be written within little time. Students also noted that, at times, the nature of the question asked, often promoting regurgitating of diverse scholars' views, forced students to plagiarise. The students also complained that there was inadequate instruction from lecturers on how to avoid plagiarism. They observed that by asking students to submit typed assignments, some lecturers were unwittingly encouraging students to cut and paste.

#### *Worst forms of plagiarism*

Overall, the majority of student respondents (68.7%) considered cutting and pasting another's assignment as the worst form of plagiarism, followed by copying another's

work (57.3%) and lastly non-acknowledgment of internet material (33%), a scenario confirmed in table 1 above. Interestingly, a number of respondents reiterated that not acknowledging the internet was a lesser offence since the student would actually have made an effort to research on his or her own, the only error being the inability to cite properly or fully. These responses show that students were able to judge their own actions along a moral plane and that they considered an ‘offence’ to ‘intellectually-needy’ acquaintances as more grievous than plagiarising an impersonal source.

#### *Results from interviews with lecturers*

Lecturers attributed the problems of plagiarism for the bulk of new students to students’ ignorance of proper procedure, especially regarding the first assignment. They, however, also bemoaned willful plagiarism where some students still plagiarised the internet as well as textbooks and copied other students’ work, even after proper procedures had been taught. Most lecturers concurred that the immoral character of some of today’s students contributed to the proliferation of plagiarism. Perhaps, these sentiments might be gleaned from one interviewee’s observation:

*We cannot blame ourselves, nor pressure of time, for students’ moral weaknesses. Remember, these are the same students who are used to downloading music and videos cheaply from the internet. And on the streets, they buy pirated music when they fully know that the musician will not receive any cent for his effort. In the end, the circle gets bigger than academic plagiarism as it intersects with larger social immoralities.*

So, here, we realise an attempt to explain plagiarism as a manifestation of contemporary degeneration of morals in general that is concomitant with an increase in the use of ICT and internet.

## **Discussion**

Results from study showed that some first-year students from the selected university committed acts of plagiarism such as non-acknowledgement of internet material, cutting and pasting, as well as copying other students’ assignments, despite the Communication Skills module lecturers’ exhortations on honest attribution. Both students’ and lecturers’ responses concurred on the typical forms of plagiarism at university.

Firstly, the fact that students did not acknowledge internet sources and that they also cut and pasted suggested that students misused technology, sometimes, for selfish reasons. That result confirms many other studies, worldwide, that have established

that hi-tech plagiarism plagues technological innovations such as internet in education (Maruca, 2003; Klein, 2007). Ma et al. (2008, p.199) have concluded thus: “[i]n short, studies revealed that the internet, as an innovation, provided young people with more convenience to cheat and plagiarize.” Evidence from both questionnaire and interviews suggests a trend whereby many first-year university students either willfully or ignorantly used information from internet sites, without acknowledgement. Though this evidence of plagiarism was got from only a first-year students’ sample and a sample of lecturers who taught first-year students only, it suggests the need to address such breaches to academic integrity among students as well as help improve their research and citation skills.

It was also observed that most first-year students plagiarised because they needed to reassure their parents and friends that they were intelligent students who had coped with their university’s high academic demands. That motive, established in this study, finds resonance in Klein’s (2007) and Chetsanga in Hastings (2009)’s contentions that the students’ parents back home still expected that their children pass with high grades. Such expectations were arguably push factors to students’ acts of plagiarism, particularly where too many research assignments were to be submitted all at once. This means that to enable ‘freshers’ to adapt to the scholarly demands of university both Communication Skills and subject-specific module lecturers ought to impart more requisite hands-on skills to these under-pressure students in order to deal with the challenges attending new information technology and the dilemmas dogging such students who have access to previous years’ marked assignments. Local university lecturers also need to patiently and systematically assist these ‘academic greenhorns’ to address what Ma et al. (2008) consider to be a decline in ethics regarding issues of academic dishonesty.

Secondly, the study established that some students plagiarised in cahoots, especially where colleagues cut and pasted each other’s typed or hand written assignments. For instance, the social dynamics of the Zimbabwean university education seem to have unwittingly encouraged some students to use their word processing skills to cut and paste not only information from the internet but also from other students’ typed assignments. This seems to have arisen from the nature of students’ interdependent relationships. A number of students may have shared and used the same laptop or desktop computer to type their assignments in the spirit of African *ubuntu-ism* (Chimuka, 2001), collaboratively edited their word files, compared and contrasted their manually written answers, and possibly ended up borrowing material from each other. As responses cited above indicate, it would appear students experienced a moral dilemma, which for most students, presented collusion with their friends as the preferable moral choice and resolution to that dilemma (Bennett-Woods, 2005). From the perspectives of such students, it would feel more painful to let their friends down

than it would be unethical to submit a cut and pasted assignment to a lecturer. Such a scenario resonates with the ‘challenges’ Ma et al. (2008) and Chireshe (2014) advise educators to content with in a contemporary world characterised with a decline in educational ethics.

The study also established that though the students’ acts of plagiarism were blameworthy, some plagiarism could have been motivated by insufficient resources and equipment, as well as insufficient time. This particularly applied to block release students whose time-table was said to have been too crowded to allow ample time for meaningful research and construction of answers. This suggests that students’ unethical conduct might have been exacerbated by the structure of some university programmes, packed time-tabling and inadequate resources. Mapako et al. (2011) have noted similar resource-related challenges bedeviling mass education at Zimbabwean universities. At the university under study, for instance, first-year students have complained of the scarcity of literature on their courses, especially for compulsory courses such as Communication Skills, a situation that forced students to crowd around the same sources. Such a search could, therefore, be shortened by cutting and pasting. While the challenge of textbook shortage could be ameliorated through encouraging students to read online textbooks and articles, this should be accompanied by hints on how to cite sources appropriately.

Thirdly, the study found that some students copied chunks of, or whole assignments of others. That fact indicated both the students’ selfish motives and the difficulties lecturers met in the supervision of large numbers of students. As the students argued, such a tempting scenario was promoted particularly by those assignments which came attached to the module outline. Such assignments inadvertently promoted collaborative dishonesty by encouraging inter-student discussions. All these facts could suggest that while students lacked the values of independent thinking, uprightness, perseverance and accountability, their lecturers lacked improved checking mechanisms. All students did, however, was to rationalise and moralise on the issue of plagiarism. That is, students were unable to imagine how they might have felt if somebody benefited financially through selling something that had been stolen from them. This was despite that university prospectuses worldwide, local ones included, generally condemned plagiarism as an offence equally reprehensible as theft, piracy, and robbery (University of Melbourne, 2005). On their part, lecturers’ predictable habits of recycling assignments could have encouraged students to plagiarise. This was also in spite of the lecturers’ abilities to construct more original and creative assignments, or even in-class assignments that might have helped lecturers to remove conditions that encourage plagiarism.



Finally, the study affirmed the problematic position of the Communication Skills module lecturers as those staff members most expected to teach first-year students how to cite and reference material. It established that these lecturers bemoaned most a student's copying of another student assignment (or previously submitted assignment) and cutting and pasting colleagues' work much more than non-acknowledgment of internet sources. This means that lecturers were concerned more about the moral character of those students who seemed not to bother about researching and constructing answers for themselves than they were about those who failed to acknowledge information that they had extracted from the internet. However, both were problems which lecturers needed to tackle. But the problem of huge classes such as in Communication Skills (Mapako et al., 2011) made cheating rather more difficult to detect. This was because lecturers were overwhelmed with marking and 'copiers' could submit their work to different lecturers. Moreover, a university community is a mixed population. A few technology-vigilant students who have had unschooled access to, and unrestricted borrowing from internet before coming to university, could be outnumbered by those who could be ignorant about how to access or utilise the internet, how to operate a word processor, nor how to construct an academic essay. Communication Skills lecturers might have found that assisting such large numbers of students on ethical research procedures and on constructing appropriately acknowledged essays was cumbersome. The role of such university lecturers in moulding a morally acceptable student to society, an accountable being who may abide by a community's code of conduct, had never been as keen as in this information technology age.

#### *Limitations of the study*

Because the research was a case study, it was restricted to only one tertiary institution. Moreover, the results from this research's questionnaire and interview have been collected from only first year students and their lecturers. Therefore, for the questionnaire the responses were limited to those of respondents who were most probably hearing about plagiarism for the first time, and for the interview, the interviewees' responses excluded experiences with students in different semesters. The grounds for comparability could have been improved had the research also included students in other levels of study. Again, the study did not ask students who did not plagiarise, their reasons for not practising it, a scenario which might have revealed interesting insights.

## Conclusion

The research has shown that the forms of plagiarism committed by first-year university students include non-acknowledgment of internet sources; cutting and pasting other students' prepared assignments on the computer and copying previously marked assignments. The motives for plagiarism have been found to include the desire to impress parents and friends through scoring highly, ignorance and pressure of time.

## Recommendations

The study makes the following recommendations:

- Students need to develop academic integrity through acknowledging all sources of information used in essays and desisting from dishonest acts such as copying and cutting and pasting other students' prepared essays;
- Lecturers, particularly Communication Skills module lecturers, need to assist new students to credit sources of information since plagiarism is both an academic offence and unethical behaviour;
- Institutions and lecturers need to help shape students' moral character and ethical choices according to African tenets of *ubuntu-ism*, in a context of technological innovations in education;
- Lecturers need to strike a balance between the need to develop research skills in their students and the available time and resources through mixing research-based assignments, in-class and practical ones;
- Institutions may need to consider the ethical issues on the use of anti-plagiarism programmes to avoid infringing on students' intellectual rights in a reality where one hundred percent human-thought originality and hundred percent plagiarism detector-error proof are difficult to attain.

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## **The nature and extent of gender-based violence on girls in high schools in Manicaland province, Zimbabwe**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper aimed to establish the nature and extent of gender-based violence (GBV) on high school girls, the perpetrators of that violence, where GBV occurred, circumstances predisposing girls to gender-based violence and possible strategies for eliminating or reducing GBV. A random sample of three hundred and fifty (350) high school girls was used in this study. A survey design was employed and data were descriptively analysed. The study revealed that the most mentioned forms of GBV were beating and bullying. Less frequently-mentioned forms of GBV were chores at teachers' houses, belittling, bad touch, food snatching, baby minding and sexual advances. The major perpetrators of GBV were males: teachers, peers, 'strangers' and to a small extent relatives. The circumstances predisposing girls to GBV were taking of intoxicants, involvement in love affairs and to a less extent watching pornography and wearing 'provocative' attire. Victims reacted to incidents of GBV by discussing the situation in secular and church groupings, reporting to parents and relatives and to a lesser extent by to teachers, peers, church members and organisations that dealt with child welfare. This study recommends school-specific and community-wide programmes to create safer environment for school girls. More research with bigger samples of girls including boys is also recommended.*

**Key words;** Gender-based violence, high-school girl, perpetrators, strategies, proposition.

### **Introduction**

There is no consensus over an acceptable definition of gender-based violence (GBV) in different cultures (Baker, 2007). Even key United Nations programme-implementing agencies counted and classified GBV differently (Population Council, 2008; UNHCR, 2000). The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) (2000) explains GBV as the physical, mental and/or social abuse that is directed against a person because of his/her gender role in society or culture. Further, UNHCR (2000) states that the person who is violated has no option to refuse or to pursue other ways of action without suffering severe social, physical or psychological consequences. Other

authorities have explained GBV as including sexual advances, sexual acts of different kinds, alongside the use of threats or harm on the victims who are unwilling to cooperate or unable to give valid consent to engage in any sexual activities (Equate, 2007; IGWG of USAID, 2006; WHO, 2003b; Saltzman, Fanslow, McMahon & Shelley, 1999; UNGA, 1999).

A relevant context of the present study is the widespread sexual abuse of women all over the world, which is sustained mostly by the power imbalance between men and women in families, communities and societies as well as in formal and informal organisations (IASC, 2005; UNIFEM, 2003). The extent of gender-based violence particularly on women has been captured in the findings of Heise, Ellsberg and Gottemoeller (1999) which revealed that one in every three women globally had experienced psychological, physical or sexual-partner violence of some kind in her lifetime. Another example of widespread abuse of women is that one in every five women worldwide had been a victim of attempted or consummated rape with serious health repercussions. It has also been found that GBV has caused as many deaths and as much disability as cancer and one in every five women has been sexually violated before the age of fifteen (Irish Joint Commission on Gender-Based Violence, 2010; Gender-Based Violence Working Group, 2009; Social Watch, 2009; ICRW, 2009; Heise et al., 1999).

In schools different types of GBV have also been found to be highly prevalent worldwide. For instance, 22 per cent of school girls in Ecuador high schools were victims of gender-based violence despite public awareness that GBV was both socially and legally unacceptable (CEIME, 1994). Thirty-three percent of male and female students had suffered some kind of GBV in the previous year in a study in one part of India (Patel & Andrews, 2001). In Botswana over sixty-seven percent of girls in high school reported some kind of sexual harassment (Rossetti, 2001), while twenty-eight percent of students in Uganda reported being violated in a school environment (Naker, 2005). In Zimbabwe, Leach, Fascian, Kadzamira, Lemani and Machakanja (2003), as well as Leach, Machakanja and Mandoga (2000) found considerable evidence of gender-based violence upon girls in high schools. South Africa has some staggering figures of survivors of gender-based violence with up to thirty percent school girls reporting in one study to have been raped in and around their schools (Geldenhuis, 2011).

Gender-based violence is perpetrated by both men and women. However, Leach, Dunne and Salvi (2014) observe that since 1988 all small scale studies from Anglophone, Francophone countries and one Lusophone country concur in the finding that there were consistent patterns of gender-based violence on school girls by both male students and male teachers. This finding had been previously confirmed by Parkes and Heslop



(2011) in their studies in Ghana, Kenya and Mozambique. In Zimbabwe, the same finding has been arrived at whereby male teachers and older school boys were the most mentioned perpetrators of gender-based violence on school girls (Leach, Machakanja & Mandoga, 2000). Taken together, gender-based violence on school girls has been found to be inflicted on a child by people well-known to that child. This includes teachers, peers, relatives and members of the community who may initially be 'strangers' to the girls but ultimately force themselves into some sort of relationship with the girls.

Research has established several factors for the boys' and male teachers' involvement in gender violation of girls in schools. The basis is in the unequal power relations between men and women in most communities. For instance, rural teachers in KwaZulu Natal were found to participate in and condone violence against women and girls because they perceived women and girls to be posing a threat to their privileged positions due to policies and programmes that empowered the women and the girls (Bhana, de Lange & Mitchell, 2009). In addition, violence has been found to be a marker for masculinity for boys and young men with bullying and sexual violence being extensively exhibited in schools (Parkes, 2007; Bhana, 2005). The involvement of boys in the gender-violation of girls has been strengthened, in part, by teachers' toleration of boys' domination of classroom space, or of gender-differentiated punishments where girls do such chores as cleaning while boys do much harder manual work (Jones, Moore, Villar-Marquez & Broadbent, 2009). Furthermore, it has also been found that (male) teachers engage in gender-based violations of girls in schools because there are inadequate structures and processes to ensure educator accountability and teachers exploit their power position to engage in such activities as 'sex for grades' and/or waiving of school fees as well as other preferential treatment (Parkes & Heslop, 2011). It can be noticed that factors for the perpetration of gender-based violence are at multiple levels: individual factors, factors in relationships, factors in the community and in society. Individual factors include such things as alcohol and drug use, exposure to sexually explicit media and many other factors while, relationship with peers and others are relationship factors. Community factors include the tolerance of gender-based violence in the homes and neighbourhoods, while cultural and social norms that shape gender roles and the equal/unequal distribution of power between men and women represent societal factors (Tharp, De Gue, Brookmeyer, Massetti & Matjasko, 2013; Jewkes, Sen, & Garcia-Moreno, 2002; Heise, 1998). It also seems that male educators predispose the school environment to violence through their deep-seated beliefs about the need for punishment in order to bring about orderly learning (Morrell, 2001).

Gender-based violence takes several dimensions which are economic where gender violators offer a quid pro quo for sexual favours such as money or goods; socio-cultural where women are expected to assume a subservient role to men and to engage even in intergenerational sexual which are largely transactional (Devers, Henry, Hofman & Benabdallah, 2012; Leclerc-Madlala, 2004).

In Zimbabwe as well as in other countries GBV took several forms including unsolicited physical contact such as touching, pinching the breast and buttocks of girls, demands or requests for sex and propositioning by teachers, male students and other male strangers. Girls were often cornered and groped by male students, who also shouted demeaning obscenities, while during lessons teachers made unwanted physical contact with girl students (Leach & Machakanja, 2000). Similarly, Chireshe and Chireshe (2009) established that the chief perpetrators of sexual harassment in Zimbabwe were male teachers and male students. Early studies in South Africa revealed that there was wide-spread gender-based violence within heterosexual relationships among pupils, which included physical assault, rape, coercive sex and other forms (Wood & Jewkes, 1998). Leach et al. (2014) put the types of gender-based violence in the form of a hierarchy from, low-level gratuitous taunts, threats and gossip, through unsolicited physical contact such as touching of breasts and buttocks to serious assault and rape.

Studies reveal that school-related gender-based violence occurs in different places. Within the schools, it occurs in such places as latrines, empty classrooms and corridors and around the perimeter of the school. School-related gender-based violence also occurs on the way to and from school as well as in the home (Devers et al., 2012). At the same time school-related gender-based violence occurs at bus-stops, in public service vehicles (USAID, 2008).

A study in Tanzania has revealed immense problems for girls on public transport to and from schools. At times they are left behind, at other times they are sexually and verbally abused through body grabbing, breast fondling. Some owners of private vehicles also forced girls to accept 'lifts' to and from school and sexually assaulted them in the process (Academy for Educational Development, 2009).

Interventions to reduce/eliminate gender-based violence in schools have been cited in the literature. The first is the development and implementation of a curriculum such that students are exposed to reproductive and sexuality education. This intervention gives students positive aspects of the relationships between the sexes in the school (Gupta, 2001; Kumar, Larkin & Mitchell., 2001; Mirembe, 2001; Mitchell & Smith, 2001; Morrell, 2001; UNESCO/Brazil, 2001; Omale, 2000).

Secondly, youth leadership training and appropriate teacher training curricula have also been found to be useful in reducing pupil-on-pupil GBV. This reduction in GBV

is achieved through modifying students' beliefs, attitude and behaviour and building positive relationships between boys and girls (Mlamlela, Mabelane, Napo, Sibiya & Free, 2000).

A third intervention in the reduction of GBV was made up of community and policy outreach programmes (DTS, 2007; DevTech Systems Inc., 2007; Fleischman, 2003; Omale, 2000). Advocacy and community outreach have been found to boost knowledge and to increase reporting of GBV incidents. Women have also been reported to be empowered through these initiatives (Plan International, 2012; Plan and Helpline International, 2011; UNFPA, 2003; CAMFED, 2002). Within the communities, youth-to-youth sexuality and other self-help development programmes have also been found to reduce GBV in schools (Mitchell & Smith, 2001; Omale, 1999).

All the initiatives summarised above have been known to be effective in a conducive public policy environment. Sadly, it has been observed in spite of some very elaborate policy development against gender violence, the implementation of those policies remains problematic for lack of political will to implement the policies and for lack of professional accountability on the part of many of the teaching and other staff in schools (Devers et al., 2012; Wilson, 2011). A good example for these comments is South Africa where policies governing the conduct of teaching and other staff have been well-developed but are not at all well implemented (Wilson, 2011).

### *Purpose of the study*

The purpose of the study was to establish the nature of school-related gender-based violence suffered by high school girls; the identity of the perpetrators of the GBV; where the GBV occurred and the circumstances that predisposed the girls in the study to GBV. At the same time the study aimed to establish prevention and control activities that could be used to reduce or eliminate GBV in the schools.

## **Method**

### *Research design*

This study employed a descriptive survey design. Best as cited by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) explains that a descriptive survey is concerned, as in the present case, with conditions or relationships that exist; practices that are extant; beliefs, points of view, attitudes that are held; processes that are ongoing and trends that are developing. It was deemed the most appropriate design for this sort of study because this study was concerned with events i.e. the processes by which girls suffered gender-based violence, the thoughts and beliefs of school authorities, parents and the girls

themselves. The study dealt with individuals and groups of individuals in institutions which were to be compared, classified, analysed and interpreted (Cohen et al., 2007).

The descriptive survey was cross-sectional meaning that the study was carried out at a particular point in time. This meant that the findings presented in this study were valid only for that point in time and not any other in the past or in the future (Gorard, 2001).

#### *Sample and sampling procedure*

The sample was made up of 350 girls from four high schools with 100 girls from each of three schools and fifty girls from the fourth school. Systematic random sampling was employed with every third girl selected from lists of girls (in the different age groups) that were provided in the schools. Random sampling was used so that each girl on the lists had the same chance of being selected and so that results could be generalised to the population from which the sample had been abstracted (Singh, 2006).

#### *Instrumentation*

A questionnaire was used in this study. The questionnaire requested data on age of the respondents and the type of gender-based violence which the participants had experienced. The questionnaire also solicited data on the nature of the perpetrators of GBV, where the GBV occurred, whether or not it was reported and to whom. Finally the questionnaire requested participants to make recommendation on how GBV in schools could be reduced or eliminated.

#### *Data collection procedures*

The lead researcher approached the Provincial Education Director in Mutare to obtain clearance to carry out the study in the named schools. Once the clearance had been obtained, the researchers visited the sites that had been selected for the study. At those sites, the researchers discussed the study with the heads of the schools and other members in school management. The researchers requested the cooperation of school authorities for the study to go ahead.

### **Results and discussion**

This study sought to provide answers on questions to do with the nature of GBV suffered by the high school girls, the perpetrators of that violence, sites where the GBV occurred and practices which predisposed the girls to GBV. Recommended actions for reducing or eliminating GBV were also investigated. The data are presented,

analysed and interpreted in line with the questions above against a questionnaire return rate of 82 for School A, 74 for School B, 43 for School C and 55 for School D.

**Table 1**

*Nature of Gender-Based Violence Reported by High School Girls by School Type*

Nature of GBV	Type of high school				Total	Percent
	Rural Mission (84)	Rural Govt Day (74)	Rural Day (43)	Urban Mission (55)		
Beating	23	15	14	8	60	20
Bullying	24	6	14	15	59	20
Chores at Teachers' houses	2	5	25	9	41	14
Belittling	9	5	16	7	37	13
Bad touch	5	11	13	5	34	11
Food snatching	15	0	14	3	32	11
Baby minding	3	4	10	4	21	7
Sexual advances	1	3	6	2	12	4
<b>Totals</b>	82	49	112	53	296	100

Table 1 reveals that in descending order the nature of GBV suffered by high school girls were beating and bullying, chores at teachers' houses, belittling, bad touch, food snatching, baby minding and sexual advances. The results in Table 1 confirm findings in previous studies. For instance, Leach et al. (2003) found that eighty-percent of the girls in studies in Africa had been beaten by at least one teacher. Rancourt (2013) also found a whole range of physical violence from moderate acts of aggression to the use of weapons such as whips, canes and other objects. One form of gendered violence was the use of girls in carrying out chores at teachers houses as was common in rural day schools (in this study). The present study found low levels of sexual advances on

girls (12%) but other studies found much higher percentages such as twenty percent girls receiving direct requests for sex in Botswana (Rossetti, 2001). Bad touch has also been extensively confirmed in previous studies. For instance, Bisika, Ntata and Konyani (2009) report a 2004 study in Malawi where nearly half the girls in the study had been touched on the breasts, butt or genitals without their permission. Although there is weak evidence for direct sexual violence (advances), some previous studies have established higher prevalence of more serious GBV in the form of attempted or consummated rape (Leach et al., 2014; Parkes & Heslop, 2011). Another example is the report by Prinsloo (2006) that 30% of South African school girls reported being raped in and around their schools. In the same country 17% of school-going adolescent girls had been raped at school (Geldenhuys, 2011).

**Table 2**

*Perpetrator of Gender-Based Violence on High School Girls*

Perpetrator	Type of High School				Total	Per cent
	Rural Mission	Rural Govt.	Rural Day	Urban Mission		
Male teacher	53	96	38	40	227	39
Male peers (classmate and schoolmate)	38	56	43	29	166	28
Male stranger	41	34	23	16	114	20
Male relative (including brother and uncle).	12	43	13	6	74	13

**100**

Table 2 shows four sets of perpetrators of GBV on school girls in high schools. In decreasing order, these were the male teacher (39%), the male peers (classmate and schoolmate) (28%), the male stranger (20%) and the male relative (13%). This result confirms the result arrived at by WHO (2012) that male teachers, instead of protecting schoolgirls from violation, actually inflicted gender-based violence on them. This same result had been arrived at by Rossetti (2001) in Botswana.

The joint participation of male teachers and male peers in directing gender-based violence on school girls which is clear from the present findings confirms the previous findings of Hallam (1994) in Ecuador which were in turn confirmed through multi-country studies (World Bank, 2002). In the same way, the present study, in finding main perpetrators of GBV as male teachers, male peers and male ‘strangers’, confirms the results of previous studies in Zimbabwe by Leach et al. (2000) and Chireshe and Chireshe (2009). Studies in Ghana, Kenya and Mozambique found that teachers, far from using their authority to protect girls in schools, actually took advantage of the girls to obtain sexual favours (Parkes & Heslop, 2011). Other male adults took advantage of their stronger resource base to violate school girls. For instance, there are chilling reports of girls being violated very seriously by operators of public transport and their assistants (Academy for Educational Development, 2009) and some took advantage of their positions of trust in the home/village (Bisika et al., 2009) in Malawi. These researchers also found that male teachers, male peers and other older adults were the main perpetrators of gender-based violence on school girls.

**Table 3**

*Sites Where Gender-Based Violence on School Girls Occurs*

Site where gender-based violence on high school girls occurred	f	%
1. Within the schools*	398	54
2. On the way to and from school	234	32
3. At home	99	14
Total	731	100

\* Different sites within the school were grouped under ‘within the school’.

Table 3 shows that an overwhelming majority of the responses indicated that gender-based violence occurred within the school. The findings here concur with those of Rossetti (2001) in Botswana and Naker (2005) in Uganda which revealed that most of the gender-based violence occurred in different parts of the schools. All kinds of places in the school have been identified as sites for sexual violation of girls: toilets, empty classrooms, corridors, bus stops and generally along the way from home to school and from the school home, have been found to be potential sites for gender-based violence (USAID, 2008; Plan International, 2011). A sizeable number of girls



also reported that GBV occurred on the way to school. This finding is consistent with that of Academic Educational Development (2009) in Tanzania where girls were gender-violated extensively by public transport operators and other male persons whom the girls came in contact with on their way to and from school. Bisika et al. (2009) found that half the violations of girls were in the school, thirty-five percent were at home and sixteen percent were on the way to and from school as well as in public transport. That there is any gender-violation in the locality and homes of the school girls suggests that there is no place where the school girls are completely safe (Leach et al., 2003).

**Table 4**

*Conditions Predisposing High School Girls to Gender-Based Violence: Views of Participants*

Practices/Conditions	Type of high school				Total
	Rural Mission	Rural Govt.	Rural Day	Urban Mission	
<b>Taking intoxicants:</b>					
Drugs	13	25	15	14	67
Alcohol	16	21	12	11	60
Glue	1	13	2	3	19
Love affairs	18	26	25	17	76
Watching pornography	14	24	23	14	65
Wearing provocative clothes	6	25	24	8	63
Totals	68	134	101	67	350

Table 4 reveals that the leading factor predisposing girls to the risk of gender violence is the taking of intoxicants of some kind by the perpetrators. The other factors are love affairs, watching pornography as well as wearing so-called ‘provocative clothes’. This study confirms the same factors that have been found in previous studies. Tharp et al. (2013) as well as Jewkes et al. (2002) found in worldwide studies that some of the leading risk factors for abuse were alcohol and drug abuse, exposure to sexually

explicit media and hostility to women, hyper-masculinity and adherence to traditional gender role norms. What was not mentioned by the respondents were other factors beyond the individual factors above. Perhaps, the respondents being of a young age were not primed to such factors as relationship factors, community factors and society-level factors (Tharp et al., 2013; Jewkes et al., 2002).

**Table 5**

*Actions Taken by School Girls after Experiencing Gender-Based Violence*

Action	F	%
Discussing gender-based violence at secular and church youth groups	90	29
Reporting to parents and relatives	86	28
Reporting to teachers	57	19
Reporting to classmates/peers	41	13
Reporting to church members	26	8
Reporting to organisations that deal with child welfare and protection	7	2
Total	307	100

Table 5 shows the various actions taken by high school girls after experiencing gender-based violence. The most-mentioned actions are discussions of gender-based violence at secular and church youth groups as well as reporting to parents and relatives. Some of the findings here are comparable to the previous findings of Hill and Kearn (2011) which revealed that 27% of girls that were harassed reported to parents and relatives. In that study more GBV victims (19%) reported to teachers. A startling finding in the study of Hill and Kearn was that over half the girls in the sample reported that they did not make any report or take any action when they were gender-violated. Although the result here is different, it is also possible that the exact extent of GBV is underreported for fear of reprisals by teachers who may be guilty of that offence.

*Suggestions made by respondents to parents and school authorities*

The respondents suggested that parents should be close to their daughters and discuss issues to do with gender-based violence and to encourage their daughters to report any gender-based violence on themselves and their colleagues. Respondents also suggested that parents could help matters by accompanying their daughters to school at the beginning of term and accompanying them back home at the end of term if they were in boarding school. Parents were also encouraged to discuss matters of girls' safety with school administration and teachers. In addition parents were urged to provide basic necessities to their children so that the children were not gender-violated through need to obtain those necessities.

To school authorities, respondents suggested that girls that were straying out of bounds to teachers' houses should be severely punished. It was also suggested that there should be punishment for students who gender-violated other students. Suggestions were also made on advising girls on proper ways of dressing so that their attire did not seem 'provocative'. School authorities were also encouraged to invite organisations that would carry out awareness campaigns on gender-based violence among students in schools. This is in line with Chireshe and Chireshe's (2009) recommendation that schools initiate normative re-education through awareness campaigns to combat sexual harassment. Also suggested was the employment of personnel that were in charge of girls' safety and who would, among other things, encourage girls to protect themselves by moving around in groups and not as single individuals.

## **Conclusion**

From the findings of this study, it may be concluded that a considerable number of the respondents reported having suffered from gender-based violence. This suggests the presence of such violations in considerable numbers in other schools in Zimbabwe within and outside Manicaland. It may also be concluded that the school premises and their environs, the way to and from school and the home itself are all sites where school girls are gender violated. There are no safe havens for the school girls. It is also concluded that girls are gender violated overwhelmingly by males be they who may be well-known to them or who may initially be strangers. No report of gender violation by females was mentioned. This was consistent with previous researches in Zimbabwe. The fourth conclusion is that relatively few reports of gender violation were made directly to the school authorities.

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made. There is urgent need for interventions to protect girls in high schools particularly against their own male teachers, male peers and male ‘strangers’. Because the teacher and the peers are the leading perpetrators, there is need for school specific programmes that aim at changing the behaviour of students towards school girls. From the participants’ own suggestions, it is necessary to address programmes towards all stakeholders— teachers, school managers, parents, students and some organisations such as welfare organisations and churches. There is also need for more vigorous policy implementation and monitoring considering that beating and bullying are proscribed in Zimbabwe but continue to be widely practised..

Most gender-based violence occurs in the schools. School managements need to be trained to be more proactive, perhaps by implementing measures that prevent gender-based violence and not just dealing with gender-based violence after it has occurred.

The present study was small by all measures and produced results that are difficult to generalise, for the small size of both the sample of the schools and that of the participants. No study of gender violation in schools is complete without including gender violation of boys which is clearly under-researched in Zimbabwe.

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## **Perceptions of school heads and teachers on the effectiveness of the Basic Education Assistance Module in Mwenezi District, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe**

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### **Abstract**

*This study sought to establish the perceptions of school heads and teachers on the effectiveness of Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) at primary school level in Mwenezi District of Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe. A qualitative research approach which incorporated the descriptive survey design was used. A purposive sampling technique was used to come up with a sample of five school heads and thirty teachers. Narratives, tables, graphs and pie charts were used to present and analyse the data collected through questionnaires, interviews and document analysis. The study revealed that most school heads and teachers viewed BEAM as largely beneficial to Orphan and Vulnerable Children (OVCs) since it helped quite a large number of them to get access to basic education. However, the respondents viewed BEAM as largely of little value in curbing absenteeism rates among orphans and vulnerable children. Therefore the researchers concluded that generally the school dropout rate among the OVCs was still high, meaning to say BEAM was failing to keep them in the system till they complete primary education. Recommendations were made for schools to introduce school feeding programmes, increase counselling programmes in schools and ensure the compulsory learning of practical subjects in schools to equip OVCs with life skills.*

**Key words:** Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM); Orphan and Vulnerable Children (OVCs); BEAM beneficiaries; orphan-hood.

### **Introduction**

Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) is a Zimbabwean government initiative introduced in January 2001 to try to help the disadvantaged children financially in both urban and rural areas to ensure that all children were accorded the right to basic education as enshrined in article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the rights of children (UNICEF, 2012). BEAM Evaluation Report (2012) states that out of 2.8 million primary school going age children, an estimated 28% of them need assistance.

Research studies on BEAM have been done before the current study. Training and Research Support Centre (TARSC) and Zimbabwe Teachers' Association (ZIMTA) (2012) carried out an evaluation in all provinces in Zimbabwe to see whether the correct beneficiaries were benefitting as laid out in the BEAM guidelines. The other study by UNICEF (2012) was meant to evaluate the financial accountability of the BEAM fund. While these studies were valuable in as much as they provided detailed information about administration of BEAM funds and the programme in general, little has been done to date to assess the views of stakeholders like school heads and teachers on whether the programme is achieving its core objectives, which are, boosting school enrolment, providing educational access to the vulnerable groups and also keeping disadvantaged children in the classroom.

In USA and South Africa, millions of dollars and rand respectively are pumped out by the governments to assist the vulnerable adults who are not productive because they would have left school early thereby compromising the quality of life of the other citizens (Achieve, 2006; Christensen & Thurlow, 2004). In Zimbabwe, these school drop-outs form bulk of those stealing in the streets and illegally crossing borders to neighbouring countries (TARSC & ZIMTA, 2012). From the above narration, there is clear evidence that completion rate in schools is an international problem hence the need to find out the perceptions of heads and teachers who implement BEAM on the effectiveness of the programme so that results of the study will subsequently form the basis of decisions when implementing other programmes in the future.

The Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) pandemic has increased the number of children exposed to orphan-hood and vulnerability across the whole world (Osborn, 2007). Osborn further states that Governments and donor agencies world over have collectively strategized to ensure that children affected by the disease get assistance especially with respect to access to education. BEAM is one strategy the Zimbabwean Government has mooted as a way to help orphans and vulnerable children to have access to basic education. It is against such revelations that we developed an interest to seek perceptions of school heads and teachers in their capacity as implementers of the BEAM programme.

United Kingdom Working Group on education and HIV/AIDS comment that the educational needs of children born with HIV have been ignored the world over possibly because they are seen as children without a future (Boler & Carroll, 2003) and yet education is seen as an investment for the future. A study conducted by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) found that children of HIV infected parents experience serious discrimination where 35% of them are denied basic amenities like education and 17% forced to take up petty jobs to augment their income (Majumdar, 2003). Such statistics that show the severity of the challenges faced by orphans and vulnerable

children can hardly be ignored hence the need for the current study on the views of school heads and teachers on the effectiveness of BEAM on orphans and other vulnerable children.

India gives us a lot of lessons which we can use when evaluating the effectiveness of educational interventions like BEAM. In India, HIV positive children have been denied entrance to schools and communities have withdrawn their children knowing HIV positive children are attending the same schools (Page, 2007). Human Rights Watch (2004) reports that in India AIDS orphans often experience poverty, illiteracy, child labour, child prostitution and police brutality. Such stigma and discrimination in schools contravene the underlying principles of Education for All (EFA) that call for universal primary education. In view of all this, one can say denying a child access to education is more or less denying that child's social development.

Whilst in India OVCs fail to enrol in schools due to stigmatisation and discrimination, in Ethiopia the problem has to do with failure to provide school necessities like uniforms and books and out of an estimated 4.6 million orphaned children in Ethiopia, 85% do not attend school (Miller, 2008). According to the UN Fund – Ethiopia (2007) in Miller (2008), children in Ethiopia are supposed to pay a yearly fee to enrol in public schools. Powell (2002) asserts that extended families that are predominant in Ethiopia see school fees as a major factor in deciding not to take additional children who are orphaned. The issue of extended families that characterizes Ethiopia's population is similar to Zimbabwe in general. Noting the challenges that OVCs face, it is necessary that any programme meant to benefit them be scientifically evaluated so as to improve its effectiveness hence the study.

The other approach to attract OVCs in schools done in well developed countries like U SA, Canada, Britain, Germany, France among others is school feeding (Boler & Carroll, 2003). School feeding helps OVCs to concentrate on their work at school as well as viewing themselves as equals to other children. The government of Lesotho has regularized the payment of fees in schools to ensure that OVCs get access to education by launching a Child Grant Programme that provides a regular and unconditional quarterly payment of \$38.00 to orphans and other vulnerable children (Barbadoro, 2009). The programme will serve not only to mitigate the impact of the HIV and AIDS but to break the cycle of poverty in which these neediest children are trapped (Khabele, 2012). The Lesotho initiative is similar to the BEAM programme in that funds are availed by the government. However, the former had regularized the programme making it more permanent and predictable. This arrangement could be behind other motivational factors that help Lesotho sustain high rate of OVCs in schools. Though the BEAM program is an initiative at higher government level it is implemented in schools. The current study therefore sought perceptions of school

heads and teachers on the effectiveness of the programme. The views of these respondents are quite important since they are the ones who work and interact with the BEAM beneficiaries on daily basis hence better positioned to know the programme's weaknesses and strengths.

#### *Research questions*

1. What are the school heads and teachers' views on the impact of BEAM on class enrolments?
2. What are the challenges of BEAM in facilitating educational access to OVCs?
3. What are the school heads and teachers' views on the impact of BEAM in sustaining completion rate?
4. What are the school heads and teachers' views of BEAM on dropout rates among OVCs?
5. What are the school heads and teachers' responses on the trend of OVCs on school attendance?

### **Method**

#### *Research design*

The descriptive survey design was used to get perceptions of school heads and teachers on the effectiveness of the BEAM programme. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) believe that a survey design facilitates the gathering of informative and largely credible data.

#### *Sample and sampling procedures*

The researchers used purposive stratified random sampling technique to draw the sample. Fraenkel and Wallen (2000, p.108) say "Stratified random sampling is a process in which certain sub topics or strata are selected for the sample in the same proportion as they exist in the population." In the current study, five school heads and thirty teachers teaching different grades made the selected sample. Of this sample twenty were females and fifteen were males. These figures were proportional to the distribution of the sexes in the population.

#### *Instrumentation*

Due to the limitation of relying on one source of information when collecting data triangulation was used to validate data collected for qualitative analysis through



different methods (Gray, 2004; Chinomona, 2013). For this study, various instruments developed from literature review were administered to different groups of respondents. One interview schedule was administered for school heads. These respondents were invited for interviews instead of being given questionnaires because of their busy schedule. Also there was need for clarification on issues that concerned BEAM beneficiaries hence the appropriateness of interviews for them. The other instrument was a questionnaire for school teachers which gave them room for free expression since their opinions were different because of the class levels they taught. Record analysis was also done in order to get the performance and school attendance trends of the OVCs. Response rate for all the instruments was 100% which made the results more valid.

#### *Ethical considerations*

Sullivan (1999) refers to ethics as something to do with what is proper or improper behaviour with moral duty and obligation. Basically ethical research avoids violating the rights of the people being studied or harming them in any fashion. Three major aspects cited by researchers as crucial to the keeping of the rightful ethical code relate to privacy, confidentiality and informed consent (Gill & Johnson, 1991). Gray (2004) suggests that respondents should be given an informed consent form before they participate. For this study, the researchers sought consent from education officials inclusive of Provincial Education Director Masvingo, school heads as well as from the participants themselves. Schools heads (e.g. H1) and teachers (e.g. T1) were given codes in the discussion. None of the participants were asked to identify themselves by names.

#### *Data collection procedure and analysis*

Questionnaires were distributed to sampled members through heads of schools. The respondents were asked to complete the questionnaires and return them to the school heads. The researchers held face to face interviews with the school heads at their particular schools and each session took about ten to fifteen minutes. The researchers also moved from one school to the other analysing documents, namely ED46 forms and class attendance registers to assess absenteeism, dropout and completion rate trends among OVCs. The collected data were presented on tables, pie-charts and graphs. The experiences and perceptions of the participants were described in words.

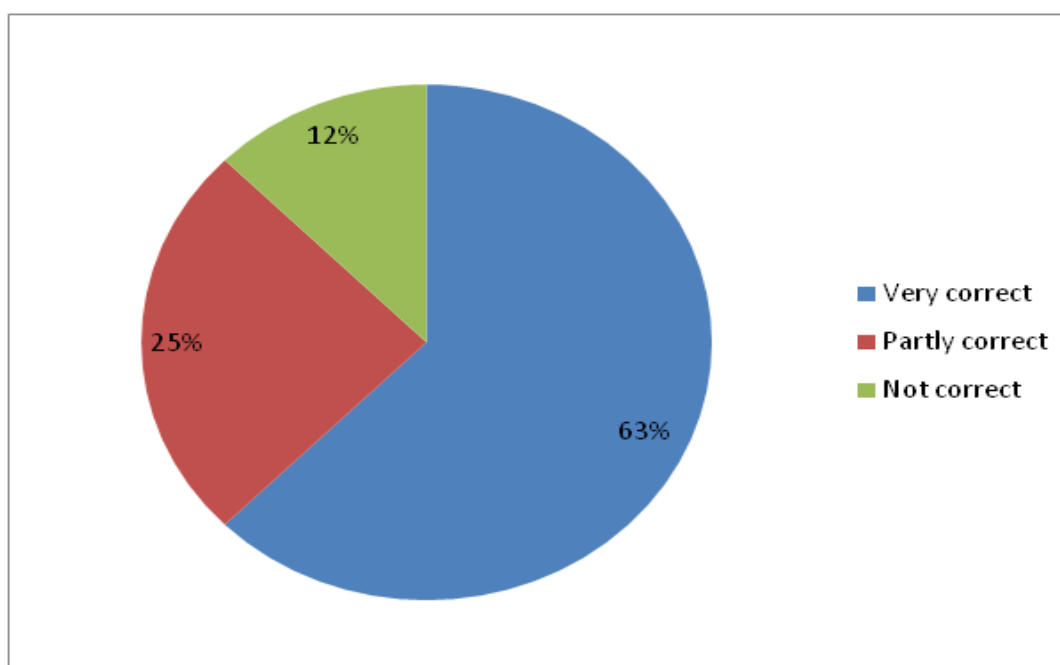
## Findings and discussion

This study investigated the perceptions of school heads and teachers on how the BEAM programme has helped OVCs to access basic education as well as how the programme has helped to sustain completion rate among OVCs at primary school level. Findings are presented in tables, graphs and narratives.

*To what extent has the BEAM programme helped orphans and vulnerable children to have access to education at primary school level?*

Thirty teachers and five school heads responded to this question through questionnaire and interviews respectively. ED 46 forms of the schools for the three years ending December 2015 were used to gather data too. Class registers of the teachers who responded to the questionnaire were analysed as well to answer the same question.

*What are the teachers' views on the impact of BEAM on class enrolments? N=30*  
*The BEAM programme has helped OVCs to enrol in large numbers*



Nineteen (63%) said it was very correct to say that BEAM has helped increase OVCs enrolment in their classes. ED46 forms also showed between 60% and 78% OVCs in 2014 in the identified classes. Seven (25%) said it was partly correct that BEAM has helped increase enrolment in their classes. Confirmations by teachers that there were so many OVCs being assisted by BEAM concurred with results of a study by TARSC

and ZIMTA in 2011 in Zimbabwe (TARSC&ZIMTA, 2012). UNICEF (2009) also notes that OVCs problems were eminent the world over and most particularly so in the developing world like Zimbabwe hence the confirmation by statistics in the current study. Teachers' views were also echoed by school heads.

Three (60%) heads said that 75% of their total enrolments were OVCs. These figures sounded too high for the researchers and prompted further probing to find the underlying reasons. All heads attributed the high figures to HIV/AIDS which they said had claimed many lives in the province leaving children without parents. I had this to say:

*In my view, the depreciation of the value of the South African Rand is worsening challenges faced by OVCs in that most OVCs' guardians in the form of brothers and sisters who had crossed to South Africa were no longer sending money home like they used to do. As a result these OVCs are now fending for themselves from food to school materials.*

Though the school heads noted the severity of the problems of OVCs, they all revealed that their schools did not have any educational policy for OVCs independent of guidelines given by the government in such programmes as BEAM or Zimbabwe Accelerated Learning Programme (ZALP). They all indicated that they prioritised degree of vulnerability when extending donor or government assistance to the disadvantaged children like OVCs. According to all the school heads, BEAM beneficiaries were ranked in the following order: double orphans, single orphans, maternal orphans, paternal orphans, disabled children whose parent(s) were disabled and children of the over aged parents and the terminally ill. For all schools, it was the responsibility of BEAM Committees that comprised at least one member from each village to select the beneficiaries. Evidence supplied by the all the heads pointed to some order in the selection of BEAM beneficiaries as indicated by TARSC and ZIMTA (2012) assessment.

*What are the challenges of BEAM in facilitating educational access to OVCs?*

Four (13%) teachers revealed that it was not correct to say that BEAM has led to the increase in enrolments. The respondents confirmed that there were no BEAM beneficiaries in their classes. This was so despite the fact that there were so many OVCs not attending school due to variety of challenges ranging from unavailability of school levies to education on the importance of schooling as was highlighted by T3:

*I don't have any student being assisted by BEAM and I feel this to be very unfair since a number of my students who qualify to benefit from this*

*intervention are sent home for school fees every term and some of them will work in other people's fields in order to get money for their fees. While they do that they lose out on lessons eventually leading to their poor performance.*

Two (40%) heads also concurred with the teachers' views and pointed out that the BEAM funds were not sufficient to cater for the growing number of OVCs. Stressing the importance and need to help the OVCs enrol in large numbers, H1 suggested that the government needed to introduce OVCs levy in addition to AIDS levy to companies and workers so that BEAM funds will accommodate all OVCs and to expedite inflow of the funds into schools. Such sentiments pointed to the fact raised by some teachers earlier that BEAM was not helping much to enrol all the deserving OVCs. TARSC and ZIMTA (2011) also comment that the BEAM programme has generally been underfunded from treasury since its inception as a result of the country's constrained fiscal space. The school heads and teachers also viewed BEAM as insensitive to all groups of children. H3 said that the programme was not helping children with deformities since it could not supply them with equipment that could assist them in learning such as wheel chairs, hearing impairment devices among others hence ineffective in according all deserving children educational access. Therefore the researchers feel that the programme should consider all the educational needs of the targeted children.

*What are the teachers' views on the impact of BEAM in sustaining completion rate?*

Four (13%) teachers confirmed that the BEAM programme has helped improve completion rate among OVCs. This view again tallied with three of the class registers analysed where the researchers noted that OVCs receiving BEAM assistance were not among the school dropouts. It was difficult though to link the class registers to the four respondents since the questionnaire was filled confidentially. The participants commented that provision of BEAM funds enabled the OVCs to be just like any other pupils in terms of levies payments hence contributing at least to some extent in keeping the OVCs in class. The participants' views were largely similar to observations made by school heads.

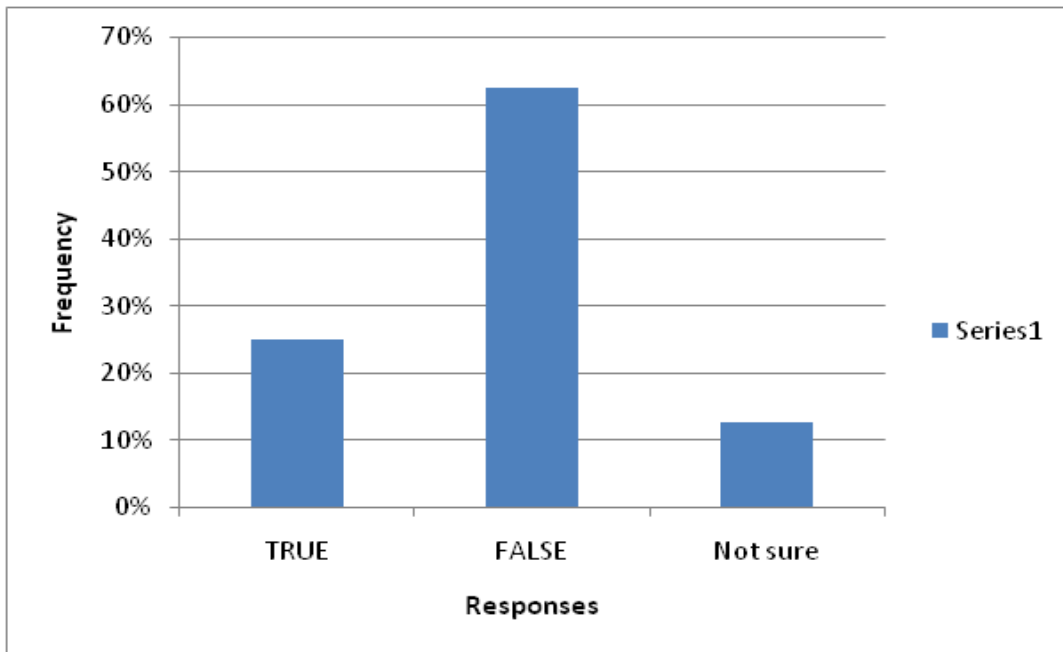
All the school heads revealed that dropouts among OVCs were very high. They all however, agreed that BEAM beneficiaries were not dropping out of school in large numbers. When pressed to explain the discrepancy between data as reflected by ED46 forms and class attendance registers, they said that most OVCs dropouts were not covered by the BEAM facility. The school heads explained that frequent changes in the BEAM beneficiary registers where new names were frequently entered during the course of the school terms were due to some OVCs transferring to other schools and not dropping out. Upon scrutinizing some memoranda of some class registers, the

researchers noted that transfers among OVCs were very high and indicated little planning since the majority of them were leaving even in the middle of the term. When probed to explain the major possible reasons behind such transfers, H2 puts it this way;

*It's a pity that every other relative wants to take care of these children, some claim to be more caring than others so they take them to their places. However, after a term or so you see the children returning. The tales they give are horrible. Some relatives simply hire them as sources of manual labour especially in the resettlement areas during the rainy season.*

The heads' observations are echoed by Jensen (2002) who also posits that poor families are ever moving especially in anticipation of greener pastures. Children's education is thus compromised. In the case of OVCs, the situation is worse since they would also be involved in domestic work.

*What are the teachers' views of BEAM on dropout rates among OVCs?*



Nineteen (63%) teachers disputed the fact that completion rates have improved among OVCs as a result of the influence of the BEAM programme. The respondents revealed that most of the dropouts in their classes were OVCs. T6 said with concern that:

*I had eight OVCs in my class who were supported educationally by BEAM but I am left with only four; meaning to say four dropped out because of other material educational requirements. Therefore besides school fees I feel that BEAM should also cater for other educational needs.*

Analysis of the class teachers' registers concurred with the teachers' views. Seventy percent of the dropouts in the classes observed were BEAM beneficiaries. The propensity of OVCs dropping out of school as revealed in the current study mirrors a related study in Uganda where it was noted that when an orphan has lost one of his or her parents, he or she has only 50% chance to access school and only 10% when it is both parents (UNICEF, 2012).

Twenty six (88%) of the teachers were opposed to the fact that the BEAM facility was enough to motivate OVCs to complete their primary education in their respective classes. The respondents listed several factors which they perceived as pertinent in motivating school pupils in education. Some of the factors listed were love from parents, learning materials and appropriate school clothing. Evidence from ED46 forms and class registers also pointed to the fact that dropouts were high among BEAM beneficiaries. The participants also alluded to the fact that BEAM was de-motivating the recipients since they were derogated upon by other children or even by some parents. In the same vein, Kalaba (2010) notes in a study in Zambia that assistance to vulnerable children needed to be handled professionally otherwise the children could be affected rendering the noble idea useless especially when the beneficiaries got names associated with the assistance they received.

In the interviews carried out with five school heads, all of them identified reasons for dropping out of school by OVCs as mainly to do with lack of appropriate school clothing and stationery. They said that OVCs were saying they could not afford to buy books, pens and other stationery needed in the learning process hence forced to drop out of school. These sentiments were echoed by teachers too thus vindicating the weakness of BEAM since the programme does not provide such materials which are pertinent in the education of children. Class attendance registers analysed showed that over 75% of the school dropouts did so in the second term. Probed further, the school heads revealed that most OVCs were forced out of school by cold weather since most of them could be without appropriate jerseys let alone school shoes. Whilst clothing and stationery challenges were given by the teachers as the major reasons for dropping out of school, school head H4 stated that:

*At our school, we have cases of sexual abuse of OVCs that had led to the abused girls dropping out of school. As I speak, one senior civil servant has been taken for questioning by law enforcement agents after one of our Grade*

*6 pupil who happens to be a head of the family where she lived with other minor siblings was sexually abused and the abuse was discovered at the local clinic when the girl fell sick due to sexual infection. What pains most is that people who are supposed to protect the vulnerable children are the ones abusing them.*

A Zimbabwe Ministry of Health and Child Welfare survey of 2000 revealed that some children were dying due to child abuse and neglect. Furthermore two heads above blamed some guardians for advising OVCs to drop out of school to look after other people's cattle so that they would be rewarded with a beast at the end of each year.

Generally the school heads blamed communities for employing OVCs as domestic workers as one of the reasons that drove them out of the school system in anticipation of better life chances in the employment arena. Tolerance of early marriages by members of some Christian churches that are dominant in the province was another reason given as propelling rising dropout rates among OVCs.

The other major reason given was lack of parental care and control. All the school heads interviewed revealed that in the communities, most OVCs came from child-headed homes, a scenario which provided too much freedom in terms of their conduct. Grandparents who took care of some of the OVCs were illiterate themselves and were unable to positively influence the children, leading the latter to drop whenever they felt they needed to do so. In Rwanda under the Nkundabana programme, OVCs were not solely assisted by guardians but by trained specialists who could advise them against dropping out of school (World Bank, 2006). The Rwanda initiative could help if adopted and implemented in Zimbabwe.

The school heads further contended that OVCs needed everybody's support if they were to stay in school. Three (60%) of them suggested that communities needed to pull resources together and establish community orphanages. Probed further to explain how these orphanages would work and reduce dropout rates, H2 explained that:

*Children would be easier to monitor when they were housed together. It will be easier also to counsel the OVCs at the same level as schools thereby helping them to stay in school longer. One would suggest that kraal heads needed to be empowered by law to prosecute those who employed school children.*

The heads also blamed early marriages and suggested that communities needed to be vocal against the system and not wait for welfare organisations to do the job they should do themselves. By so doing, OVCs would be discouraged from any attempts to drop out of school since they would not find anybody sympathizing with them, the respondents argued. All the school heads also suggested that schools needed to teach



practical subjects such as Agriculture, Building, Home Economics, Carpentry among others so that all children inclusive of OVCs would acquire skills pertinent in their day to day life activities. They said that this would help the OVCs see the value of education from the angle of self-sustenance than from the angle of finding employment hence motivate them to stay longer in school as they would want to develop more sophisticated skills. This view mirrors what happens in Mozambique where orphaned and vulnerable children receive farming and life skills training through the Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (Osborn, 2007).

Twenty five (75%) teachers confirmed that absenteeism was high among OVCs. Five (25%) teachers said that OVCs' school attendance was average. These revelations indicated that absenteeism was a challenge among OVCs. Class attendance registers analysed showed that absenteeism among OVCs was high irrespective of whether they were receiving BEAM assistance or not. The teachers commended that lack of parental control, illness; hunger and child labour were the major reasons behind most OVCs absenteeism. This shows that reasons behind pupil absenteeism were largely nothing to do with payment of fees or levies. One would also say that the BEAM programme has failed to motivate OVCs into attending schools on daily basis in Masvingo Province. Teachers' responses mirrored what was observed in the attendance registers analysed. School heads interviewed also attributed high absenteeism rates among OVCs to malnutrition and child labour. The heads reiterated that OVCs were overburdened at home since they were responsible for ensuring that ill parents or guardians were looked after. Some chores listed were fetching water, chopping firewood, weeding, watering their neighbours' gardens among other duties. The results from the current study mirrored what was observed in Ethiopia that malnutrition, child labour and stigmatisation were behind the reasons for OVCs absenteeism from school (Miller, 2008).

Evidence given by all the teachers indicated that OVCs were largely contributing to high failure rate in the schools because of absenteeism. They alluded to the fact that absentees had more chances of missing lessons than regular school comers hence the former's higher chances of failing. From this analysis, one would regard OVCs absenteeism as a threat to teacher motivation hence needed redress. The teachers' observations that OVCs absenteeism was largely caused by lack of parental control was noted too in a study in South Africa where it was concluded that lack of parental guidance reduced educational performances (Manomano & Ndonga, 2014).

All the school heads also said that absenteeism among OVCs was high in the schools. The participants revealed that in their schools, as much as ninety percent of the OVCs would be away for between fifty and eighty percent of school days in a term. They also revealed too that most OVCs were absenting themselves from school on Fridays

and Mondays. Probed to explain what they thought were the reasons behind such trends, three (60%) respondents said that most OVCs were heading families so they could extend weekends without anybody controlling them. All the heads agreed that since most OVCs did a lot of manual labour to sustain themselves, they would be tired especially on Monday hence high absenteeism tendencies on that particular day. The school heads' observations were also collaborated by class attendance registers that showed high absenteeism trends among OVCs especially on Mondays and Fridays as well. Most absenteeism trends were recorded in Term One and Term Two. The commitments of OVCs that led to absenteeism seemed to be similar to what happens elsewhere. For example in Tanzania and Uganda, Yaro and Dougnon (2003) cite commitments such as taking care of the sick as major ones that force OVCs to drop out of school as well as to absent themselves.

All the heads gave four major reasons that they said were given by the OVCs themselves for their absenteeism. These were care giving obligations, sickness, attending crop fields and lack of stationery. The participants concurred that most OVCs were caregivers at home looking after their sick siblings, grandparents or even their parents. Again since most of them were family heads, they had to attend to their fields during ploughing and crop harvesting periods thereby finding them not attending school every day. The participants had observed that in a family where there were more than one OVC, these would take turns looking after the sick and going to school. They also said that health welfare facilities seemed not enough for the OVCs and implored the Social Welfare Department to do more in this area so as to ensure an improvement in the health of OVCs so that they would attend school.

The researchers probed the participants to add what the OVCs had said as major reasons contributing to the OVCs high absenteeism trends. The school heads added clothing and food challenges as other major reasons which the OVCs were shy to reveal. These challenges were the same as those given by the teachers.

All the heads also blamed communities for not being considerate of vulnerable families when setting community by-laws. Looking very disappointed H1 revealed that:

*In the communities, all families are expected to contribute some money at funerals and such obligatory arrangements are forcing OVCs to sell their labour to raise the money for their terminally ill guardians thereby absenting themselves from schools. Again, there are no social solidarity in the communities where the less fortunate could get assistance in terms of food and clothing let alone advice.*

One (20%) participant H4 noted that truant activities among OVCs were one of the problems that led them to absent themselves from school. Probed further to give truant activities done by OVCs, the participant revealed that some OVCs were abusing drugs. Similarly, Van Pelt (2009) notes that the majority of drug abuse cases involve addicted boys who come from homes where a woman is the only or the strongest influence and that the young ones do so under the guise of easing emotional problems. Vulnerability is at times being abused by the OVCs as they try to seek sympathy from everybody they meet in the community.

All the heads reiterated that communities should work together with the schools to monitor school attendance trends of OVCs. The participants suggested that members of the community needed to inform the school authorities whenever they noticed that children were not attending school. Schools also needed to contact community leaders, updating them about absenteeism trends of OVCs so that corrective measures could be taken quickly. They also suggested that guardians of OVCs needed to be trained in care giving skills so that they would appreciate the OVCs' school attendance requirements. The suggestions provided by the school heads also mirror those given by the United Kingdom Working Group on HIV/AIDS (Boler & Carroll, 2003)

## **Conclusion**

The study revealed that the BEAM programme has largely helped to increase access to education to some orphans and other vulnerable children in the area under study as perceived by school heads and teachers. However, the programme is insignificant to the community in that it leaves so many OVCs without assistance. Again, the programme has done little to improve welfare of disabled as OVCs since it does not provide such necessities as wheel chairs and hearing impairment gadgets that are vital in learning. The programme has once again failed to keep the children it had helped to enrol, in the school system. The study also revealed that absenteeism rates were still high among OVCs despite the existence of the BEAM programme. Moreover it has been noted that OVCs' attitudes towards education have not been improved by the BEAM programme. The respondents viewed the BEAM programme as largely positive in that it helped most OVCs to have basic education. However, their perceptions of the programme's ability to contain absenteeism rate were negative. The study should therefore be viewed as quite valuable because the views of school heads and teachers are very important as a basis upon which improvements to the programme could be made since they are the implementers of the programme.

Generally in the views of school heads and teachers, the programme remains ineffective in sustaining educational completion rate among OVCs in Mwenezi district in Masvingo province. Therefore this shows that a lot needs to be done on the organisation of the BEAM programme and its thrust country wide.

### **Recommendations**

The study recommends the following as ways of improving the BEAM programme in primary schools:

- Government may consider increasing monthly financial payments to guardians of OVCs and institute monitoring mechanisms to ensure that OVCs receive what they deserve.
- Schools may expedite learning of practical subjects starting from infant level, so that OVCs acquire skills that will help them for self-sustenance
- Community leadership should be trained in counselling and care giving skills so that communities will be taught appropriate procedures of coexisting with OVCs.
- School heads and teachers may need to consider counselling OVCs before resorting to punishing them whenever they view their behavior as wayward
- Schools need to educate guardians of OVCs on the importance of the education of the OVCs

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## **SECTION B: Discourses on culture, practices and heritage for sustainable development**

### **Notions of womanhood embedded within Shona religion and culture in light of their liberating potential**

Excellent Chireshe

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#### **Abstract**

*This paper, which is based on an analysis of literature, both oral and written, is a discourse on the Shona concept(s) of being a woman and the extent to which such conceptions are liberating to women. Liberating notions are those beliefs, teachings and practices that affirm the full humanity of women, protect their dignity, and present them as of worth socially, religiously, economically and politically. In this paper I contend that there are elements of Shona religion and culture that can be tapped to promote notions of womanhood that enhance the wellbeing of both men and women in the modern world, thereby promoting sustainable development.*

**Key words:** liberating notions, Shona religion, Shona womanhood, African Indigenous Religion, African culture

#### **Introduction**

This paper examines notions of womanhood embedded in African indigenous religion and culture (particularly, Shona). African Indigenous Religion (sometimes referred to as African Traditional Religion) is the “indigenous beliefs, ceremonies, rituals, customs and practices of Africans borne out of the expression and deep reflection of their forbearers” (Ebere, 2011, p. 481). These traditions evolved over many centuries. Today, not many Africans publicly profess their adherence to African Indigenous Religion. However, as Taiwo (2011) argues, indigenous African beliefs, practices and rituals survive and remain part of the life of individuals who now identify themselves with missionary religions such as Christianity and Islam.

Culture concerns the whole way of life of a society and therefore includes religion (Bourdillon, 1993; Rukuni, 2007). Culture is shared and learned through the process of socialisation. Culture provides a paradigm, a framework within which people think



and live (Bourdillon, 1993). It is, therefore, no wonder that people often cite culture to support actions which serve their interests. Culture consists of all the material and non-material aspects of human society. Material aspects include physical objects such as buildings, food, dress and non-material aspects include language, beliefs, customs, norms, values, folklore, skills, and family patterns. Culture includes religion. In this regard, where the term Shona culture is used, Shona religion is included.

The view that culture can serve as both a source of liberation and as a source of oppression (Frederiks, 2003; Moyo, 2004) has prompted this study. Liberating notions are those concepts/elements that are enshrined in cultural beliefs, teachings and practices that affirm the full humanity of women, protect the dignity of women, and present them as people of worth socially, religiously, economically and politically. Today African female scholars of a feminist orientation such as Mercy Amba Oduyoye and Musimbi Kanyoro, who engage in an analysis of culture (cultural hermeneutics) within the African context, criticise cultural practices that contribute to women's denigration and affirm those that contribute to the affirmation of the full humanity of women. Cultural hermeneutics combines an affirmation of culture and a critique of it (Kanyoro, 1999). It scrutinises culture with the intention of testing its liberative potential (Kanyoro, 1999). Cultural hermeneutics employs a hermeneutics of suspicion in challenging religious and cultural practices that contribute to women's marginalisation, exploitation and oppression. A hermeneutics of suspicion is an approach to analysing texts, beliefs, and customs that has as its starting point the assumption that such texts, beliefs and customs are not good (for women) and as such should be approached with caution (Fiorenza, 1995). From a feminist perspective, a hermeneutics of suspicion goes hand in glove with deconstruction which involves challenging entrenched beliefs and practices that promote women's oppression and deny them full humanity. I argue that while there are some Shona cultural beliefs and practices that bind and degrade women, there are others that liberate them, providing them with the opportunity to realise their full potential, thereby enabling them to fully participate in the lives of their communities. In doing so I am using the hermeneutics of suspicion as well as the hermeneutics of liberation as lenses to test the liberative potential of religious and cultural aspects of the Shona people of Zimbabwe.

While much has been written about womanhood in African culture pertaining to a number of African contexts, for example, Ghana (Oduyoye, 2006), Kenya (Kanyoro, 1999), Malawi (Phiri, 2004) and South Africa (Masenya, 2010), there is paucity of literature pertaining to womanhood within the Zimbabwean Shona cultural context. This study sought to fill this gap.

## **Method**

The study involved a review of literature on womanhood in light of Shona religion and culture. It also entailed an analysis of aspects of Shona culture, language included, in terms of the extent to which they contribute to women's liberation. The study took cognisance of the fact that culture is a two-edged sword that can be both oppressive and liberating.

This paper adopted a hermeneutics of liberation alongside a hermeneutics of suspicion. This involved identification of both liberative elements as well as dehumanising and degrading elements of Shona culture. A hermeneutics of suspicion involves challenging inhuman and domesticating customs and traditions (Oduyoye cited in Pui-lan, 1998). Writing on a similar subject, Chitando (2009, p. 83) asserts, "Where most male theologians valorise African culture, African women theologians employ the hermeneutics of suspicion to draw attention to the vulnerability of women." Thus, contrary to most male theologians who celebrate African culture and affirm its value when it comes to gender, African women theologians look at the same from a gender critical perspective and affirm those aspects that promote the full humanity of women and condemn those that contribute to the denigration and oppression of women. A hermeneutics of liberation allows women (and men) to identify and promote life-giving aspects in their culture (Oduyoye cited in Pui-lan, 1998). In Oduyoye's (2006, p. 23) view, liberating notions of womanhood are those elements that depict women as "persons-in-communion, not persons who "complete" the other." In this context, women and men interact as partners in a relationship "devoid of hierarchical relations and power-seeking" (Oduyoye, 2006, p. 23).

Scholarly views on the issues at stake are an integral part of the current discussion. The discussion considers terms that affirm the full humanity of women, role of women in religious beliefs and practices, as well as role of women in the family and the wider community. Some proverbs and taboos that have bearing on womanhood are also considered.

## **Discussion**

### *Notions of womanhood depicted by some Shona names*

There are some Shona terms that suggest that women, or more generally females, are fully human. The terms affirm the completeness of females as human beings. The terms are presented below.

The term *munhukadzi* (a female human being) which can be used to designate a girl child or an adult female shows that a female is primarily a human being because what comes first is *munhu* (human being) then the nature, *kadzi* (femaleness) which is secondary. *Mwanasikana* (a child who is female) testifies to the full personhood of the woman as a child. The term suggests that the sex of the child (represented by *sikana* in this case) is secondary to her being a child (*mwana*). A number of Shona personal names can be applied to both males and females in an interchangeable fashion (Makondo, 2013) and this testifies to the full humanity of women. Such personal names include Farai, Tatenda, Kudzai, Tinotenda, Rugare, and Mufaro, among others. The implication of the terms considered is that women, as children and adults, are no lesser beings than their male counterparts.

#### *Role of women in Shona religious beliefs and practices*

Women are important as custodians of African religion and culture (Jeenah, 2004; Moyo, 2004). This equally applies to women among the Shona. Women have also played important roles as spirit mediums and ritual specialists in various religious rituals (Bourdillon, 1998). Female traditional healers have enjoyed a high status in society, like their male counterparts. They serve as religious consultants as well as medical practitioners. In spite of modernity, Western education, and embracing of Christianity, many Shona people continue to consult traditional healers when faced with life puzzles or misfortunes (Chavunduka, 1994). The establishment, of an association for traditional healers in Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe National Traditional Healers' Association (ZINATHA) testifies to the recognition of traditional healers by the Government of Zimbabwe. According to Chavunduka (1994), the majority of traditional healers who registered with ZINATHA at its inception were women. That women serve as spirit mediums and traditional healers, wielding a lot of influence, underscores their full humanity and importance.

The full humanity of women can also be inferred from their association with the Mwari religion. At the Matonjeni shrine near Bulawayo, western Zimbabwe, there is a *mbonga-svikiro* (female spirit medium) who is the channel of communication of the hidden God at the shrine (Mukonyora, 1999). Mukonyora (1999) further states that virgin girls sometimes assist the *mbonga-svikiro* in looking after the shrine. The spokesperson of Mwari at Matonjeni is always a virgin woman, who speaks from a cave. This points to the centrality of women as priests in the Mwari religion.

In spite of their significant role in the ancestor belief system, women have generally occupied subordinate positions in most traditional Shona rituals (Mukonyora, 1999). While women do actively participate in the Shona Indigenous Religion, they largely play supportive roles or serve as 'stop-gap personnel' who carry out certain tasks like

sacrificing to ancestral spirits in the absence of appropriate male relatives or under spirit possession. In addition, there are restrictions on women's participation. These have to do with women's biological nature. The belief in the ritual impurity of menstruating women has led to the exclusion of females from certain rituals thereby marginalising them and rendering them second-class citizens (Pui-lan, 1998). As Fanusie (2006, p. 135) argues, "In spite of her physical and mental fitness, a woman is usually excluded for her menstrual blood, her breast milk, and even for her ability to bear children." The choice of virgins as priests at the Mwari shrine and the practice that beer for the rainmaking ceremony is brewed by women past childbearing age and young virgin girls regarded as 'clean' (Shoko, 2012) illustrate Fanusie's (2006) point. The need to serve Mwari as a perpetual virgin seems to suggest that motherhood is incompatible with priesthood. Thus, while women play important roles, they are not on par with their male counterparts due to limitations placed on them. In this regard, it can be noted that while women's participation in religion can be liberating, restrictions placed on them contribute to their 'unfreedom'. It is worth noting that while women face restrictions based on their sexuality, men conduct the rituals regardless of their sexual activities (Shoko, 2012). Although not all men are equally privileged, it is worth noting that they are generally more privileged than their female counterparts.

#### *Status of women in the wider community and the family*

##### *The public sphere*

Since the Shona society is hierarchical and patriarchal, male headship is taken for granted. In spite of social changes taking place in Shona society, male dominance and female subordination still prevail (Kethusegile, Kwaramba & Lopi, 2000; Townsend, 2008).

In the public sphere decision-making was traditionally the prerogative of men but sometimes women were consulted by their husbands in private. In this connection, a man who publicly asserted his decision-making capacity would consult his wife in private (Bourdillon, 1998). One can thus argue that Shona women have always been influential in decision-making but this influence was not legitimated. Women served and still continue to serve as 'those behind the scenes' when it comes to decision-making. Women's private influence in decision-making suggests that men do recognise their worth and their reasoning capacity, which is liberating to women. What is lacking is for society to make that contribution official.

Shona society still associates leadership and decision-making with men in spite of gender awareness campaigns and legal reforms aimed at achieving gender equality. Underscoring the ineffectiveness of legislation in addressing gender inequality, Bourdillon (1993, p. 58) has this to say: "While the formal authority of men over

women has been weakened by legislation which asserts the rights of women, the power of men over women is not weakened.” Social and economic factors continue to impede the full realisation of gender equality. Thus men, in collaboration with women, continue to appeal to culture and tradition to assert their authority, thereby keeping women at the periphery where they are vulnerable.

### *The private sphere*

#### *Marriage and kinship*

Upon marriage the bride leaves her parents and home to join the bridegroom’s family-group and she is expected to be subordinate, subservient, and faithful (Moyo, 2004; Nyanhongo, 2011; Shoko, 2012). However, the wife remains an alien (*mutorwa*) in her husband’s family on the ground that she was not born in that family, that is, she has no kinship ties with her husband’s family. Thus, as in Igbo society in Nigeria where a married woman stays as a perpetual stranger in her husband’s kin group (Ibewuiké, 2006); the Shona woman remains a stranger to her husband’s home no matter how long she has lived there. The designation of the wife as an alien (*mutorwa*) may justify her exclusion and marginalisation but at the same time affirms her independent personality and origin. For example, she may be referred to as MaMoyo, VaZimuto, VaChihera, VaMadhuku which points to her natal origin. MaMoyo designates that a woman comes from the Moyo totemic group; VaZimuto denotes that a woman comes from the Zimuto totemic group; VaChihera indicates that a woman is of the Hera totemic group; and VaMadhuku signifies that a woman comes from the Madhuku family. These names show that a woman is identified with people of her own blood.

The designation of a wife as a *mutorwa* may be liberating in a way. It could be an affirmation that a woman is an independent being who cannot just be absorbed into another family and so relinquish her identity. She maintains her identity and this could be perceived as liberating to her personhood, thereby affirming her full humanity. However, the consideration of a woman as a *mutorwa* can be a thorn in the flesh for a married woman as it entails inability to access the full rights accorded to those who belong. Thus it often serves as a basis of discrimination and abuse (of the alien), thereby disempowering the individual concerned.

#### *The custom of roora*

In the domestic sphere, the husband is the head of the family. This is consolidated by the husband’s payment of *roora* or *lobola* (bride wealth). *Roora* involves some payment by the bridegroom or husband to the family of the bride or the wife. Traditionally it was paid in form of cattle but nowadays it includes cash which may sometimes replace

cattle. Traditionally, *roora* was a protection of the rights of both men and women (Townsend, 2008), signifying a lasting relationship. It was a symbol of respect for the woman and gratitude to the woman's family (Bourdillon, 1993; Chireshe & Chireshe, 2010; Gelfand, 1999). Gelfand's (1999, p. 177) high regard for *roora* is expressed in the following citation:

*I personally would look on the payment of bride wealth as having the effect of giving the woman a value in the eyes of all especially the man. Here is a person who has a value; someone who cannot just be taken.*

Similar sentiments were expressed earlier on by Bourdillon (1998) who argued that a woman acquires status through the payment of *roora*.

*Roora* validates a marriage (Bourdillon, 1993) such that where it has not been paid to the woman's family, Shona society does not recognise the union as a marriage. The woman is stigmatised as *mukadzi wemapoto* (Shona, literally translated as 'a wife of pots'), which implies that she is just a cook (someone in a temporary relationship) and not a homemaker (someone in a lasting relationship). The relationship looks like casual sex or prostitution (Bourdillon, 1993). In this connection, *roora* or bride wealth gives status to women in traditional marriages. Following this line of thinking, one can argue that *roora* suggests the worth of women thereby expressing their full humanity. Seen in this light, *roora* becomes a liberative element.

Far from enhancing the status of women, *roora* is viewed, from a radical feminist perspective, as disempowering to women as it results in their objectification and commoditisation. The radical feminist perspective is critical of social institutions as sources of women's oppression (Jardine, 2010). This is contrary to the liberal feminist perspective which seeks reform within existing social institutions so that females attain parity with their male counterparts. Thus liberal feminists would not see *roora* as intrinsically wrong as would radical feminists. Wiley (2009) views bride price (*roora*) as signifying the commoditisation of women wherein women serve as subjects of economic transactions between men. This view is consolidated by the fact that during the ceremony of the *roora* payment, only the male members of the two families (that of the bride and that of the bridegroom) negotiate *roora* (see Ibewuiké, 2006). While in most cases aunties (*madzitetete*) will be present during the proceedings and in some cases influencing the amount charged, they are not front liners in the negotiation process. Theirs is an ancillary role.

A girl child is sometimes referred to as '*chiriman'ombe*' (Shona, literally translated as 'one who exercises cattle farming') in the sense that she is expected to get married and earn *roora* for her family in form of cattle. In this connection, Nyanhongo (2011,



p. 37) asserts that “While a girl is still in her father’s home, she is viewed as an investment...” Thus, as a potential source of material gain, she is valued for what she will bring in future and not for what she is, thus undermining her personhood.

The custom of *roora* is often abused to give the husband and his family a sense of ownership of the wife. In this regard, *roora* is viewed as a source of oppression for women and as such a cause for concern among feminists of various persuasions. Underscoring the negative impact of *roora*, Ndulo (2011, p. 94) concedes “*Lobola* has become what Westerners alleged was a ‘bride price’ and has ceased to be a source of African pride.” Following this line of argument, one is led to conclude that *roora* represents the purchase of a woman by a man and his family.

Coupled with patriarchal attitudes, *roora* has become the basis of oppression of women by men (Chireshe, 2012; Chireshe & Chireshe, 2010; Kambarami, 2006; Nyanhongo, 2011; Townsend, 2008; UNICEF, 2007). Ntsimane (2006, p. 30) describes *roora* as “...the formal transaction that cements women’s social dependence upon men.” This is due to the fact that when some men pay *roora*, they have a feeling that they have bought the women and so are entitled to control their wives, having the right of decision-making over them. As Nyanhongo (2011, p. 46) expresses, “A woman ceases to be an independent agent and is stripped of independent volition.” Gelfand (1999) argues that the practice of *roora* gives the man rights over his wife to the extent that if she errs he may mete out punishment. In a similar vein, Tsanga (1999, p. 101) asserts, “A man who has paid *roora* acquires the status of a demigod who has the right to punish his subject if the subject fails to remain subordinate.” As such, the woman becomes a man’s possession by virtue of *roora* (Burn, 2005; Kethusegile et al., 2000; Masenya, 2011; Townsend, 2008). In this connection, Ndulo (2011) maintains that *roora* has become an instrument of male dominance and exploitation. Seen from this perspective, *roora*, which is a key essential of customary law marriage, entrenches gender inequality and engenders male-perpetrated intimate partner violence (Chireshe, 2012; Kambarami, 2006), thereby repelling women’s liberation. That *roora* lays a fertile ground for domestic violence is also articulated by Essien and Ukpong (2012, p. 287) who state that a high bride price often encourages domestic violence as the man wrongly considers the woman as his ‘talking furniture’. Similarly, a study conducted by Chireshe (2012) among abused religious women in urban Masvingo and its surroundings (Zimbabwe) established that *roora* was one of the factors that ‘sponsored’ domestic violence.

In spite of the negative impact of *roora* payment on women, the custom is still held in high esteem as an aspect of the cultural heritage of the Shona (Chireshe & Chireshe, 2010). Many women show a commitment to *roora* because it represents, for them, “a sense of commitment and love of the man” (Posel, Rudwick & Casale, 2011, p. 108).



*Roora* is thus a double-edged sword which, on the one hand affirms the full humanity of women and on the other hand contributes to their disempowerment and denigration.

#### *Decision-making*

Within the context of the family, men have the final say on family matters. As family head, the man is the ultimate decision-maker and spokesperson of the family (Bourdillon, 1993). The traditional definitions of husband and wife, as superordinate and subordinate respectively, are still strong (Chireshe, 2012). This is also expressed by Shoko (2012) when he asserts that the husband owns the homestead while the wife is expected to be docile. Since customary law subjects women to male domination, decision-making at household level remains in the hands of men (Kethusegile, et al., 2000). Despite the fact that in rural areas men are usually away from home because of employment in towns or abroad, they still make family decisions. Thus they continue to govern their families by 'remote control.' However, in some cases husbands do consult their wives on matters of importance.

#### *Women, childbearing and children*

Children are central in marriage and family life in Shona culture, hence the centrality of motherhood/mothering. Procreation is the chief goal of marriage, making marriage and procreation a unit (Masuku, 2005). For this reason, a woman gains status as a result of childbearing and childrearing (Bourdillon, 1998; Tichagwa, 1998). Seen in this light, childbearing may be liberating to women as it enhances their status. As in other African cultures, for instance Zulu culture (Masuku, 2005), traditional Shona marriage is only considered complete when the woman has borne her husband at least one child (Mutswairo, Masasire, Mberi, Furusa & Chiwome, 1996). Children thus ratify the marriage contract between the wife's family and that of her husband, thus completing her status as an adult woman. The production of offspring enhances the clan of the husband by carrying the family name to posterity (Burn, 2005; Ebere, 2011). The value of children, especially males, is also tied to social security in old age (Gelfand, 1999; Mabasa, 2002). Thus, children are highly valued as economic assets and old-age insurance. Children serve as heirs to inherit their parents' estate (Mabasa, 2002). Articulating the value of children, Masuku (2005, p. 81) asserts "A person who, therefore, has no descendants in effect quenches the fire of life, and dies forever since his line of physical continuation is blocked."

Given the centrality of children (especially males) in a Shona marriage, motherhood is highly valued; barrenness is a disgrace and may be a ground for divorce. Barrenness on the part of the wife is regarded as a "failure by her and her family to fulfil their side of the marriage contract" (Chavunduka, 1994, p. 67). It should also be noted that a woman who has given birth to females only is valued less than one who has a number

of boys because generally male children are preferred to female children. In this regard, male humanity is considered superior to female humanity.

Barrenness is often attributed to the wife in Shona society in spite of the fact that the Shona term '*ngomwa*' applies to both males and females who are barren. While it is possible for a man to conceal his barrenness, it is not so with a woman who has to fall pregnant and give birth. When it is established that the man is sterile, arrangements could be made for his younger brother or nephew (*muzukuru*) to have sex relations with his wife and bear him children (Gelfand, 1999). Although this practice is waning due to Christian influence, it has not disappeared.

While childbearing is important, an overemphasis on childbearing and the attachment of value to a woman on the basis of this may be denigrating to those women who fail to bear children. That women are valued as child bearers is confirmed by Uzodike and Isike (2012) who state that women are symbols of fertility and as such a guarantee of children. Seeing a women's value in terms of childbearing renders the barren women worthless and is therefore an antithesis of liberation.

#### *Women and primary socialisation*

Women are important as teachers and moral agents. Through folklore, women as mothers, aunts and grandmothers taught the youth the norms and values of society, including religious beliefs (Bourdillon, 1998). Even today women are the chief primary educators of children since childcare is largely in their hands. As key agents of primary socialisation, women have a great impact on the personality development of children. The centrality of women in character formation shows that they are of great value. This is an affirmation of their worth. Thus, in spite of their subordination, women are seen as important transmitters of religious and cultural traditions due to their role as teachers and moral agents. In this way, they serve as protectors of cultural traditions, customs and beliefs (Ebere, 2011; Moyo, 2004). Traditionally, and even today, women have had the task of inculcating gender stereotypes which result in gender inequality. This involves conditioning boys to be domineering and girls to be docile. In this regard, women continue to support their own denigration through the socialisation role. As Nasimiyu-Wasike (2006, p.104) laments, "The women are servers and maintainers of the system that continues to relegate them to inferior status in society." When children misbehave it is usually the mother who is blamed for the misbehaviour, the understanding being that she did not play her socialisation role properly. Thus, ill-mannered children are the mother's while the well-mannered ones belong to the father. This is unfortunate as it renders women vulnerable.

Given women's key role in the socialisation process wherein they teach children manners, respect, and social obligations (Ebere, 2011), they are well positioned (if

empowered) to reshape gender roles and expectations. They can thus engage in normative re-education which can have the effect of instilling gender sensitive attitudes in children. This would be quite liberating to women.

#### *Women's economic and property rights*

Shona women have always enjoyed some economic and property rights. They have traditionally engaged in economic activities such as pottery and craftwork thereby contributing to the family's economic wellbeing (Masenya, 2011; Taiwo, 2011). A woman could also acquire property in her own right, for example 'motherhood cows' (cows a woman receives when her daughters marry) and any property she earns if she is a traditional healer since a woman's healing powers are believed to come from her ancestral spirits (Gelfand, 1999). In addition, a wife is allocated a piece of land (*tseu*) on which to grow crops such as groundnuts, round nuts, and cowpeas. It is on this *tseu* that a woman has authority to determine what and how much is grown there. This is economically liberating. However, a woman's earnings, apart from the identified, belong to her husband under customary law.

It should be noted that the woman's property is very limited compared to that which is under the control of her husband. On motherhood cows, a woman only gets one per girl child who is married compared to the man who may get up to ten or more per girl child. This is because children are said to belong to their fathers. Moreover, whereas the wife gets a *tseu* to grow 'feminine' crops, the rest of the land belonging to the household is under the control of the husband. This is because under customary law communal land is allocated to an adult male who is married. A woman can only own land through a male or males (Townsend, 2008). In this regard, males are the guardians of the land, that is, they have custody of the land. By implication, although women are a majority of those who work in the fields, they do not have property rights as far as land is concerned. Women's limited control over land epitomises their disempowerment, which may ultimately engender their economic abuse.

#### *The concept of musha mukadzi*

The concept of *musha mukadzi* (Shona, literally translated as 'the home is a woman/wife') underscores the significance of a woman in the family. She is the force of family cohesion, the homemaker and household manager. In this regard, Taiwo (2010, p.229) asserts that, "Even though the patriarchal system in Africa cannot be ignored, the African woman possesses the power that binds the society together." She brings completeness to the man. In the traditional culture, a man cannot be a full adult apart from marriage to a woman (Masenya, 2011). As such, a woman is an indispensable being without whom a home ceases to be a home. This image of a woman is

empowering if the woman is given decision-making powers in keeping with her designation as the ‘essence’ of the home. However, the concept of *musha mukadzi* may result in the abuse of women if they are left to deal with family problems single-handedly. It should also be noted that since Shona society is patriarchal, the husband remains the household manager. As in most African societies, the Shona woman remains under the control of her husband to the extent that she cannot make independent decisions pertaining to the household although she is expected to bear household burdens, including the support burden. Thus the husband, who has a commanding position in the governance of the household, serves as a controlling agent in the family while the wife’s role is supportive (Masenya, 2011; Shoko, 2012; Taiwo, 2010; Uzodike & Isike, 2012). Seen in this light, the ‘*musha mukadzi*’ idiom can be disempowering to women as it purports to give them power, yet taking it with the other hand. Bluntly speaking, the wife remains a ‘stooge’ of her husband where her husband’s leadership is hegemonic.

*Status of women as reflected by some Shona proverbs and taboos*

Proverbs and sayings that underline the value of women as mothers include *Mudzimu mukuru ndowokwamai* and *Nherera inoguta musu wafa mai*. The importance of the mother and her kinship group is expressed by the saying “*Mudzimu mukuru ndowokwamai*” (literally, the great ancestral spirit belongs to the mother’s lineage), implying that one’s maternal relatives can be more protective and supportive than one’s paternal relatives. Indeed, witchcraft accusations and counter accusations are often found among paternal relatives. Underscoring the importance of the mother as a source of satiation is the Shona proverb “*Nherera inoguta musu wafa mai*” which, according to Muwati, Gambahaya and Gwekwerere (2011, p. 4), means that the death of one’s mother signifies vulnerability, “the end of satiation.” Furthermore, the importance of the mother is evidenced by the fact that African men will fight to defend their mothers (Kanyoro, 1999). Boys at play may mould soil into small heaps which they refer to as ‘mother’s breast’ (*zamu ramai*). If one happens to dismantle that heap of soil, the anger of the one whose mother’s breast is dismantled will be kindled and usually a fight ensues. When people are exchanging words and when one makes reference to a negative aspect of another’s mother this is likely to lead to a fight.

*Wazvara hadzi wazvara ndume, wazvara ndume wazvara hadzi* (one who has borne a female child has borne a male child, and *vice versa*) affirms that male and female are equally human and equally important. Furthermore, it implies that if one bears a female child one is likely to have a male child who comes in the form of a son-in-law, that is, the daughter’s husband. Similarly, one who bears a son can expect to obtain a daughter in the form of a daughter-in-law (the son’s wife). Given this scenario, it can be inferred that the notion under consideration is liberating to women.

Some taboos are a deterrent to violence against wives and mothers showing a high regard for women. While both parents ought to be honoured, it is considered a taboo to offend one's mother. There is a belief that if someone offends his or her own mother and the mother dies with a grievance, the mother will come back as an avenging spirit (*ngozi*) to punish the offender. This experience is degrading on the part of the offender (Muwati et al., 2011).

Children are prohibited from sitting on a mortar (*duri*) or from sitting on a hearthstone (*pfihwa*) because their spouses would die. The taboos imply the importance of spouses whether these are male or female. This shows the value of both husbands and wives and is in this way liberating to women.

## **Conclusion**

Shona culture is ambivalent when it comes to the place it accords women. It is both liberating and oppressing. As presented, liberating notions affirm the full humanity of women thereby promoting realisation of their potential. This ultimately leads to societal development.

As has been noted, women as mothers are highly valued among the Shona and the designation 'mother' is not confined to one's biological mother but to any woman who is elderly. This engenders respect for women and as such liberating.

*Rooru* is a customary practice that both affirms and diminishes the full humanity of women. Thus, the liberative potential or otherwise of *roora* depends on how it is perceived and practised. While customarily women's decision-making power is not publicly acknowledged, women do influence decision making in various ways. This makes them stakeholders in the decision-making process. As discussed, a number of Shona concepts that have liberating potential can be tapped to promote gender justice and hence liberate women.

## **Recommendations**

Given the ambivalent nature of Shona religion and culture, it is necessary for today's society to uphold those aspects that uplift the status of both men and women and promote partnership between men and women as this enhances sustainable development. On the other hand, it is necessary to bid farewell to some religious and cultural beliefs and practices that stifle women's, and ultimately society's, development.

While children are good and valuable, it is necessary to accept barrenness so that those who fail to bear children are treated with dignity and not frowned upon. The humanness of an individual should take precedence over anything else that a person can do or acquire.

Given the ambivalence of *roora*, it is suggested that if the original meaning of the custom as a unity enhancer (between families) could be maintained, the custom would continue to have a liberating effect. However, where it is abused, it contributes to women's comprehensive disempowerment and ultimately violence against them. This becomes an impediment to women's self-esteem and self-actualisation and as such detrimental to societal development.

While traditionally women were not the decision-makers evidenced by their exclusion from the man's forum (*dare*), they have always had power as they would be consulted by men in private. In view of this, it is necessary for society to acknowledge women's power in public so that their contribution does not remain veiled. Re-thinking the idea of *dare* in such a way that both men and women actively participate would go a long way in fostering cooperation between women and men when it comes to decision-making.

The concept of *musha mukadzi*, if observed in such a manner that the centrality of women is recognised, is empowering to women and is ultimately instrumental to societal development in the modern day.

Since the current study was confined to Shona society, it was limited in terms of geographical and conceptual scope. As such, further research could be done to cover different ethnic groups. Furthermore, a comparative analysis of different ethnic groups could be more enlightening.

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## **Karanga musical heritage deprivation: Rethinking and transforming living archive to cultural industry**

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### **Abstract**

*The essence of this article is to offer a nuanced understanding of 'living archive' and the Karanga musical heritage deprivation relationships. Since the colonial period, the Karanga of the Dzimbahwe community's indigenous musical arts has been considered as oral/aural performative practice conducted at the Great Zimbabwe African village. This implies that the musical heritage owners and performing experts have enabled tourists to freeze the cultural performances into what is referred to as a 'living archive' through the use of technological devices. Institutionalization of musical arts which have existed as 'living lore' by way of documenting and archiving the same has strongly been pursued by applied ethnomusicologists. This enterprise, which is meant to conserve, safeguard and sustain the cultural practices, has been detrimental to the creators' intellectual property rights. Such legitimacy and authority of the African village living lore has rendered it an ivory tower for the majority culture bearers who have not only been alienated from their fellow social actors works of art through gate takings, but have also been deprived of the material benefits accruing from the postmodern dissemination of such musical legacy. Approached from an emic perspective, the research serves to avert (in)tangible musical heritage deprivation by collaboratively structuring and coordinating interventions for social transformation through the establishment of rural communities Musical Arts Performative Archival Centres (MAPACs) comprising a nuanced understanding of living archive. In an endeavour to satisfy the philosophical underpinning of applied ethnomusicological work in relation to performing and archiving Karanga musical lore by positioning such institutions within communities-at-large, this study engaged the Dzimbahwe community members in designing and establishing their own MAPAC as a cultural industry for sustainable development and nation building.*

**Key words:** Applied ethnomusicology, institutionalization, living lore, living archive, musical heritage, vulnerability, authority, legitimacy

## **Introduction**

Indigenous African societies, including Zimbabwean indigenes, embrace musical arts in its performative sense as an intangible knowledge phenomenon. To this end, the indigenous African musical arts are conceived as living lore. Prior to colonization, the dissemination of such knowledge as well as the memory retention of the arts used to be enhanced through the conduct of regular functions and ceremonies involving the young and the old members of the community. Cognisant of the fact that orality among Africans is inevitable, Agawu (2003, p.24) found that:

Oral sources matter because African cultures remain largely oral. Oral sources include pedagogical schemes, repertoires, and critical discourses that reside in the memories of individuals or collectives and are recalled, invoked, reinvented, or simply constructed as occasions demand.

The power systems, among them: education, church, language (English for Zimbabwe) and Western music have tended to hinder the promotion of indigenous musical arts. This is substantiated in part of the text of the UNESCO Convention on Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage, which states that “Many forms of performing arts are under threat today. As cultural practices become standardized, many traditional practices are abandoned. Even in cases where they become popular, only certain expressions may benefit while others suffer” (UNESCO, 2003). Considering the Dzimbahwe indigenous musical arts as a case in point, the Karanga cultural staged performances at the Great Zimbabwe African village benefit tourists while the indigenous knowledge system embedded in the musical arts is neglected since, from a Eurocentric perspective, music is perceived as a form of entertainment.

Before the inception of the Convention, some missionaries who turned ethnomusicologists, for example, Hugh Tracey, concerned by the plight of the possible death or disappearance of traditional musical practices, were the early field researchers and collectors of much traditional Sub-Saharan music. Tracey’s collections and recordings ranging from the 1940s to the 50s were ultimately stored in a library that he built on his farm in Kimberley near Johannesburg in South Africa. After his death, one of his surviving sons, Andrew Tracey, who remained on the farm, realised that the holdings did not serve much purpose so he decided to sell the archival materials to an institution of higher learning so as to enable researchers to access the resources. The holdings were subsequently acquired by Rhodes University which established an archive known as the International Library of African Music (ILAM) in Grahamstown, South Africa. These materials that are conceived as traces of a people’s past are meant to protect preserve and promote cultural heritage. It can never be doubted that the practitioners of the musical recordings and collections in ILAM have become known

across the world and that their musical heritage has been preserved such that it continues to be accessed in the course of time. Conversely, the legitimacy and authority of ILAM and, of course, other archives of similar nature, have rendered themselves ivory towers that have not only alienated social actors from their artworks, but have also deprived the same of the rights as well as material benefits accruing from the dissemination of such musical legacies

In a move to try and avert some of the limitations of archiving culture such as the exclusion of oral musical arts practices that are essential to the dissemination of the indigenous knowledge system of a people, applied ethnomusicologists have contributed to the establishment of what is currently known as the 'living archive'. Among the various definitions of this concept that have been offered by several scholars is the London International Festival of Theatre's (LIFT 2010, 19/06 – 17/07) contribution that appears to crystallise most of the ideas from the offerings, which states:

The 'living' archive's aim is not to bury the past in the boxes or databases for prosperity, but to unearth fresh forms of thinking from what has gone on before. The 'living' component of this archival framework is thus twofold: on the one hand it is about access as it encourages researchers to make connections between materials and to map out their own archival journeys in hopes of revealing new ways of looking at the future by examining the past. On the other hand, it is also about survival, in opposition of death, loss and destruction.

In this sense, on the one hand, archiving of musical arts provides scholars with the opportunity to access empirical data from the otherwise physical phenomenon. Essentially, this can be viewed as an evasion of the experiential dimension of musical sensibility which also accounts for musical understanding. On the other hand, the survival of cultural heritage in the static form of recordings and souvenirs (instrumental resources) excludes contingency, whereas orality accommodates individual performers' creative abilities.

LIFT's archival framework and ILAM archival holdings weigh heavily on historic archiving for exposure and accessibility. It is being argued that the experiential<sup>1</sup> performative dimension be incorporated to constitute a more comprehensive 'living archive' that resonates with indigenous African musical arts living lore. Thus, this work situates the concept of 'living archive' in the Zimbabwean indigenous musical arts of the pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial eras.

*Pre-colonial Zimbabwean musical lore archiving*

Archiving by way of preserving and protecting tangible and intangible musical lore dates back to the pre-colonial period in Zimbabwe where the custodians, often the spiritually initiated master musicians and dancers of a given community, used the living huts and sacred huts storage spaces. The tangible heritage including *mbira*, *ngoma* (African drums), *hosho* (handheld rattles), *magagada* (leg rattles) and *makano* (half-moon shaped axes) would normally be hung up inside kitchen huts where the walls and the roofs meet. According to Mushipe (2016):

*Zviridzwa zvinosanganisira ngoma, hosho,*

*Magagada nembira zvakagara zvichichengeterwa dzokubikira nezvikonzero zvakati kuti.*

*Chokutanga ndechokuti dzimba dzokubikira dzimba dzoruzhinji sezvowo zviridzwa zvirizvoruzhinji. Chechipiri chin'ai chinobva pautsi hwehuni dzinobvira chinodzivirira zviridzwa*

*chichiitawo kuti zvibudise mazwi akajeka.*

*Uyezve zvinorerukira vachengeti vezviridzwa kuti vagare vachiona mamiriro emidziyo yavo.*

Musical instruments such as drums, handheld rattles, leg rattles and *mbira mudzimba* have always been kept in kitchen huts for several reasons. Firstly, kitchens are open to all much as the instruments are communal. Secondly, the soot from burning firewood preserves and also improves the sonorities of instruments. In addition, the custodians of the instruments can make constant checks.

Going by Mushipe's account of the essence of archiving indigenous musical instruments, it is evident that such practice is informed by underpinning knowledge. Inspired by Agawu's (2003) view that "Probing the ideologies of practice makes us aware of the darker side of knowledge ordering" (Agawu, 2003, p.53), the researcher engaged the Dzimbahwe community members gathered at a *bira* (spiritual ritual ceremony) who directed the questions to Mushipe to provide comprehensive answers. This means that for one to gain a fuller understanding of the tangible musical heritage, the visual objects should be complemented with the oral explanation and demonstration of their significance and use in music making. As such, musical instruments also perform the role of disseminating their adherents' cultural knowledge. With particular reference to the music of Africa, the idea of musical communication has been aptly explained by Nzewi, Anyahuru, Ohiauramunnal (2008, p. 6) who, not only consider stimulus, receptivity and response as basic to musical meaning, but also crystallize them into "a philosophy of musical communication, which, whether or not articulated discursively in a musical arts tradition, is nevertheless inherent and perceived in how



the musical arts is used and appreciated by culture owners” In his reference to the way they share their musical tradition with the rest of the world, Mushipe (2016) says:

*Zviridzwa zvinomirira zvinhu zvakasiyana*

*Siyana sokusiyana kwatakaita isu vanhu.  
Somuenzaniso, ngoma dzinomirira manzwi*

*akasiyana, hosho nemagagada zvirivutsa  
mitambo. Tinosvika pakunzwisisaz vinhu  
kubudikidza nokusevenzesa zviridzwa  
mukuvandudza mitambo yakasiyana.*

*Kuzvichengetera zviridzwa zvedu pamwe  
chete nokuzvisevenzesa somutauro  
wokutsanangudza tsika nemagariro edu  
micherechedzo yekodzero nesimba ratinaro  
pazvinhu zvedu.*

Musical instruments signify differently much as human identities differ.

For example, drums signify varying tones, rattles stimulate sensations and invigorate *izvi* performers. We gain such appreciation by engaging in musical performances of various ceremonies.

We account for the legitimacy and authority of our musical heritage by preserving and protecting the tangible heritage as well as using it to enact our epistemology.

As if to define ‘living archive’ from a Karanga indigenous perception, Mushipe’s description of the place of instruments in communicating a cultural tradition is twofold: they invoke appropriate musical sensibilities, and articulate a people’s knowledge system. Nannyonga-Tamusuza (2015) appears to have conceived Mushipe’s assertion from a musical perspective by saying that “Music represents frames and influences the corporeal bases, capabilities, performance and choreographic sensibilities of the dances” (Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2015, p.82). Just as Nketia (1974) found that “In traditional African societies, music making is generally organised as a social event” (Nketia 1974, p.21), Zimbabwean traditional music is often a communal experience. The opportunities for members of a given community to be involved in music making are availed to them through the regular conduct of rites, ceremonies or festivals in which music is embedded. Participation is the hallmark for one’s understanding and appreciation of any musical tradition and it also strengthens social cohesion. Thus, the preservation of musical instruments in community huts is conceived not as souvenirs, but as a symbol of the exponents’ philosophy of life which is articulated through their use in music making.

*Colonial Zimbabwean musical lore archiving*

Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia) was a British colony from 1890 to 1979. During this period the colonized were subjected to the colonizers' domineering modernist ideology incorporating formal education, church, commerce and industry, urbanization and formal employment. The enhancement of formal education and hence scientific knowledge system through the establishment of schools gradually overshadowed and perhaps eroded the indigenous knowledge system or oral tradition that existed in the pre-colonial era since children would spend most of their time at school. The most affected were indigenous musical arts because they were excluded from the school curriculum. Through its promotion of the Western scientific knowledge system, the school tended to subdue the indigenous knowledge system to an extent that the schooled become more conversant with the foreign at the expense of what belongs to their immediate environment. For example, learners were taught to name imported trees such as the Jacaranda but remained ignorant on how to name indigenous trees like Muzeze, which used to be done through memory retention game songs such as *De-e de zengeya uyo mutiyi?* (Guess the name of that tree). Lamenting over the schools' inability to assist learners to produce indigenous musical instruments for use in music making in communities, Marecha substantiated the issue presented in the foregoing statement by saying:

*Zviri pachena kuti dzidzo yavadzidzisi vevana  
Vedu vari muzvikoro haina kuvabatsira kuti  
Zvinhu zviri munharaunda dzavo zvinogona  
kusevenzeswa kugadzira zviridzwa zviri  
kutinetsa kuwana makore anodarika makumi  
tawana kuzvitonga igadzirise upenyu  
hwedu.*

It is clear that the knowledge acquired by teachers who teach children in school has not helped them utilise the resources within our *matatu* environments in innovating musical instruments that we struggle to get more than 30 years after we gained our independence.

The first schools to be built in rural communities were church or mission schools. Through missionary work, many people were converted to Christianity, which denounced most of the indigenous practices including the use of traditional instruments in church. The converts would congregate in church buildings located at school premises. Much as the Christians were prohibited from engaging in traditional music making in church, so also were children not taught the same in schools. It is important to note that the church stigma against indigenous music transcended the church building premises to communities-at-large. The late Munamba (2015), a rain priest, herbalist

and spiritually initiated master musician and dancer, shared with the author a touching experience when he was asked to give the whereabouts of one of the master musicians with who he used to perform when he stated that:

*Zvaita kuti musasangana naVaMavheneka  
Nhasi uno ndezvokuti pavakatendeuka kuva  
muKirisitu mwedzi mishanu yapfuura  
vakaunganidza zviridzwa nefuko  
zvavaichengeta nokushandisa ndokuzvipisa  
nemoto vachiti ndezvemweya yetsvina.  
Chinhu chakatirwadza tose asi ndizvo  
Zvezvimw ezvatinorara mamazviri.*

Mr Mavheneka is not among us today for the reason that following his conversion to Christianity five months ago he subsequently gathered musical instruments and attire in his custody and burnt them with fire. This is the painful truth we sometimes have to contend with.

The degree of oppression imposed by the church on converted members together with the amount of suppression of music traditions of the communities in which churches were established was not peculiar to the community to which Munamba belonged. However, the likes of Munamba have accounted for parallel survival of musical lore to church music to such an extent that some people have aligned themselves to both traditional and church music based on the circumstances in which they would find themselves.

In addition to the introduction of school and church, the advent of colonization also brought with it the establishment of processing and manufacturing industries coupled with commercial enterprises in various urban centres around the country. This development drew migrant labour from rural communities to metropolitan centres. This move culminated into the creation of traditional cultural voids. The multiple effects of this were: the extinction of some traditional musical lore; the parallel existence of indigenous and Western music cultures ensuring the safeguarding of valued practices in changing contexts, and the accommodation of adaptable musical principles and skills. People who migrated into and settled in towns and cities began to group themselves in relation to their rural home backgrounds that enabled them to perform music that they were familiar with. Given the diversity of cultures that would reside in a locality such as a particular township, this exposure to a variety of music traditions inspired some performers to adopt as well as adapt ideas to create hybrids that attracted people with varying tastes for music. The emerging popular music genres such as *simanje manje*, *kwela* and *rumba*, which fused ideas from traditional music together with the colonizers' and other African nations' music, were so instrumental in providing entertainment to people. These were packaged into phonograms for commercial purposes. Foley (2015, p.141) found that the tourist industry, cognisant of "the lucrative

potential of tourism, have learnt to construct commoditized cultural packages for tourist consumption”. The performance of Karanga indigenous musical arts at the Great Zimbabwe Monuments African village is a typical example of commoditized cultural tourism which was introduced during the colonial period. Instead of preserving the musical heritage by recording and archiving it as well as eliciting the sense and meaning of the musical arts from the authorities and expert performers, European tourists have chosen to subtly document the performances. Through such a venture, local culture may subsequently be altered, and often destroyed and potentially made ‘meaningless’ to its people (Foley, p.155). Mushipe (2016) appears to contend with Foley’s view when he says:

*Ndiri mumwe wevagari vomudunhu rino vakadzaniira vashanyi veDzimbahwe kwemakore akawanda apfuura. Kuona kwangu ndekokuti vashanyi vazhinji kunyanya vevarungu vanowanazitora mifananidzo nezviitwa vobva vafuratira kuenda vasina kana kumbotaura nesu varidzi nevazivi vemitambo yedu yechivanhu chavasingazivi asi vane chido chokuitakura vachindoichengetedza. Kuita kwakadai kunotaridza kuti varungu vanofarira mitambo yedu asi havadi kuti tivadzidzise kuti vainzwise.*

I am one among those who have entertained tourists who visited Great Zimbabwe Monuments over the past years. I observed that white tourists in particular often document our performances and turn away without seeking understanding from us the heritage authorities and experts. They show interest in the musical tradition they intend to archive, but they are not keen to seek understanding of the practice from knowledge owners.

Hugh Tracey’s foresight to the anomaly alluded to by Mushipe in the foregoing quotation is expressed in his address at the International Folk Music Council Conference on 14 July 1953 as cited by Agawu (2003, p.157):

We Europeans are at a great disadvantage in talking about African music. Unlike most of other members of this conference we do not represent or discuss our own music but that of a people radically unlike ourselves among whom we live. It is only because we have found out that the African is pathetically incapable of defending his culture and indeed is largely indifferent to its fate that we, who subscribe wholeheartedly to the ideals of our International Council, are attempting to ride over the period during which irreparable damage can be done and until Africans themselves will be capable of appearing at our conferences as well-informed representatives of their own peoples.

Tracey's observation connotes that the Europeans had no intention of studying African music from African creative perspectives, but were eager to use their own music discourse to interpret the music of a different tradition. The idea of talking about African music implies that there were some archival resources in form of recordings that were to be analysed.

In colonial Zimbabwe, music recording companies were solely white-owned. The first and dominant two were: Teal Record Company in Bulawayo and Gramma Records in Harare. Black artists whose music was recorded in these studios were made to sign contracts that exploited them by allocating an award of about two percent royalty per copy of any release. Not many artists managed to have their works recorded, which indicates that much music that was not documented was lost over time. The abundance of national archives such as museums, monuments and art galleries is heavily contrasted with the one and only music archive for the nation, the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) (formerly Rhodesia Broadcasting Corporation). The ZBC lacks holdings on traditional music of the colonial period due to the fact that the coloniser, not only despised it, but also relegated it to public domain – the reason traditional musicians continue to be deprived of the benefits they ought to realise from their creativity to the present.

While in the West, Britain included, musical lore archiving is highly esteemed as evidenced by the institution of the Library of Congress in which some of the Zimbabwean tangible musical heritage constitutes part of its holdings, Zimbabwe, and of course, many other African countries that were colonised by the West, has been deprived of the perceived benefits of packaging musical heritage through archives of this kind.

#### *Postcolonial Zimbabwe lore*

Zimbabwe's attainment of independence in 1980 witnessed the new regime's intention to reclaim and promote indigenous culture that had been subdued over the colonial rule by appending the cultural component to the then Ministry of Education. Educationists in the Ministry of Education and Culture subsequently embraced two major features: traditional hut and traditional dance, which were deemed to depict Africanness. To date, majority schools have, as part of their physical structures, pole and mud or brick and plaster grass-thatched huts that serve no particular purpose. Traditional dance is one of the main features among the various co-curricular activities that are held in Zimbabwean schools. Accordingly, schools have invested in traditional dance groups by acquiring varieties of musical instruments, attire and props for use in performing different dances at different occasions including school ceremonies, political rallies and musical competitions such as the annual Jikinya Dance Festival.

On the contrary, no sponsorship has, to date, been availed to promote scholarship in traditional dance for it to be effectively taught. Traditional dance performance in schools generally denotes the adaptation and re-contextualisation of authentic dances.

The school and indeed many other organs which were marshalled through colonialism had the legitimacy and authority that served the purposes for their establishment; however, they did so often in marginalising the Zimbabwean indigenous musical practices. Taking traditional dance for example, schools have never sought authority from the culture bearers as to what to include and/or leave out when staging cultural dances in order to prevent misconceptions, misrepresentations and misinformation. To this end, the quality and significance of the ideas, ideals and values that defined and directed Zimbabwe's valuable past have been ignored in the advancement of ideas that should serve the cause of the future world. It is expected that school teachers be engaged in musical arts action research in order to complement the scholars' contributions.

Zimbabwean traditional dances have often been the epitome of ritual ceremonies. This view is aptly supported by Turner (1973, p.1100) who states, "No one who has lived for long in rural Sub-Saharan Africa can fail to be struck by the importance of ritual in the lives of the villagers". This idea has been expanded on by Some's (1995, p.42) postulation that "Whatever happens in a ritual space, some kind of power is realised if given a freedom in which to live. The forces aroused in the ritual function are like a power plant into which every individual is hooked". Drawing from his study of the Karanga traditional dance, Rutsate (2011, p.104) found that "The nature of *mhande* dance, which subsumes the fusion of behaviour and culture through the adepts' symbolic acts, communicates Karanga reality about the existence and service of spiritual beings among the human beings" resounds with the endowment of the power of ritual in dance that binds the past with the present. These notions on indigenous African musical arts point to the transcendent meaning of the musical heritage.

The idea of staging traditional dance at the Great Zimbabwe Monuments African village, not only takes away its power and symbolism of bodily action, but it also turns it into a performer-audience form of entertainment which resonates with modernity. In this sense, the modernity that was ushered in through colonisation pushed indigenous cultural practices – so called musical lore - to the fringe of development. Harrison, Mackinlay and Pettan (2010, p.1) proposed the adoption of the type of applied ethnomusicology meant to redress this situation by defining it as:

The approach guided by the principle of social responsibility, which extends the usual academic goal of broadening and developing knowledge and



understanding toward solving concrete problems and towards working both inside and beyond typical academic contexts”.

More than broadening and developing the understanding of Zimbabwean traditional music, the author has been so challenged by the vulnerability of both the music and its creators for over three decades after independence to an extent that he has since engaged members of the Dzimbahwe rural community on the prospects and commencement of constructing a Musical Arts Performative Archival Centre (MAPAC) that is meant to preserve, protect and promote such inheritance for sustainable development. The establishment of the centre will protect cultural heritage, enrich creativity, promote musical arts practices and enhance research. It is common knowledge that much scholarship in indigenous African musical arts, in particular Zimbabwean music and dance, has tended to benefit researchers and not the researched as confessed by one among several consultants to this research, Chivenge (2016) who observes that:

*Kuuya kwenyu pano kunondieuchidza  
vemhando yenyu vandakabetsera  
mutsvakurudzo dzavaiita nezvetsika  
namagariro edu vakasazodzoka kuzotipawo  
zvinyorwa zvavakatsikisa zvinosanganisira  
pfungwa dzavo pakubatsira kugadzirisa  
matambudziko atinosangana nawo  
mukurarama munyika inogaroshanduka.*

Your visit reminds me of your *vamwe* predecessors who I assisted in their research on our way of life and they never came back to share with us or serve us with manuscripts containing their ideas on how we can address the challenges we encounter in our daily lives in an ever-changing world.

*Imi zvamunotsvagurudzawo nezvemitambo  
Yechivanhu isina vanga varatidza hanya  
nayo, tinovimba kuti hazvipereri mukudzana  
kvedu nemi asi kuti muchatsikisa mitambo  
iyoyi igotekeshera muzvikoro nemumisha  
zvigova nhaka yetsika nemagariro edu  
zvinowanikwa mukuita chete parizvino.*

Since your research is on music that is embedded in traditional ceremonies where no one had shown interest in, we believe this enterprise will not end with you performing together with us but we expect you to document this cultural heritage which currently exists in performance in order to avail it to schools and communities in general.

It can be inferred from Chivenge’s contribution that he advocates the kind of scholarship that is guided by the principle of social responsibility. This affirms the objective of the branch of Ethnomusicology called Applied Ethnomusicology, which may be crystallised as: advancing the sense of purpose and use of music as a tool for solving problems. Driven by the sense of purpose, majority applied ethnomusicologists, among them: Kwabena Nketia, Meki Nzewi, John Blacking and Dave Dargie grounded their



scholarly works in safeguarding and disseminating the musical traditions of the WaGogo in Tanzania; the Igbo in Nigeria; the Venda, and the Xhosa in South Africa, respectively. These and many other scholars' works are held in institutional libraries and/or archives that are removed from the culture bearers' geographical locations. It is the latter objective alluded to above that appears to have been overlooked by Applied Ethnomusicology researchers over time.

It is inevitable therefore that the musical legacy of different ethnic groups of people in African countries be packaged under the expert advice of applied ethnomusicologists and utilised by the social actors as a means of averting their socio-political and economic marginalization. Accordingly, the researcher engaged the Dzimbahwe community in designing and constructing MAPAC for their social transformation. A two-year fourfold strategic plan encompassing Resource mobilisation, Infrastructural development, Branding and Ethnographic documentation was produced by end of 2014.

The activities that were identified to mobilise resources include the utilisation of available material and human resources, the setting up of musical arts performing groups and the development of the project proposal document. The community members volunteered to render their services and tools such that to date they have cleared the MAPAC site, moulded and burnt ten thousand bricks and constructed ablutions blocks for provisional use. In addition, there is one indigenous dance group that has been set up and supplied with some attire. The group has since been given a stage to perform at President Robert Mugabe's 92<sup>nd</sup> Birthday Bash held at the Great Zimbabwe Monuments on 28 February 2016. It is also preparing to participate in forthcoming prize giving competitions as a means of fund raising for project development. The drafting of the project proposal has been completed and submitted to legal experts for review. Following the approval of the project proposal by the relevant authorities, the same will be used to solicit funding for the project.

The structural design for the Dzimbahwe MAPAC incorporating multipurpose hall, an amphitheatre and an outdoor indigenous dance arena, a round hut for conducting ritual performances, a sound recording studio, a musical archive and a typical Karanga homestead is nearing completion after which it will be submitted to Nemamwa Rural District Council for approval. Once approved, the plans will be availed to stakeholders as a way of harnessing their support.

The branding of the Dzimbahwe MAPAC as enshrined in the vision, mission and values of the project proposal when approved will be vigorously driven through print, electronic and social media platforms. The success story of the project will be the hub of the brand. Live shows by MAPAC performing groups will also serve as a branding

strategy. Since this is an on-going project, several organisations and institutions such as embassies, non-governmental organisations and the Zimbabwe Heritage Trust that have been sensitised about the project in the making may be further inspired by these branding mechanisms to offer financial, material and any other forms of support for its accomplishment.

The ethnographic documentation of the Dzimbahwe community cultural musical arts performances has since commenced through the researcher's invitation to and participation in ritual ceremonies that have been conducted over the past two years. The footages of the interviews and performance practices are currently being edited for the production of CDs and DVDs which will be stored in the MAPAC archive. This cultural portraiture embodies the audio, and the accompanying literary descriptions and explanations of the musical sense and musical meanings of the artworks. The capturing of artistic performances has begun with the Dzimbahwe Dance Group performance at the President's 92<sup>nd</sup> Birthday Bash.

It is such pursuit of treating rural community musical arts as cultural industry that ensures the reclamation, preservation and promotion of such creative enterprise. Essentially, this study goes beyond the idea of propounding theories about traditional musical heritage to encourage collaboration between professional musicians and community music practitioners with the motive of generating and executing projects on the collection, documentation, archiving and performance of musical arts by the Dzimbahwe Karanga as well as other different ethnic groups of people in Zimbabwe. This venture is aligned to the postcolonial and postmodernist perception of the vulnerability of traditional music, which has been categorised as public domain. The UNESCO Convention (2003) on the safeguarding of tangible and intangible cultural heritage is a typical example of the initiatives of raising new expectations and challenges in this regard. Resonating with this Convention is Harrison et al.'s (2010) and Dirksen's (2012) stated concerns for the field of applied ethnomusicology, among them: establishing music archives, exhibitions; protecting intellectual property rights; preservation of heritage; authenticity of traditional institutions, genres and sacredness, and reflexivity.

#### *Transforming musical living archive*

The creation of Musical Arts Performative Archival Centres (MAPACs) in Zimbabwean rural communities such as the Dzimbahwe not only enhances intergenerational memory of musical lore and the use of musical instruments and dance in enacting the way of life of a people, but it also transforms such living archive into a form of cultural industry. In this sense, tangible heritage such as musical instruments, props (objects) and substances are not perceived as souvenirs, but they

are employed in making music whenever necessary. The intangible lore is to be documented literarily, visually and digitally in order to market the products as a means of disseminating the musical traditions. It is envisioned that the Dzimbahwe MAPAC will also occasion research and provide instruction to learners from educational institutions with the desire to develop deeper understanding of particular musical practices. Moreover, the Centre will be an entrepreneurial enterprise as well as a means of employment creation for sustainable development.

## **Conclusion**

Institutionalisation of musical arts which have existed as ‘living lore’ by way of documenting and archiving has partially served the interests of cultural heritage owners and expert performers. Such a venture, which is meant to conserve, safeguard and sustain the cultural practices, has been detrimental to the creators’ intellectual property rights. In addition, the vogueish, dormant archiving has excluded orality; an inevitable dimension of African indigenous musical arts which is incorporated in this study’s nuanced understanding of ‘living archive’.

Going by the present results of the Dzimbahwe MAPAC project, it can be argued that the establishment of MAPACs is an idea that may be embraced by many indigenous groups of people, particularly those whose musical arts are vulnerable and marginalised. Thus, the Dzimbahwe MAPAC is recommended for protecting musical arts inheritance and intellectual property as well as promoting creativity and socio-economic development for social transformation and nation building.

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## **Managing the commons without Hardin's (1968) Tragedy: Experiences from southern Africa**

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### **Abstract**

*The study assessed the management of resources under common and private management regimes to ascertain the feasibility of managing the commons without Hardin's tragedy. The assessment was premised on an extensive literature review of the resource management discourse in southern Africa. Research techniques included desk top research and key informant interviews. The study posits that Hardin's tragedy of the commons hypothesis is Eurocentric and does not consider African culture and realities. Much of the degradation in the communal lands is not due to the ineffectiveness of common property resource management regimes but due to the disempowering of traditional institutions of authority among other factors. It is argued that this disempowering resulted in traditional authorities failing to effectively and efficiently enforce excludability rights. With regards to trans boundary commons there is need for regional cooperation and respect for international conventions. It is hoped the study will contribute to the sustainable utilization of resources under common property management.*

**Key Words:** common property resources, excludability rights, management, sustainable, conservation.

### **Introduction**

Berkes and Farvar (1989) note that for a resource to be defined as common property it should belong to a class of resources for which exclusion is difficult and joint use involves subtractability. Subtractability refers to the degree to which one person's use of a resource diminishes others' use. It implies that one individual's use of the resource reduces the level of the resource available for other users. Thus the addition of another animal in a common grazing land may lead to the consumption of some grass that would not otherwise have been grazed, but it will also deprive other animals already there of grass which would have been theirs. The management of common property resources has, for a long time, been inspired by philosophies that favoured either

privatization or central administrative control as a means of ensuring sustainable utilization of such resources (Maphosa, 2002).

This notion found its most eloquent expression in Hardin's (1968) now famous phrase, 'tragedy of the commons'. However, Bromely (1989) argues that a well-functioning common property regime provides assurance that resources that are collectively used will be available sustainably. Further, Matowanyika, Sibanda, and Garibaldi (1995) argue that it is possible to collectively use and manage natural resources without necessarily degrading them where indigenous traditional institutions are effective in enforcing excludability. Indigenous traditional institutions are clan chiefs, sub-chiefs, headmen and kraal heads who constitute the communal lands' administrative and legal institutions with historically defined areas and sets of rules and regulations clearly understood by the rural people.

In 1968, Hardin popularised the model of 'the tragedy of the commons' to describe the management and use of common property resources. This model postulates that an individual resource user is inclined to take as much as possible of the common property resource before someone else does. Because common property resources belong to everyone, nobody is motivated to take responsibility for them. As a result, common property resources are prone to overexploitation (Hardin, 1968).

Hardin's model was premised on a number of assumptions such as that there are no rules about uses of the common property resources and common property is synonymous with open access property (*res nullius*) (Berkes & Farvar, 1989). The other assumptions are that users are selfish and are not restricted by social norms of the community and users are always trying to maximize short term gains. Further, a common property resource is used so intensively that over-exploitation and depletion are possible (McCay & Acheson, 1987).

The flaw of 'the tragedy of the commons' model is its failure to distinguish between open access and common property resources as argued by Cousins (2000). Succeeding writers have distinguished between open access and common property resources (Berkes & Farvar, 1989; Maphosa, 2002). The latter are managed while the former is not managed. In well-functioning common property regimes (*res communes*) rights and duties are well defined (Cousins, 2000). Thus, Maphosa (2002) notes that common property resources have been, and are still, subject to specific legal and/ or customary arrangements that define user-groups and exclude non-users.

Furthermore, Hardin's model has been criticised for its being western ethnocentric. The model makes an assumption that resource users are individualistic and unable to cooperate towards the greater community interest. Therefore it emphasizes competition

rather than cooperation (Berkes & Farvar, 1989). Thus, Maphosa (2002) notes that the model underestimates the ability of resource users to cooperate towards a collective interest. In well-functioning common property regimes selfishness among resource users is restricted by social norms of community. In common property systems the emphasis is on taking what is needed, there are social sanctions against excessive individual gain from a communal resource and against the accumulation of wealth (Berkes & Farvar, 1989). Therefore common property, like other types of property as private property and state property, is a social institution (McCay & Acheson, 1987).

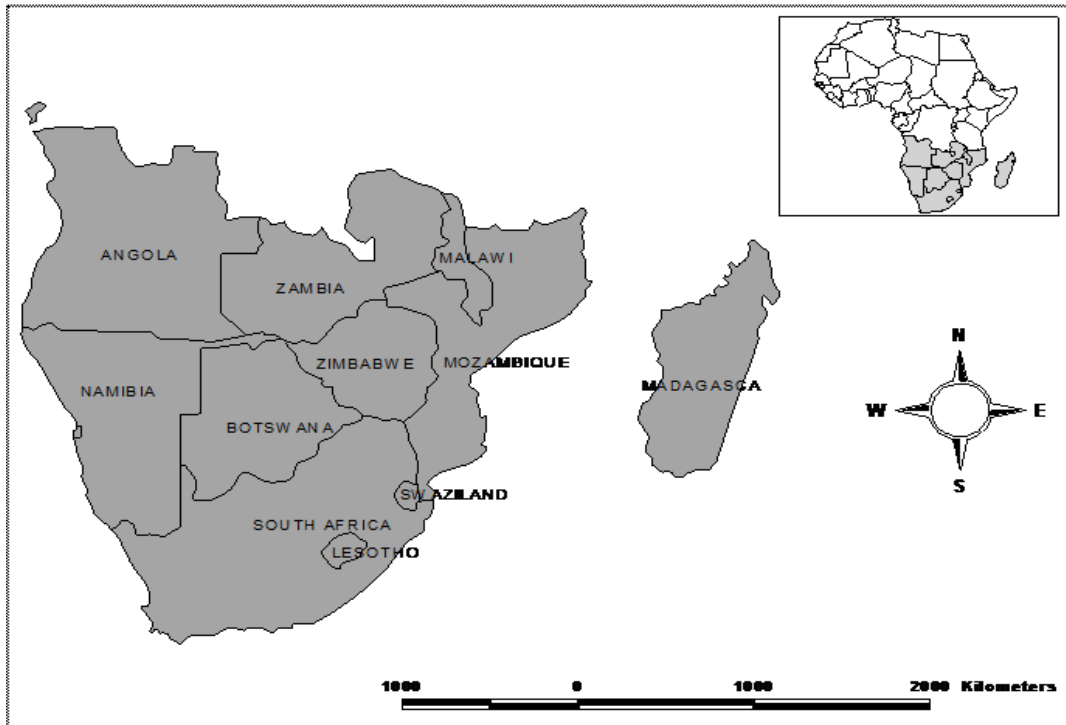
This paper seeks to show that it is possible to avoid the degradation of resources managed under common property regime using experiences from southern Africa. The research also assesses the ways in which trans boundary commons can be conserved. Furthermore, the research explores how international resource management institutions can assist local traditional authorities in Southern Africa to sustainably govern common property resources.

#### *Study area*

The study focused on common property resource management in southern Africa (Figure 1). A few other examples were taken from central and east African countries. Southern Africa is the south most region of Africa. The terrain is varied, ranging from forest and grasslands to deserts. The region has both low-lying coastal areas, and mountains. It is regarded as the richest region in the world in terms of natural resources endowment. There is a wide diversity of ecological regions *inter- alia* grassland, bushveld, karoo, savannah and riparian zones. However, there has been considerable disturbance resulting in habitat loss due to human overpopulation.

The region is home to many cultures and people. The majority of the ethnic groups speak Bantu languages. The process of colonization resulted in a significant number of Europeans in the region ushering in some changes in the management of common property resources with direct and indirect consequences on resource degradation.





**Figure 1 Countries in the southern African region**

## **Method**

The research was premised on an extensive literature review of the resource management discourse in southern Africa. Zimbabwe and South Africa were the main countries of focus although a few other examples from other African countries were used. The data was largely collected through desk top research and key informant interviews. The key informant interviews were conducted with purposively sampled officers from the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) based in Harare and Mahenye Ward in Chipinge Communal Lands and environmental officers from the Environmental Management Agency (EMA) based in Harare and Masvingo. Interviews were also carried out with two Wardens from the Parks and Wildlife Authority of Zimbabwe based at Gonarezhou now part of the Great Limpopo Trans-Frontier Conservation Area. Chiefs Chirau and Nhema of Zvimba and Shurugwi Communal Lands respectively were also interviewed. In addition, a participatory based approach was adopted as the authors drew on own experiences on the dynamics of resource management in southern Africa.

## **Results**

The research found that there was extensive degradation of natural resources in the communal lands of southern Africa. The degradation is in the form of deforestation, overgrazing, soil erosion and river siltation. In Zimbabwe there is widespread degradation in the communal lands such as Chirau, Zvimba, Nhema and Mazungunye. In South Africa the former Bantustans such as Transkei, Ciskei, Venda, KwaZulu, KwaNdebele and Leborwa which are characterized by communal tenure are also largely degraded. This also applies to the former Bantustans in Namibia such as Damaraland, Hereroland, Kaokoland, Kavangoland and Namaland. The degradation in these communal lands is largely due to population pressure, overstocking and weak natural resources governing institutions. Population pressure resulted from European land alienation during colonialism whereby Africans lost vast tracts of land to the Europeans. African traditional natural resources governing institutions such as chiefs, headmen and kraal heads were also disempowered during European settler rule. In Zimbabwe the creation of new resource governing institutions such as Village Development Committees (VIDCOs) and Ward Development Committees (WADCOs) after independence in 1980 resulted in conflicts between these new institutions and traditional chiefs over who should be responsible for allocating resources such as land. These conflicts worsened resource degradation. Moreover, lack of secure tenure rights in communal lands has resulted in extensive degradation.

The research also found that it is possible to conserve natural resources under communal ownership where the benefits accrued in conserving resources are greater than the costs incurred. This is shown by success stories of Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) programmes in Zimbabwe, South Africa, Namibia, Zambia and Botswana. However, some of the CBNRM initiatives are donor funded and face financial problems or die a natural death once the donor pulls out. Financial support and technical assistance from donors also comes with strings attached (there is no free lunch) and the CBNRM initiatives may be forced to do what the donors want and follow their guidelines and management practices in conserving resources. Further, some of the international or global natural resources governing institutions that give donations to the CBNRM initiatives may not be well-versed with local realities in southern Africa regarding access to resources by different social groups and gender relations. In Zimbabwe CAMPFIRE has also been affected by failure of local leadership and lack of democracy in the selection of committees. Moreover, in the post-2000 period when Zimbabwe faced political and macro-economic crises some international Non-Governmental Organizations such as International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) that supported CAMPFIRE pulled out of the country. The post-2000 crises have also resulted in a decline in tourist arrivals at CAMPFIRE ventures.

The existing body of literature and information gathered through key informant interviews point to the fact that in southern Africa, there is great opportunity for implementing a plethora of strategies to avoid the tragedy of the commons under the common property management regimes. These strategies include strengthening institutions, providing security of land tenure, empowering traditional institutions, harmonisation of new and traditional structures/ systems of resource governance and regional cooperation. Regional cooperation is essential in the conservation of regional and global commons such as international rivers, wild animals such as elephants and lions and the atmosphere. The effective and efficient implementation of these strategies by all countries in the region will help conserve natural resources under common property.

## **Discussion**

In southern Africa, there is great opportunity for implementing a plethora of strategies to avoid the tragedy of the commons under the common property management regimes. These strategies include strengthening institutions, providing security of land tenure, empowering traditional institutions, harmonisation of new and traditional structures/ systems of resource governance and regional cooperation.

### *Strengthening responsible institutions*

It is possible to avoid ‘the tragedy of the commons’ with respect to the management of common property resources if the institutions governing these resources are strong and effective. Thus what is important is the effectiveness of institutions governing resources in enforcing exclusion rights. If the institutions are weak the exclusion or control of access of users to these resources will be problematic leading to over-exploitation and degradation. Therefore it is the enforceability of excludability that ensures resource over-exploitation and depletion is checked. Indeed resource over-exploitation and depletion can occur under any property regime be it private or state (*res publica*) if the institutions governing resources fail to enforce excludability. This is because even private landowners are motivated by the desire to increase profits and may thus exceed the recommended livestock carrying capacity of their land leading to overgrazing, increase in soil erosion hazard and biodiversity loss. This degradation can only be checked by the timely intervention of resource governing institutions who then instruct the private landowners to reduce the stocking levels on their farms. Furthermore, the failure by the authorities in Kenya and Tanzania to effectively implement the privatisation and fencing of Maasai group ranches led to overgrazing and failure by cattle to access enclosed water points (Rukuni, 1994). This could be

viewed as the tragedy of privatised property. The Maasai have social norms which allow them to carry rotational grazing thus allowing pastures to regenerate after grazing (Rukuni, 1994). Cattle also have communal access to water points. However, attempts to privatise disturb these traditional values leading to cattle failing to access water, conflicts over resource use and eventually to resource degradation.

#### *Security of tenure*

The invasion of private commercial farms in Zimbabwe in 2000 also shows that if other citizens refuse to respect the rights of those who own land and authorised institutions with obligations to enforce to exclude others refuse to do so the result will be resource degradation under an open access regime (Bond & Manyanya, 2002). The lack of secure tenure for the new settlers worsens the situation as people are forced to over-exploit resources to maximise short-term gains. Further, the hard macro-economic environment in the country has resulted in more people living below the poverty datum line. Poor people are both victims and unwilling agents of resource degradation. Poverty is sometimes seen as a source or driver of biodiversity loss and environmental degradation. A poor person's inability to accumulate wealth from natural resources may lead to overexploitation and environmental degradation (Cavendish, 2000). This view assumes that poverty leads to cycles of further environmental degradation and ever-increasing poverty. Reardon and Vosti (1995) note that poverty restricts household ability to make resource-enhancing or land-conservation investments. Further, environmental degradation and declining resource entitlements, reduce the productivity of poor people's assets including the effects of bad health on labour productivity contributing to further impoverishment, but environmentally damaging behaviour on the part of the poor themselves is usually a result of a lack of alternative choices (Reardon & Vosti, 1995). Agricultural crops such as maize and cotton fetch lower prices that cannot adequately sustain livelihoods. Thus people cut firewood which is in high demand in urban areas due to electrical power shortages countrywide. People also illegally extract pit and river sand to sell to builders in urban settlements. Further, they engage in illegal mineral extraction (Utete, 2003). In 2006 the government launched '*Operation Chikorokoza Chapera*' in an effort to end illegal mineral extraction. However, the operation was a one-off thing. Also to some extent the operation was undermined by corrupt law enforcement officials trying to survive the harsh economic situation in the country.

#### *Empowering traditional institutions*

Further, Murphree (1991) argues that resource degradation in Zimbabwean communal lands is mainly due to the disempowering of traditional institutions during the British colonial era which even continued in the period immediately after independence in

1980. Chiefs, sub-chiefs, headmen and kraal heads in effect constituted the communal lands' administrative and legal institutions with historically defined areas and sets of rules and regulations clearly understood by the rural people (Mamimine & Mandivengerei, 2001).

Colonialism also worsened the situation by alienating indigenous, and frequently poor, African populations from resources they had always enjoyed (Chenje, Sola & Paleczny, 1998). With colonialism, Africans were pushed to marginal areas such as the Gwaai and Shangani reserves created for the Ndebele after the Anglo-Ndebele War of 1893. These areas are characterized by sandy soils and low rainfall and therefore more prone to degradation. Africans were also overcrowded in reserves whereas in the pre-colonial period they could move freely giving grasslands time to regenerate. Rukuni (1994) also notes that communal lands are generally of lowest agricultural potential in Zimbabwe with 74 percent thereof located in Natural Regions 4 and 5, areas receiving erratic rains which are on average less than 650 millimetres (mm) per annum. The soils are generally light. Considering that these areas have the highest rural population densities the management of resources is bound to be a problem. For example, in 1997 Zimbabwean communal lands had a population density of 32.6 persons per square kilometre as compared to 9 persons per square kilometre in large-scale private commercial farms (Ministry of Agriculture, 1997). Further, the forced movement of indigenous people from fertile lands to poor lands resulted in indigenous knowledge systems developed over centuries being either moved or lost as they were no longer applicable to the new areas (Matowanyika et al., 1995).

Colonialists even acknowledge that in pre-colonial times, people of Zimbabwe lived in harmony with nature, doing nothing to disturb the balance between people and their environment (Tracey, 1947). For example, indigenous traditional societies in the country practiced and enforced wildlife conservation through timely hunting of animals and birds, avoiding indiscriminate killing (Chenje et al., 1998). Societies believed wanton killing was punishable by the spirits. As a result control mechanisms are found in traditional taboos, totems and customs. For example, the custom of totems forbade people to eat certain animals such as vultures and hyenas. Taboos forbade the killing of young animals and females in gestation (Chenje et al., 1998). Hunting on sacred places was also prohibited. The killing of rare species such as pangolin and python could only be done with permission from the chief (Chenje et al., 1998). However, these indigenous practices are being eroded by the spread of Western culture through globalisation.

Wetlands were also protected as sacred places. In Wedza communal lands wetlands were generally left untouched as it was thought that they were visited by ancestral

spirits and, therefore, could never be visited by a living human being (Gumbo, 1988). Further, trees were protected through traditional taboos and customs. Some trees such as *parinari curatellifolia* (hissing tree) were not cut because of their cultural importance. Fruit trees such as *syzigium* (waterberry), *uapaca kirkiana* (wild loquat), *azanza garckeana* (snot-apple) and *ziziphus mauritiana* (buffalo thorn) were also protected. Debarking was done only on one side and ring barking was prohibited. Any violations of community sanctions were dealt with in such a way that others were discouraged from breaking the rules. For example, blindness was quite a usual sanction of the spirits for individuals who exploited resources before certain periods of the year. In some parts of the country such as Mutoko, harvesting young edible caterpillars (*madora or macibi*) was a taboo and offenders often lost eyesight and were left to wonder in the veld for weeks without food (Tracey, 1947).

Following colonialism, there was the subordination of traditional leadership to central government (Masiwa, 2002). This ensured that the role of traditional leadership in common property management was curtailed. The role of traditional leadership was reduced to that of enforcement of centrally-designed environmental laws (Masiwa, 2002). Traditional leaders lost their authority to the Native Commissioners established by the colonial administrators. Traditional leaders simply helped in the implementation of legislation and policies enacted by the settler colonial government and Native Commissioners. As traditional leaders became increasingly associated with the colonial government they became alienated from their people (Maphosa, 2002).

Although the independent government of Zimbabwe made attempts to redress the common property management problems by empowering communal farmers through land redistribution and the decentralisation of power to local authorities, the desired objective of empowering the communal farmers has not been achieved. Neither has management of the commons improved, as evidenced by the ever-increasing land degradation taking place in communal areas (Masiwa, 2002).

Further, the post-independence decentralized system of local government has experienced a number of problems. One of the problems is the tendency by bureaucrats to use such structures as VIDCOs and WADCOs as convenient units of mobilisation rather than for real community participation. Bureaucrats have tended to disempower people by using these decentralized units to rubber-stamp the implementation of centrally-derived objectives (Mamimine, 2002). In many cases VIDCOs and WADCOs have failed to elicit popular participation of the rural population in development planning and administration (Mamimine, 2002).

*Harmonisation of new and traditional structures/ systems of resource governance*

The relationship between the new structures of resource governance and those of traditional authority has been problematic. The then Zimbabwean Prime Minister's 1984 decentralisation directive did not specify the nature of the relationship between them. This was worsened by the efforts of the immediate post-independence government to reduce the powers of traditional leaders for having collaborated with the colonial governments (Maphosa, 2002). VIDCOs and WADCOs were therefore perceived as having been created to replace traditional authority. This resulted in conflicts and competition for allegiance between these institutions. Conflicts regarding the allocation of land, for instance, became endemic. These conflicts have led to the breakdown of accountable institutions thus accelerating resource degradation in Zimbabwean communal lands (Rukuni, 1994).

The situation is worsened by the unwillingness of government to relinquish *de jure* ownership of communal land. Thus all Zimbabwean communal land is legally state land and the role of traditional structures in natural resource management is significantly reduced. Coupled with the state's inability to effectively manage resource use, this produces conditions akin to those of an open access system leading to serious environmental degradation (Maphosa, 2002). The current poor and unstable macro-economic environment prevailing in the country has also to a large extent worsened the state's inability to effectively manage resource use as it has resulted in resource administrators being highly corrupt. The resource administrators can take bribes and let people exploit wood fuel and river sand for sell.

In South Africa the creation of African homelands (Bantustans) during the apartheid era led to widespread resource degradation in these areas (King & Mccusker, 2007). There is incisive soil erosion and widespread deforestation in these former African homelands due to high population densities (Garrett, 1998). Traditional resource governing institutions also lost their authority to the apartheid regime. In Ciskei, now part of the Eastern Cape up to 46% of the land is moderately or severely eroded and 39% of pastures overgrazed (Garrett, 1998). King and Mccusker (2007) note that livelihood systems in the former Bantustans are just as vulnerable under the neoliberal policies of the post-1994 independent South African government as they were under apartheid. Although the post-apartheid democratic government is making attempts to redress these problems through land reform, promoting the use of renewable energy, empowering traditional authorities, wealth redistribution and rural economic diversification it lacks the financial capacity to effectively tackle widespread resource degradation in the former homelands (King & Mccusker, 2007).



The success of Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) programmes in southern Africa also shows that it is possible to avoid 'the tragedy of the commons' where common property regimes are effective in enforcing exclusion rights. CBNRM initiatives such as CAMPFIRE in Zimbabwe, Administrative Management Design for Game Management (ADMADE) in Zambia, Botswana Natural Resources Management Programme (BNRMP) in Botswana and Living in a Finite Environment (LIFE) in Namibia have helped conserve resources (Rihoy, 1995). These CBNRM programmes also show that for a community to manage its resource base sustainably it must receive direct benefits arising from its use. These benefits must exceed the perceived costs of managing the resource and must be secure over time (Rihoy, 1995). Thus it is possible to manage the commons without the tragedy.

In Binga District of north-western Zimbabwe the CAMPFIRE initiative has reduced poaching activities (CAMPFIRE, 2008). Binga is home to the minority Tonga group. Dahl and Tevera (1998) showed that the impoverishment of the Tonga was compounded by the colonial state, through various regulations that were used to deny the group access to Lake Kariba water and fish resources previously granted by traditional common access rights. The Tonga were also evicted from their homes when National Parks such as Matusadona were created. They were no longer permitted to hunt the animals and harvest the plants now found inside protected areas (Dahl & Tevera, 1998). Moreover animals frequently roam outside Park boundaries, destroying crops and killing livestock and sometimes people. This created much conflict between local people and National Park staff, often resulting in illegal hunting. Local people generally considered wildlife to be a nuisance, not a resource. However, CAMPFIRE changed this by empowering local communities to benefit from resource conservation (CAMPFIRE, 2008). CAMPFIRE has also had the same success story of reducing poaching activities in Mahenye ward of Chipinge district where local indigenous people were displaced by the creation of Gonarezhou National Park (Murphree, 2001). CAMPFIRE is thus helping communities manage the environment in ways which are both sustainable and appropriate. Further, the programme creates more revenues for wildlife management and conservation projects in areas that would otherwise not receive adequate financial support for conservation. For example, CAMPFIRE revenue amounted to US\$ 786 719 and US\$ 2.25 million in 2005 and 2006 respectively (CAMPFIRE, 2008). This is very important given the poor macro-economic environment in the country at the moment.

The programme, however, is burdened by problems of inequitable income distribution. There is also conflict in the relevant rural districts between those wards receiving proceeds from the programme and those not benefiting. This conflict is more critical where the wild animals in question destroy crops in the wards not benefiting. Rural District Councils have not developed effective and efficient mechanisms to compensate those who have sustained damage. The offended appear willing to support the

programme if they are adequately compensated (Rukuni, 1994). CAMPFIRE also faces challenges of lack of secure tenure and rights over wildlife by local communities (Murphree, 2001). CAMPFIRE also suffers from a shortage of financial resources as donors pull out or due to donor fatigue (Mudzengi & Chiutsi, 2014). Further, dependence on donors results in the programme following management practices which are favoured by the donors and this may relegate the role of traditional institutions in resource management. According to Balint and Mashinya (2006) there is also lack of democracy in the selection of CAMPFIRE committees. There is also failure of local leadership to efficiently and effectively manage the programme and after 2000 there has been lack of external support to assist fragile local participatory decision-making institutions (Balint & Mashinya, 2006). The sustainability of CAMPFIRE has also been negatively affected by a decline in tourist arrivals in the post-2000 period due to the unstable macro-economic environment in the country (Mudzengi & Chiutsi, 2014).

### *Regional cooperation*

With regards to transboundary common property resources such as shared watercourse systems effective cooperative action by states can prevent degradation. Trans boundary common property resources are resources which belong to two or more countries. Examples are trans boundary rivers such as the Zambezi and Limpopo which flow through two or more countries and their pollution knows no boundaries. For example, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) member states signed the SADC Protocol on Shared Watercourse Systems in 1995 which seeks to achieve equitable, sustainable and reasonable utilization of shared watercourse systems such as the Buzi, Congo, Cunene, Cuvelai, Incomati, Limpopo, Maputo, Okavango, Orange, Pungwe, Ruvuma, Save and Zambezi (Ramoeli, 2002). Degradation can occur when riparian states fail to respect the provisions of the protocol. Thus Shoko (2002) notes that the flooding events in Mozambique and parts of South Africa of 2000-2001 have to a large extent been blamed on siltation resulting from alluvial gold panning in the Zambezi basin. Therefore the failure by the Zimbabwean authorities to effectively end illegal alluvial gold panning contributed to the siltation and degradation of the Zambezi river system to a great extent.

Regional commons such as game animals that move across national borders can also be conserved through the formation of Trans-Frontier Conservation Areas. To this end Trans-Frontier Conservation Areas such as the Great Limpopo, Mapungubwe and Kavango-Zambezi have been created in order to manage wildlife sustainably. The Trans-Frontier Conservation Areas are enhancing regional cooperation in conserving wildlife and facilitating the sustainable development of border areas in southern Africa. However, the development of these Trans-Frontier Conservation Areas is funded financially and technically by international Non-Governmental Organizations and global natural resources management institutions such as the World Wide Fund

for Nature, Peace Parks Foundation, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as well as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (Bretton Wood institutions) which tend to relegate the effectiveness of traditional institutions and local people in resource governance (Hanks, 2003). Hanks (2003) further notes that all too often the majority of people living in the Global South appear to be incidental to its development rather than its focus. Wolmer (2003) also notes that the perception in Zimbabwe about the Great Limpopo Trans-Frontier Park, particularly in government, is that the process is driven by the top-down, external agenda of foreign donors and international Non-Governmental Organizations seeking to advance neo-colonialism. Nevertheless, it is now widely accepted that local communities in and adjacent to the Trans-Frontier Conservation Areas must be consulted at the start of the development process, and at all subsequent stages. Stakeholder involvement and total transparency are essential, and all parties need to have some power, including the power to reward or sanction others (Hanks, 2003).

Global commons such as the atmosphere and oceans can also be sustainably managed if all member states ratify and respect Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and conventions. These international conventions and protocols include the United Nations Law of the Sea (1982), Montreal Protocol on the Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (1987), Kyoto Protocol (1997) and Climate Change Convention (Chenje et al., 1998). To this end Southern African countries are participating in carbon trading projects which seek to mitigate the destruction of the stratospheric ozone layer by greenhouse gases. However, some countries are prioritising industrial development in order to be competitive on global markets with little regard to environmental protection and sustainability. For example the United States of America is refusing to ratify the Kyoto Protocol. Thus, the need to maintain or increase industrial productivity contributes to the degradation of the commons in southern Africa. Further, international resource management institutions such as the UNEP, IUCN, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and Global Environment Facility have been formed to conserve the commons (Chenje et al., 1998). However, these institutions tend to underestimate the role of traditional authorities in resource conservation and fail to understand local realities in the developing Global South (Mamimine & Mandivengerei, 2001).

## **Conclusion**

From the above it can be concluded that ‘the tragedy of the commons’ can be avoided with respect to the management of common property resources. The overexploitation

and depletion of common property resources can be avoided where institutions are effective in enforcing exclusion rights. Thus it is the disempowering of traditional resource governing institutions that has largely led to 'the tragedy of the commons' in the communal lands of southern African countries. Common property tragedies in the Hardin sense seem not to be the rule but the exception. The tragedies tend to be related to the breakdown of existing commons systems due to disruptions that have originated externally to the community. From a historical point of view, the tragedies tend to be episodic, with recovery sometimes following disruption. With regards to regional and global commons effective cooperative action like the ratification of and respect for protocols and conventions by all states is crucial in preventing resource degradation.

### **Implications**

The sustainable management of common property resources in southern Africa is facing challenges due to globalization. Globalization is limiting the authority and influence of traditional leadership over the management of common property resources. This poses challenges as authority is being taken away from local and national resource management institutions and being given to international institutions. Environmental resource management is becoming increasingly globalised as international conventions, laws and structures seek to regulate the terms on which people access natural resources. These international institutions may not be fully aware of local realities in developing countries, where there is a conflict between sustainable resource utilization (as well as allocation) and poverty. Gender also becomes an issue given that males and females have different access rights to the commons. To a large extent, women are more directly involved in the utilization of the commons. For example, they need to collect firewood and water. Therefore international institutions need to fully understand gender relations in developing countries especially in Africa, the continent probably experiencing most severe resource degradation and socio-economic deprivation.

Thus, maybe international resource management institutions need to leave local traditional authorities with some rights to enforce excludability to the commons. What local traditional authorities need is to be fully empowered and capacitated to effectively enforce excludability. In this regard, international natural resources governing institutions and Non-Governmental Organisations as well as multilateral and bilateral donor aid agencies such as the Bretton Wood institutions can greatly assist by channeling funds and other resources. These resources can be used to effectively exclude non-users through, for example providing fencing infrastructure.

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## **Sites of political and cultural resistance: Performance spaces in post-independence Zimbabwean theatre 1980-1990**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper engages the framing of performance spaces in post-independence Zimbabwe theatre practice as sites of political and cultural resistance. It argues that these (alternative) spaces/ places of performance were/are sites on which political and cultural hegemony was fought in post-independence Zimbabwe. Through interrogating Amakhosi Theatre Productions' (ATP) use of alternative spaces of performance as intervention mechanisms in the fight against hegemony in Zimbabwe between 1980 and 1990, this paper will demonstrate how public spaces such as the Stanley Square become contested and active places when they are used to host performances. As a theoretical exploration, this paper borrows Doreen Massey's (1999) concept of the 'social space', as a framework of engaging and understanding Stanley Square (and other alternative performance spaces) as part of the social relations between ATP and Bulawayo City Council; Amakhosi and Stanley Hall; ATP and its spect-actors as well as ATP and the greater Bulawayo community. Methodologically, this paper will draw from interviews with Cont Mhlanga and literature relevant to the performance history of ATP.*

**Keywords:** performance, space, Amakhosi, Zimbabwe, political, cultural

### **Introduction**

Within the African theatre enterprise, performance spaces provide key entry points into understanding theories and practice as they open up debates about the relationship between performers and audiences (Kerr, 2007). These debates relate to aspects of aesthetic representation and presentation. Performance spaces within the Zimbabwean theatre industry come in different types and forms, largely determined by their location, architectural design and use. Because performance spaces are attached to locale and geographic positionality, the kind of performance done within them either conforms to the ideological status quo or revolts and seek to develop new narratives and conventions of cultural representation and presentation.

It is within this continuum that (alternative) theatre performance spaces emerge in post-independence Zimbabwe. This paper positions Stanley Square, an (alternative) theatre performance space, as politically and culturally contested. This contestation is a result of Amakhosi Theatre Production's (ATP) reclaiming of this public space, originally set for community meetings and youth clubs into a theatre performance space. The Stanley Square is a community space which was used free of charge by the Makokoba community. The Dragons Karate Club, a club by Makokoba youths, used the Stanley Square as its training and development centre.

In Zimbabwe, Bulawayo City Council had, during the colonial period, built Youth Centres in the townships. These Youth Centres were age regulated. Mthwakazi, Iminyela, Tshaka and Luveve Youth Centres were specifically set aside for the under 16. The membership of the Dragons Karate Club was limited only to young people over the age of 18 (interview Cont Mhlanga). As the only community space in Makokoba, the Stanley Square, thus, became the operating space for the Dragons Karate Club. However, when the Dragons Karate Club transformed into ATP, they were kicked out of the space. This left ATP's constituency, standing at 83, in the cold (personal interview Mhlanga). This called for engagement with the Bulawayo City Council (BCC) for it to avail rehearsal and performance spaces in the same manner it was doing for martial arts, karate and technical skills training.

ATP's engagement with Bulawayo city fathers adopted conventional and non-conventional approaches. Conventionally, Amakhosi leveraged through councillors and administrators in the city establishment to be allowed to use the Stanley Square as a rehearsal and performance space. On the sidelines, Amakhosi started performing at beer halls and beer gardens. This built up a strong community support and buy in, which provided necessary pressure on councillors and administration officials. Finally, the city council grudgingly allowed ATP to use the Stanley Square as a rehearsal space. At the political level (city council), there were moderate councillors who fought and supported ATP's application to use Stanley Square as a rehearsal and performance space. However, there were some councillors who strongly rejected this application because they felt it would contaminate the standards of theatre production (Chukwu-Okoronkwo, 2012; Kerr & Chifunyise, 2004). It is within this continuum, that Stanley Square becomes a contested space within the political and cultural landscape.

### *Theoretical framework*

This paper borrows Massey's (1999) theoretical concept of the 'social space', which manifests in different formats; geographical space, economic space, cultural space and political space. The basic tenet in the conceptualisation process of these different kinds of categories is the space-time relationship as Massey (1999, p.2) advises; "space

must be conceptualised integrally with time; indeed that the aim should be to think always in terms of space-time.” The spatial and temporal highlights the history, material conditions and context that moderate how spaces are experienced and used. What Massey’s conceptualisation of space provides to this paper is a framework of engagement and understanding of Stanley Square (and other performance spaces) as part of the social relations between ATP and Bulawayo City Council; Amakhosi and Stanley Hall; ATP and its spect-actors as well as ATP and the greater Bulawayo community.

The adoption of Massey’s concept of the ‘social space’ highlights a politics of containment (Young-Jahangeer, 2016; Hooks, 1984). The politics of containment has been engaged in gender (Browne, 2013; Butler, 1988) and ethnic relations. In colonial Africa, the parcelling of land into reserves, hostels, African townships and apartheid pass laws were mechanisms of containing the indigenous natives to certain spaces (Ramphela, 1993; Mamdani, 1996). Engaging containment through spatiality in the form of recreational spaces and (theatre) performance spaces provides a different view into understanding the politics of space in the post colony.

#### *Overview of ATP’s works*

ATP’s plays fall into two general categories: political satires and social plays. The political satires were a means of responding to certain political situations. These plays were also a means of pushing government towards certain ideas or policies. The social plays engaged issues that affected the community. ATP used its political satires and social plays at three levels: to communicate, mobilize and engage communities. As such, many of ATP’s social plays such as *Bantwana! Bantwana!* (1982), *Ngizozula Lawe!* (1984) and *Stitsha!* (1992) engage varied social issues ranging from drug abuse, teenage pregnancy and street vending in Bulawayo.

The political satires were motivated largely by William Shakespeare’s political works. ATP’s *Workshop Negative* (1986) engages the polyethnic and polylingual controversy over culture, politics and leadership in Zimbabwe that had not been experienced before (Kaarsholm, 1999). *Workshop Negative* is characterised by Owen Seda (2004, p.142) as “an honest assessment of (newly) independent Zimbabwe’s varied and contentious attitudes towards racial integration and socialist transformation”. It is a call to the leadership to return to the core values that anchored the liberation struggle.

The play is set in a tool-making factory owned by a former liberation commissar Mkhize (Thokozani Masha). Mkhize has two employees: Zulu, a black ex-guerrilla (Mackay Tickey) and a white ex-Rhodie (Christopher John). In addition to being former adversaries during the war, the two have to negotiate and manage their emotions

as they share the same working and living space under the government's new policy of racial reconciliation and integration (Seda, 2004). Through exposing the hypocrisy behind socialist transformation championed by the elite liberation leaders, *Workshop Negative* is a condemnation of post-independence corrupt leadership. The emergence of ATP at Stanley Square provided the people of Bulawayo with an opportunity to engage contentious political issues. Moreover, the fusion of indigenous folk music and stick fighting in *Ngizozula Lawe* (1984), *Workshop Negative* and *Dabulap!* (1990) generated interest among the elderly members of the community who had been off the cultural centres in the beer halls (personal interview Mhlanga, 2015).

As alluded to earlier on, while ATP could rehearse at the Stanley Square, they were not allowed to perform either in the Stanley Hall or Stanley Square because theatre performances were not part of the activities on the roster of the space. It was until 1982 when, at the insistence of Michael Ndubiwa, the full council allowed the Stanley Hall's booking for *Book of Lies* (1982). However, the approval came with stringent conditions. One of the conditions was that the Director of Housing would sit in the auditorium and assess whether the performance qualified to be performed in the space. The Stanley Hall was thus transformed into a place where political and cultural censorship was enforced.

The conceptualisation of space as a social construct ideologically coded and grounded in political culture provides a framework of engaging how theatre practice exploits space, positively or negatively, in post-independence Zimbabwe. This engagement highlights how performance space becomes a contestable terrain in the post-independence Zimbabwean political and socio-economic landscape. Henri Lefebvre (1991, p.12) argues that

when we evoke 'energy', we must immediately note that energy has to be deployed within a space. When we evoke 'space', we must immediately indicate what occupies that space and how it does so: the deployment of energy in relation to 'points', we must immediately say what it is that moves or changes therein.

The energy that Lefebvre identifies in the context of this paper, refers to different kinds of performances that take place within spaces of performances. Reading this in the context ATP, the Square becomes contested because it was used to contain the 'energy' that challenges, exposes and lampoons parochial, elitist and corrupt government. When *Workshop Negative* and other political satires were performed herein, the Stanley Square **was** transformed into a site of struggle for contending narratives. On the one hand is the corruption ridden government which operates as day-time socialist and night-time capitalist (Mhlanga,1986). On the other hand, are

liberal Zimbabweans who demand responsible leadership from political figures and a clear holistic developmental path from the masses. While the government used repressive laws, arrests and intimidation, ATP used the Stanley Square to communicate and engage with the community. This engagement sought to expose the double standards of leaders and galvanise the community towards social change. This process of challenging authority and pressing for responses attached political agency to the Stanley Square.

Conventionally, in Zimbabwean Ndebele culture, (performance) space is communally owned. The (performance) space is the space in which people live and undertake (perform) their everyday activities. The Stanley Square falls into this category. As a city council owned space, built for the Makokoba Township residents, the Stanley Square was a communal space. It is in this light that ATP's demand for space got support from community elders and leaders such as Barry Daka, Ndubiwa and the then Home Affairs Minister, Dumiso Dabengwa. The support that ATP got from Cont Mhlanga's father, a ZAPU member and Dumiso Dabengwa presented the theatre group, in the eyes of the government, as a political extension of ZAPU. This extended to all the performance spaces in which ATP performed.

However, in a globalised society, the communal lived space is transformed into 'schizo-space' (Jameson, 1991) which is dominated by the logic of profit focussed spatial organisation. Within this space "old loyalties of class or gender or race fragment, dislocate, rupture, disperse; new loyalties of class and gender and race interrupt, disrupt, recombine, fuse" (Keith & Pile, 1993, p. 3). ATP used the Stanley Square as the space to develop these new classes and disrupt the emerging corrupt elitist individualities. The multi-racial cast of *Workshop Negative* challenged the government's sincerity and commitment to racial integration.

### **Discussion: Performance spaces as communities of resistance**

The emergence of the (independent) constitutional political state in Africa created rivalry between the artist and the state over the articulation of cultural laws that regulate society (wa Thiongo, 1997). This conspicuous and condescending relationship between the state and the arts manifests in varied forms ranging from political censorship/self-censorship, selective financing and infrastructure development. Important to note is that the fierce rivalry is only with those that challenge the state's resource administration, ideology, historical narrative and policies. The use of performance spaces as "strategies of self-hood - singular or communal - that initiate new signs of identity and innovative sites of collaboration and contestation" (Bhabha, 1984, p.1-2)

provide an institutional alternative to challenge and engage with the state. Performance spaces thus become political: sites of struggle against political hegemony and domination.

A political space according to Ramphele (1993) determines the framework within which social relationships are conducted and legitimised. Political space is

that aspect of social relations concerned with the capacity to marshal authoritative and allocative resources. Policies pursued by a given political and economic system sets limits on choices which individuals can exercise within a particular area of jurisdiction [...]. (Ramphele, 1993, p.3)

As a community space, the Stanley Square was used by the colonial government to police youth participation in political activities through monitoring their participation in community meetings, youth clubs and political rallies. The Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) independent government inherited this policy which stood in the way of the development of a new identity narrative cognisant of the political and economic conditions obtaining in the new Zimbabwe. The Stanley Square thus gained political agency, as it became a site for the struggle to liberate other recreational centres for the over 18s in Bulawayo and craft a new performance narrative grounded on the materiality of township life.

In 1981, the Robert Mugabe led government unleashed the South Korean trained 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade soldiers onto Matabeleland and southern parts of Midlands (CCJPZ, 1997). From the government's perspective, this brigade was meant to quell political disturbances caused by dissidents (former ZIPRA liberation soldiers), that had affected these areas (CCJPZ, 1997). This military operation by the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade has become known as *gukurahundi* (throw away the chaff). This was a narrative that instituted the spatial marginalisation of Matabeleland and regional animosity between Mashonaland and Matabeleland. This spatial marginalisation narrative is important if we are to understand and appreciate performance spaces as sites of political and cultural resistance in Matabeleland. The closure of schools, community and business centres forced young people to flee the countryside to urban and peri-urban centres. While other Zimbabwean provinces developed and put in place long term developmental programmes, the inherited infrastructure in the Matabeleland regions was destroyed by the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade and its human resource scattered all over the world.

The Matabeleland community needed a spatial performative placement to respond to this narrative; Stanley Square was the most convenient due to its location and historical significance. The very first workers union meeting and strike led by the Rhodesia Railways African Employees Association (RRAEA) in 1945 started at the Stanley



Square (Vickery, 2010; Mpofu, 2010; Phimister & Raftopoulos, 2000). The revolutionary United African National Congress (ANC), National Democratic Party (NDP) and Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) used Stanley Square as their fortress before and during the liberation struggle. In this light, the Stanley Square got inscribed with dissenting political ideologies and signs; a centre for radicalism and opposition to the status quo. In light of this history, ATP's application to use the Stanley Square as a rehearsal and performance space in 1980 to the BCC, received mixed reactions. On the one hand, the government's pursuance of *gukurahundi* had forced the closure of recreational centres, businesses and transport routes (CCJPZ, 1997) in greater Matabeleland and Bulawayo. In this regard, some councillors strongly opposed the application in the interests of security. On the other hand, some ZAPU aligned councillors felt these spaces such as Stanley Square, became alternative platforms for discussing national issues (Zenenga, 2011). Finally, ATP was allowed to rehearse after business hours (5-8pm) on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays in the Stanley Hall.

While this was a positive progressive step in terms of ATP's initial application, it came with complications. The BCC instructed its caretaker to open the Hall at 5pm and lock it up at exactly 8pm. This meant that if ATP members came in late, they were either locked out of the space or had to negotiate with the care taker. The same applied with finishing/ locking up time. They were, in so many instances, forced to stop their rehearsal process because it was time to lock up. The closure of public spaces by the government had a direct impact on the operational processes of ATP; rehearsal and performance. ATP's playmaking methodology included among other strategies, open rehearsals that solicited community involvement in the creation of the story. These open rehearsals were grounded in the belief that "in African performance] actors and actresses do not play roles; they play with roles" (Banham, 2004, p.9). As such the open rehearsal process provided an opportunity for the actors and actresses to introduce their roles to the community. This was in violation of the emergency curfew that prohibited gatherings of more than twelve (12) people. I will return to explore the implications of the open rehearsal vis-a-vis the operation.

#### *Political-educational and cultural spaces*

Political-educational space refers to the symbolic framework through which social interaction, conventions, norms and discourses are legitimated (Ramphela, 1993; Young-Jahangeer, 2016). This space provides critical and intellectual awareness of emerging discourses. It is this space that legitimises emerging discourses and introduces them to practice. In 1988, ATP was summoned to the University of Zimbabwe to perform *Workshop Negative* at the Great Hall. This performance was for the purposes of assessment and critiquing by the academic and government panel in the form of a



post-performance discussion. However, in my view, the summoning of Amakhosi Theatre Productions and the bad treatment they received at the hands of the academia (Robert McLaren) and government (Stephen Chifunyise and Ngugi wa Mirii) highlights an interest by government to micro-manage the theatre group outside its fortress; Stanley Hall. One of the major issues raised by the panel was that *Workshop Negative* misrepresented post-independence Zimbabwe. On the other hand, the students who had filled up the 2000 plus Great Hall auditorium defended ATP as they considered *Workshop Negative* as a candid and honest representation of facts. That fateful evening sparked a continuous student riot which spread to other major cities in Zimbabwe.

The main argument raised by McLaren, Chifunyise and wa Mirri lay in the struggle to control the emerging new theatre narrative. At independence in 1980, the Zimbabwean theatre industry emerged fragmented. This fragmentation was due to ideological differences as highlighted by Seda (2004, p.137);

At independence therefore, the emergence of segregation, polarisation and division in Zimbabwean theatre was part of a residual consciousness of confrontation which had come out of the nationalist struggle on the one hand, and the tenacity of colonialist occupying forces on the other.

This residual consciousness manifested itself in the form of organisations that sought to safeguard and fight for their cultural and political space within the cultural industry in Zimbabwe. On one hand was the National Theatre Organisation (NTO), which controlled and administered purpose-built theatres in Zimbabwe. On the other hand was the Zimbabwe Association of Community Theatre (ZACT), which sought to mobilise community theatre groups and create a counter-structure to the NTO. ATP was a member of the NTO and as such their persecution by academic institutions and government was a direct attack on the NTO. It can thus, be argued that the persecution of Amakhosi Theatre Productions by academia and government institutions was a mechanism to rattle the momentum that was gathering in Bulawayo and Matabeleland provinces within community theatre groups. Stanley Square was slowly becoming a popular space for training and collaboration work by community theatre groups. In challenging and rubbishing ATP's systems of producing, quality of work and methods of presentation, the academia and government institutions sought to disturb the tide of flow and lure community groups within the Bulawayo Arts Association to switch allegiance to ZACT.

The cultural space relates to the configuration space according to indigenous (context specific) spatial concepts. This does not only capture the physical forms, but also the behaviours associated with these physical forms (Balme, 1999). The cultural space is inclusive of the stage space and the dramatic space. The stage space, according to

Balme (1999, p.229), designates the stage itself (performance area) while dramatic space refers to the “spatial semantics indicated by the dramatic text”. The cultural space therefore influences performance spaces in terms of their physical form as with Carlson’s (1989, p.6) observation: “places of performance generate social and cultural meanings of their own which in turn help to structure the meaning of the entire theatre process”.

In light of Carlson’s observation, the Stanley Square is a location of struggle for survival and recognition (by ATP) and censorship and control (by the state). Operating in the interstices of political policing and community resistance, the history associated with Stanley Square “generate a whole spectrum of connotative meanings in addition to their functional level of significance” (Balme, 1999, p.230). Its cartographic placement in the oldest township of Makokoba further influences the construction of receptive codes and structure messages from performances. Compositionally, cultural spaces in Zimbabwe adopt circular spatial configurations with cyclical lines that speak to the infiniteness of life. The link between certain characteristics of cultural performance spaces and African life positions spatiality as a central figure in the development and dissemination of information, norms and values, representation and presentation of culture, religion and life. The colonial government dismantled, stifled and suffocated the African performance narrative through closing down cultural spaces such as the Khami and Great Zimbabwe enclaves (Kaarsholm, 1993; Seda, 2004). Performances were then packaged into purpose-built spaces reinforced by a foreign culture.

The purpose-built spaces such as Bulawayo Theatre, Harare Repertory Theatre and Masvingo Charles Austin perpetuated an exclusionary and selective cultural policy which favoured exotic arts over indigenous forms of art. This fortified the resolve by community based theatre groups such as ATP to perform critical works that challenged the hegemonic tendencies and traditions by the government in their own spaces within their own communities. As discussed above, these spaces had to be fought for. Spatially, the Stanley Square has two spaces; the Stanley Hall and Square. The Stanley Hall has an end-on stage and floor-level flat auditorium while the Square adopts a circular form with racked concrete-slab auditorium with the stage in the centre. ATP preferred the Square for its performances while most of the rehearsals took place in the Stanley Hall. The spatial configuration of the Square identifies with *isibaya* (kraal/ the yard), traditionally used in ceremonies such *Inxwala* (thanksgiving) ceremony. Performatively, the basic circular forms “reflect the idea of the traditional storyteller with his/her audience gathered around” (Balme, 1999, p.234). It is this circular form that influences the appreciation of space in the African paradigm. In so much as life is circular in the African perspective, houses are circular, pots are circular, so are fire places as well as yards that provide protection to people’s homes.

The spatial configuration of the Stanley Square speaks to a “politics of change” (Radcliffe, 2011, p.131) due to its “powerful spatial metaphor that speaks of something beyond the coloniser-colonised binary” (Radcliffe, 2011, p.131). ATP’s usage of the Stanley Square leads to the “construction of cultural identity as a difference, in the spirit of alterity or otherness that departs from the recognition of the frequent incommensurability of cultural difference” (Bhabha, 1990, p.209). Through *Ngizozula Lawe* (1980) and *Stitsha* (1992), ATP “utilises the form, convention and content of state maps” (Radcliffe, 2011, p.132) as its tools in the struggle for political and social change.

#### *Geographical-political space: Disrupting narratives*

Geographical space, according to Massey (1999, p.51), relates to aspects of locational surface that determine “distribution of resources, developments in communication and the production process”. This locational surface is “as full of surprises, changeability, social pressures, insecurities, opportunities and pitfalls, as are the inhabitants” (Morris, 2010, p.70). The majority of plays by ATP, both political satires and social plays explored these characteristics of the geographical space. The transference of these characteristics through performance onto the Stanley Square stage space transformed the ordinary Square into a political space.

The political space relates to the spheres of power that wield influence on social relations. The very fact that the national structural changes involved a geographical restructuring meant that people in different parts of the country had different political spaces (Massey, 1999). ATP, therefore, used the Stanley Square as political space to discuss and debate issues that affected Bulawayo and Matabeleland. In *Ngizozula Lawe* (1984), ATP makes use of popular art forms as a strategy to bring back the elderly from beer halls and gardens to the Stanley Square. This was a strategy targeted at reducing high levels of alcoholism that were affecting the family structure, social fabric and family relations. *Diamond Warriors* (1980) was a play that targeted at building and motivating children to be the masters of their own destiny and *Stitsha* (1992) engaged the pain of broken promises about land in Zimbabwe. As a performance space, the Stanley Square became synonymous with ATP’s social and political satires. Thus, the space became a locus from which Zimbabweans questioned government policy and commitment to the ideals of the liberation struggle.

The locatedness of both ATP and Stanley Square in the continuum of the historical, political and social landscapes of Zimbabwe allowed the plays performed to speak to the current conditions obtained in Bulawayo and Matabeleland. This was a result of the distinct traditions and material conditions that the Stanley Square performance spaces drew their interpretation from. These materials informed the political, social

and cultural content of the plays performed on the Stanley Square stage space. In this context, the Stanley Square acted as a site of struggle for control of content and as a strategy of retrieving repressed histories (Fanon, 1963). As a site for the retrieval of repressed histories, the Stanley Square is inherently disruptive (Radcliffe, 2012). This disruption happens at two levels: performance and political narrative. At the level of performance narrative, ATP's performance at Stanley Square disrupted the staging conventions that had developed within purpose-built theatres. The use of everyday items such as used oil factory drums for *Workshop Negative* and *amabhetshu* for musicians and dancers in *Ngizozula Lawe* disrupted the tradition of period costumes and realist sets used in purpose built spaces.

The majority of ATP's plays were highly physical and musical. The physicality of ATP's theatre derived from an adaptation and infusion of karate moves and indigenous stick fighting (*ukuqwaqwazana*). This created a syncretic physical theatre, distinctly peculiar to the Stanley Square as the home of ATP. This syncretic theatre, which used popular indigenous art forms, falls into Chifunyise and Kavanagh's (1986) calls for a 'national theatre'. Chifunyise and Kavanagh's national theatre adopted a proletariat stance and galvanised community towards social action rather than passivity (Chifunyise & Kavanagh, 1986). The majority of ATP's plays such as *Workshop Negative* galvanised the University of Zimbabwe students in 1988 into a riot and turned the whole university into a battle ground between the students and the proletariat on one hand and the corrupt government on the other.

The plays by ATP disrupted the political narrative set by the Zimbabwean government. Community theatre initially adopted a socialist approach at independence until the early 90s and sought to create, develop and instil a sense of "Zimbabweanisation, Africanisation and build a sense of socialist transformation" (McLaren, 1993, p.36). However, through *Nansi Lendoda* (1985), *Workshop Negative* (1986) and *Dubalap!* (1990), ATP began to challenge the sincerity of this Africanisation and socialist transformation. *Workshop Negative* ends with all the three actors standing by the line and debating over the decision to cross over and start afresh: a new narrative. The performance spaces thus become centres of counter narratives in cultural practice and political activity.

The collapse of communism and the rise of global capitalism resulted in "old notions of political theatre falling into disrepute" (Kershaw, 1999, p.5). In colonial Zimbabwe, indigenous theatre was marginalised but emerged in post-independence as "contemporary (radical) live performance, [especially] outside [purpose-built] theatre buildings" (Kershaw, 1999, p.8). These radical live performances offered communities an opportunity to participate in the most vital cultural, social and political theatre; "a pathology of hope" (Kershaw, 1999, p.8). Live performance provides a place where

people come together, embodied and passionate, to share experiences of meaning making and imagination that can describe or capture a fleeting intimation of a better world (Dolan, 2005). ATP's plays made use of the performance space as a site to challenge communities to critically look into how their resources are administered and used for their benefit. In so doing, ATP tried to find, at the place of performance, a way to reinvest [community's] energies in a different future, one full of hope and reanimated by a new, more radical humanism (Alrutz et al., 2012).

After more than two decades operating from Stanley Square and Hall, ATP engaged the BCC and sought land on which it could build its own space; Amakhosi Cultural Centre. After years of consultation and visits to the Scandanavian countries, ATP was given land on the *Inxwala* heritage site; wedged in-between Makokoba Township and the western periphery of the Bulawayo City Central Business District. The location of Amakhosi Cultural Centre on the cultural heritage site used by King Lobengula positions the work to be performed within the political and cultural history of the Ndebele people. As such Amakhosi Cultural Centre emerges as a spatial synthesis of "different systems of beliefs, social practices or aesthetics, from sources inside and/or outside of cultures" (Sorgenfrei, 2006, p.491) reflective of the poly-lingual and poly-ethnic Zimbabwe. This spatial organisation was effectively used by ATP as a vehicle of communicating viewpoints, beliefs (political and social) and visual aesthetics of the new syncretic order.

After the establishment of Amakhosi Cultural Centre, new alternative spaces began to emerge in Harare: Gallery Delta, Theatre-In-the-Park and Alliance Françoise. These spaces have become a significant part of a search for new and exciting forms and techniques that appeal to both sides of the traditional cultural divide. These spaces demanded, from community theatre groups, purposeful productions relevant to the new Zimbabwe. As a result, theatre performances in the new venues followed an experimental approach and sought to transcend the voyeurism of traditional semi-professional white theatre and the serious didacticism of township community theatre, treading a middle road characterised by an admixture of protest, entertainment and social commentary (Seda, 2004). This conceptual categorisation of alternative theatre as an issue based genre which sought to challenge and speak to power, society and individuals concerning its specific agenda presents the place/space of performance as a contested arena.

## Conclusion

This paper has positioned Stanley Square and Hall as sites of cultural and political resistance in post-independence Zimbabwe. As sites of cultural resistance, Stanley Square and Hall positioned ATP's work as an alternative strand to the domineering colonial residual mainstream theatre. This alternative strand stylistically and aesthetically responded to the materiality, needs, fears and contexts of the Zimbabwean middle-class majority. Politically, this paper highlighted that Amakhosi Theatre Productions exploited the historical agency inscribed on Stanley Square and Hall to challenge communities to critically look into how their resources are administered and used for their benefit. In so doing, ATP used the colonial relic Stanley Square and Hall, as resistive sites to political and cultural domination in the post colony

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