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Table of Contents

About the Authors	iv - v
Editorial	vi - vii
Articles.....	1 - 179
An Evaluation of The Effectiveness of Policy Implementation on Sustainable Informal Trading in the City of Gweru, Zimbabwe.....	1- 22
By Lawrence Dumisani Nyathi	
Development of an Afrocentric Effective Leadership (AEL) Instrument for Zimbabwean SMEs.....	23 - 47
By Paul Nemashakwe, Alice Zinyemba and Samuel Gumbe	
The Factors Influencing Effective Policy Implementation in Remote Rural Areas: A Case of Gokwe District.....	48 - 65
By Tapiwa Musasa, Dr Alice Zinyemba and Dr Nyasha Kaseke	
<i>Mashurugwi: A Manifestation of a Weakening Human Security Situation in Zimbabwe</i>.....	66 - 84
By Blazio M. Manobo and Lucia Gunguwo	
Traditional conflict prevention and resolution strategies among the Manyika people of Zimbabwe: A spiritual dimension.....	85 - 98
By Deliah Jeranyama and Nomalanga Mpofu-Hamadziripi	
Challenges Women face in Accessing the Benefits of Development Policies in Rural Areas: A case of Gokwe District in Zimbabwe.....	99 - 119
By Tapiwa Musasa, Dr Alice Zinyemba and Dr Nyasha Kaseke	
Rethinking Sacramentology in the post-Covid 19 era: Contestations around the virtual Eucharist.	120 - 140
By Blazio M. Manobo	
Types of Marriages and their Counselling in Bikita	141 - 155
By Andreas Zvaiwa, T.M. Kaputa and L. Chaminuka	
Bereavement and Counselling in Bikita District: Cultures Battling for Survival.	156 - 165
By Andreas Zvaiwa, T.M. Kaputa and L. Chaminuka	
Afrocentricity, Ndebele proverbs, and Deviant youth behaviour in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.....	166 - 179
By Majahana John Lunga	

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Editorial

Reading the ten articles in this Volume 6, Issue Number 1 of the *Fountain Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, one would be forgiven to conclude that ‘nothing’ seems to work in Zimbabwe, and that the very fabric of society is tearing apart. But that is only one level of the analysis. Perhaps another level of analysis would give a more optimistic picture, namely that; some local scholars and researchers are keenly aware of where the challenges are and what needs to be done to raise the bar of performance. Or perhaps, is it that research is problem seeking and solution finding? Either way, if indeed this is the case, then this volume has done a splendid job.

The article by Lawrence Dumisani Nyathi decries the inconsistent policy implementation strategies by central and local government in supporting Small to Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) while lauding the seriousness with which government takes this economic sector shown in the creation of an entire ministry to co-ordinate its activities. His conclusion however is gloomy, ‘Universities are churning out graduates who will find it hard to get jobs and thus end up in informal trading to survive. While on the one hand Informal trading is creating employment, sustaining livelihoods, producing cheap goods and services, on the other hand, their operations are hampered by difficulties such as harassment by law enforcement agents, stiff competition, lack of infrastructure and capital, as well as negative perceptions by established operators’. Tapiwa Musasa also identifies policy implementation shortfalls and argues that the reason for policy implementation especially for rural women in Gokwe was the absence of the exclusion of these rural women in the policy formulation processes and implementation. The lack of buy-in by those for whom policies are made results in the women losing the intended benefits as well as failure by the authorities to implement. The overall impact being retarded national development even after over 40 years of independence and self-determination. Paul Nemashakwe identifies poor leadership as the balm of the poor performance of SMEs and the root of their problems and proposes an Afrocentric Effective Leadership instrument (AEL) for Zimbabwe. Blazio Manobo’s article on Mashurugwi and Majahana Lunga’s article on deviant youth behaviour in Bulawayo represent a breakdown of moral norms that normally keep society secure and productive. But the reasons for the breakdown and the distress caused is not entirely a result of

longstanding economic challenges, but of a creeping neglect of obligations to the spirit world, harmony with which for African societies is critical for wellbeing, health and prosperity. The Article by Deliah Jeranyama focuses on third dimension. And Manobo's article on reviewing sacramental practice in the aftermath of Covid 19 also tangentially point to the importance of the spiritual dimension. And finally, the last two articles on marriage and counseling by Andreas Zvaiwa deal with various types of marriage obtaining in traditional Bikita communities. So, all the articles speak of something that needs to give or to change to usher an imagined better society. However, while utopian aspirations are in themselves noble as they keep humanity on its toes to build a better world, it is doubtful that such a world will come to pass given the nature of man. The conflict in Europe between Russia and Ukraine and the many other conflicts plaguing our world indicate that there is a cap placed on progress by the very constitution of man.

An Evaluation of The Effectiveness of Policy Implementation on Sustainable Informal Trading in the City of Gweru, Zimbabwe.

By Lawrence Dumisani Nyathi¹

Abstract

Since the implementation of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) policy in 1991, formal employment in Zimbabwe shrunk as the economy contracted. This was intensified by the Fast Track Land Reform Program (FTLRP), whereby capacity utilisation was further reduced resulting in severe retrenchments in both the private and public sectors. As a result, many people turned to informal trading for survival. It is on record that both skilled and unskilled labour in underperforming economies survive on informal sector activities. The city of Gweru has not been spared of the deindustrialisation affecting other parts of the country. The mushrooming of informal enterprises has revived economic activity in the city despite the numerous challenges faced. This paper interrogates the benefits and challenges of informal trading in economic development using the descriptive

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design supported by the purposive sampling technique. The sample consisted of 500 stakeholders participating in informal trading. A mixed method approach was adopted. Data was collected using questionnaires and analyzed using SPSS V16 using the principal component extraction method with Varimax rotation. The study revealed that informal trading generated revenue, sustained livelihoods, provided cheap goods and services, created employment, and contributed significantly to the development of the economy of Gweru. Nevertheless, entrepreneurs are by harassment by law enforcement agents, lack of financial support and infrastructure. Given their significance to the economy of Gweru, the paper suggests that these businesses should be assisted by all relevant stakeholders so that they graduate from informal to formal sector players. This will boost rapid, overall, economic growth.

Key words: informal trader, economic development, benefits, challenges, policy implementation

1.0 Introduction

Zimbabwe has witnessed a rise in informal sector trading as the economy has been on free-fall since 1990 waning by over 40% from 1997 to 2006 (Techfin Research, 2007). The economy further plunged as government embarked on populist policies that led to retrenchments in farms and industries. Moreso, skilled labour migrated to greener pastures outside the country. Retrenched labour resorted to informal trading to sustain livelihoods. These small businesses have saved family livelihoods, provided much needed income for survival, and are also developing industries in the City of Gweru. Coad (2009) postulated that small organisations, including informal traders play critical roles in the development of industries and economies. In developed countries, entrepreneurial small firms play an important role in introducing new products and new techniques into the market through technological innovations, (Audretsch and Tamvada: 2008). In addition, the entry of new entrepreneurial ventures ensures market contestability, which is a source of competition that keeps markets functioning well.

There is acknowledgement the world over that small-scale businesses, notably informal trading, have become very important in economic growth and wealth

creation. There is a shared view, however, that informal trading faces a variety of challenges, which challenge those in authority to grapple with. Emphasising the focus of his research in informal trading, Cantens (2012) depicted that the challenge faced by governments and administrators is that of either negotiating with the informal sector on some basis (possibly policy framework) or brace-up to see informal trading tipping into total illegal practice. Chidoko *et al* (2011) point out that every activity that takes place in the informal sector also takes place in the formal sector. Although informal activities are found in both rural and urban areas such activities are more notable in cities and towns.

The informal sector is defined as economic activity not included in a nation's data on gross domestic product, and not subject to formal contracts, licensing and taxation. These businesses generally rely on indigenous resources, small-scale operations, and unregulated and competitive markets (Morris & Pitt, 1995:78). Informal sector entrepreneurs are the biggest contributor to the economies of most African countries. Meanwhile, IFC (2012) postulates that Micro to Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), account for over 95% of all enterprises in developing countries of which over 80% of these are within the informal sector. Within the world organisation, SMEs contribute over 95% of all enterprises and provide a hundred million jobs, representing 67% sector employments (International Monetary Accounting Committee, 2010). Cai and Wong (2010), also note that Taiwan is the most flourishing developing country over the last fifty years, with a fully integrated and dynamic SME sector. SMEs have played a major role in Taiwan's economic development in increasing exports and providing jobs.

In Africa, the informal sector is a fast-growing segment of most economies (Murphy, 2008). According to Oxfam (2008), the informal sector in African countries constitutes more than 72% of the working population but the tax contributions from the SMEs do not reflect this. In Kenya, for instance, the informal sector grew by 32.7% during the years 2006 to 2009 and employs over 6.5 million workers (Larossi, 2009). However, the SME sector presents unique challenges for the developing countries and there is need to ensure that it contributes effectively towards national economic growth.

More so, the rise of the informal sector in Zimbabwe can be traced back to pre-independence times, but more significantly from 1991 when the government

embarked on the ESAP program which drastically failed and set the economy on free-fall where GDP fell 40% from 1997 to 2006 (Techfin Research, 2007), while inflation soared from around 20% in December 1997 to a record peak of 7 635% in July 2007 (Central Statistical Office, 2007). On the same note, in 2005, the government embarked on the infamous *Murambatsvina* where it destroyed stalls for informal traders as they were not designated by the law. This move received worldwide condemnation which saw the government backtracking and creating a whole ministry to cater for these traders. Further, the government commenced initiatives to unlock funding business ideas and conducting workshops for these traders. The government had conceded that informal trading was sustaining livelihoods amidst a weak currency and underperforming formal sector. While on the same point, the International Monetary Fund (IMF, 2019) of 158 countries from 1991 to 2015, the findings state that the informal sector grew by 31.9 %, with Zimbabwe being the second largest (60.6%) and second only to Bolivia (62.3%) of the GDP, while the lowest being Austria (8.9%) and Switzerland (7.2%).

The bulk of the informal economy in Zimbabwe consists of largely unregistered and unregulated tiny units engaged in the production and distribution of products and services with the first aim being that of generating financial gain and employment to their participants (UNDP/ILO, 2000). Zhou (2010) mentions that there are 1.2 million SMEs in the Republic of Zimbabwe. Over the past ten years, the informal sector exploded to become the leader and source of support to livelihoods. However, like in any developing country, informal traders face unique challenges although if nurtured well the informal sector will build the economy considerably if it is integrated into the formal economy. The growth in number of informal traders in the city of Gweru in recent years has triggered a new dispensation, which calls for a revisit to the informal trading regulatory framework. It has been observed that there are policy challenges associated with the recognition of the informal sector.

Findings (IMF, 2019) in 158 countries from 1991 to 2015, show that the informal sector grew by 31.9 %, with Zimbabwe being the second largest (60.6%) and second only to Bolivia (62.3%). The vibrancy of the informal economy has been heightened by poor economic policies, sanctions, dampened investment climate and deindustrialisation in the country. The government of Zimbabwe's policy

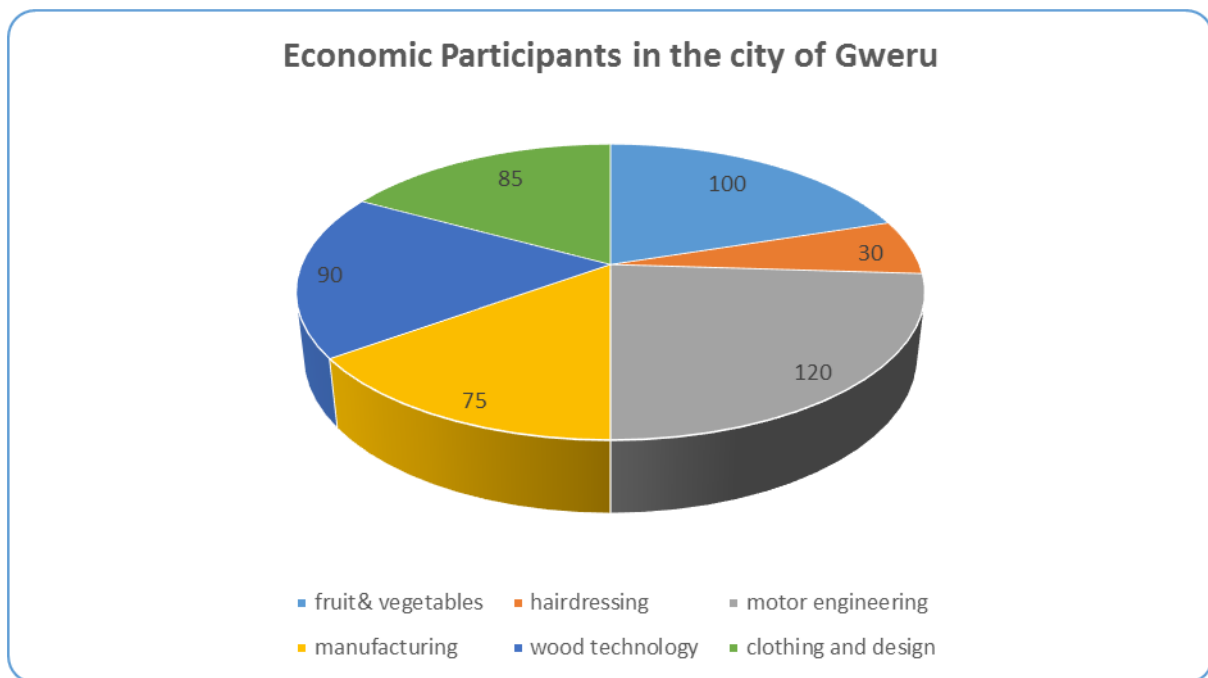
implementation is highly skewed to formal businesses while sidestepping the vibrant informal sector. Current policy trends in the city of Gweru do not appear to favour the promotion of informal traders. Existing policies appear to promote the formal sector at the expense of the informal sector. This paper investigates the policy options which the City of Gweru needs to implement for the benefit of the informal sector for sustainable economic development, and to advocate for the inclusion of informal traders into the city's mainstream economy.

2.0 Methodology

A survey was conducted amongst informal traders operating in the city of Gweru. The sample consisted of 500 stakeholders in informal trading in Gweru, 20 city council officials, 15 government officials, 5 SMEDCO officials, 5 Informal Traders Association officials. Convenience sampling procedures were employed based on personal experience and judgment. Cohen & Marion (1994, p.89) argue that purposive sampling is when the researcher handpicks the cases to be included in the sample based on their judgment. The study adopted a mixed method approach involving triangulation of qualitative and quantitative designs. In this study the qualitative design depended on open ended questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions and observations. The quantitative design focused on the factor analysis using the principal component extraction methods with Varimax rotation method analysing the variance of extracted factors. It therefore depended on closed ended questionnaires. Secondary data was obtained from the City of Gweru, Department of Housing and Community Services.

3.0 Results

Figure 1: Economic Participants in Gweru



Source: Survey

The 500 entrepreneurs in city of Gweru participated in different economic activities such as (fruit & vegetables vending 100, motor engineering 120, manufacturing 75, hairdressing 30, wood technology 90, and clothing and design 85) as shown in the pie-chart chart.

Table 1: KMO & Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin-Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.731
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	721.110
	Df	91
	Sig.	.000

Table 1 shows that the KMO value is 0.731, reaching the standard feasibility, while the Bartlett Sphericity test value is 721.110, significance value of 0.00 is far less than the significance level of 0.05, therefore rejects the null hypothesis, so that the original data is fit for factor analysis. The data was collected and analysed using the 16.0

versions of SPSS. Factors analysis was used for the data reduction and purification, resulting in the deletion of some insignificant items with factor loading less than 0.5 and the Eigen Values less than 1. the research revealed that the first five factors include mainly information of all indicators. The factor analysis using principal component extraction method with Varimax rotation extracted 5 factors which explained 83.74 % of the variance (Table 2). The table of Total Variance Explained shows that eigenvalues of the first five components are greater than 1 and the cumulative contribution rate reached 83.742%. The total variance explained by factor 1 is 31.537 % for income for living, no huge capital investment had a variance of 18.339%. The third explained 13.194%, while the fourth explained 11.072 and lastly the fifth explained 9.601% of variance.

Table 2: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loadings		
	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	5.215	31.537	31.537	5.215	31.537	31.537
2	3.107	18.339	49.876	3.107	18.339	49.876
3	2.567	13.194	63.070	2.567	13.194	63.070
4	1.270	11.072	74.142	1.270	11.072	74.142
5	1.064	9.601	83.743	1.064	9.601	83.743
6	.993	4.092	87.835			
7	.907	3.998	91.833			
8	.766	3.007	94.840			
9	.573	2.998	97.838			
10	.540	2.162	100.00			

Table 3: Component Matrix: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Component Matrix					
	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
Income for living	.750	.096	.086	.183	-.120
No huge capital investment	.623	-.172	-.247	-.271	-.248
No hustles with formal registration procedures	.561	.256	-.457	-.169	.353
No formal qualifications	.554	.529	.153	.328	-.038
Poverty alleviation strategy	.539	-.239	.459	-.148	.073
Less underpinning laws	.537	-.298	-.127	.280	.091
Abnormal profits	.492	.261	.395	-.254	-.271
Difficulty in entering the market	.490	.099	-.672	-.129	.119
Low participating standards	.318	-.509	.289	.107	.425
Finding suitable location	.375	-.116	.192	.347	.436

The above table shows that there are 6 variables on the first factor of the load which is high. The 6 variables are; income for living, no huge capital investment, no hustles with formal registration procedures, no formal qualifications, poverty alleviation strategy and less underpinning laws. With the factor analysis it can be concluded that there are 6 variables on the first factor of the load which is high. These 6 variables have led to the uptake of informal trading in Gweru.

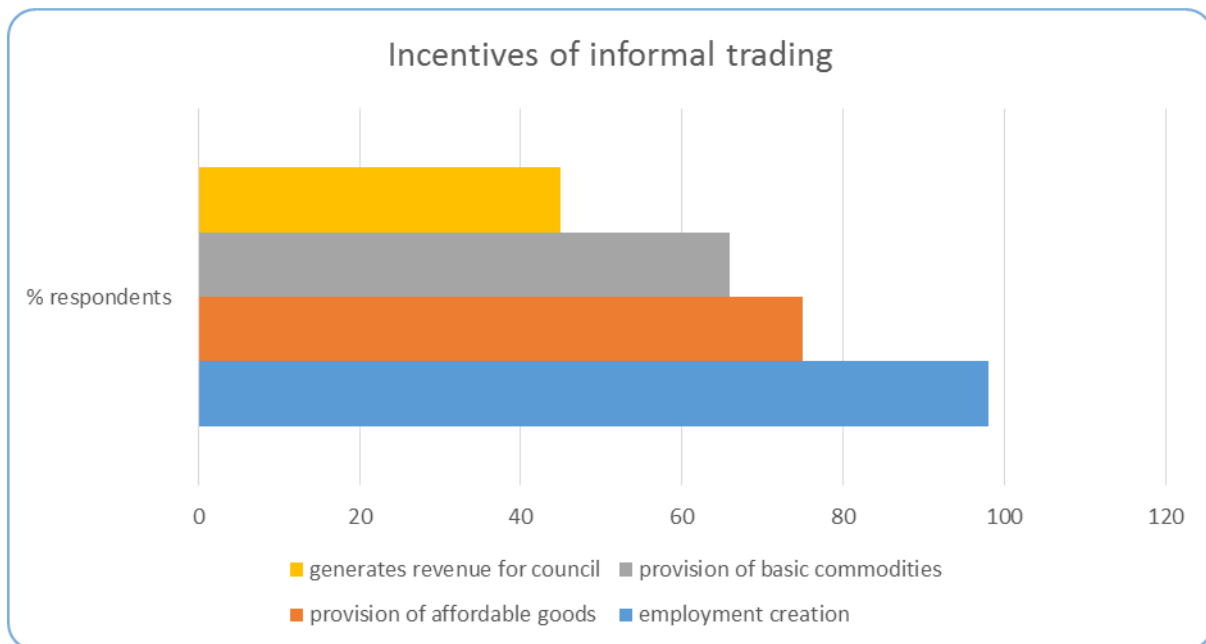
Furthermore, the study revealed that informal trading has benefits and challenges relating to the economic development of the city. Firstly, the study revealed that informal trading activities create employment, thus alleviating poverty levels amidst the economic crisis in Zimbabwe. This result is like that of Grava (2013) who argued that informal traders generate income, which is essential for sustaining livelihoods. Informal trading provided benefits to the concerned families of the traders as it

sustained lives by generating revenue to meet the daily necessities of life. Furthermore, it enabled them to produce of affordable goods as well as a source of revenue to the council. Furthermore, Newberry (2006) observed that small businesses are engines for economic growth in a country. The other reason is to attain financial independence and not to rely on income from an employer.

In addition, the World Bank revealed that Zimbabwe has the largest informal economy in the world, second only from Bolivia, and the informal sector was critical to the economy. This notion is supported by Skinner (2008) who postulates that collectively, informal trading tends to contribute greatly to the GDP of developing countries (Most informal street-trading business are started with loans from social networks, which include family and friends, which rely on informal financing).

On the same note, Fleetwood (2009) and Never (2010) postulate that in many countries in Africa, informal trading makes a significant economic contribution by providing employment and provision of goods and services. Zimbabwe's unemployment level is slated at around 90 per cent, and Gweru, one of its cities has lost industrial production due to the closure of some of its economically viable industries such as Zimglass, Zimbabwe Alloys, and Bata Shoe Company. Informal trading has seen economic activities rebound again with both skilled and unskilled labour making goods and services that were once provided by these big companies. Consequently, informal trading remains somewhat a continuously debatable issue. Dewa (2005) notes that, some view it as backwardness and a symptom that requires attention. Other schools of thought postulate that informal trading is a worthy, positive and dynamic enabler to many who prospect to be gainfully employed or earn some income and earn a living.

Figure 2: Incentives of Informal Trading in the City of Gweru



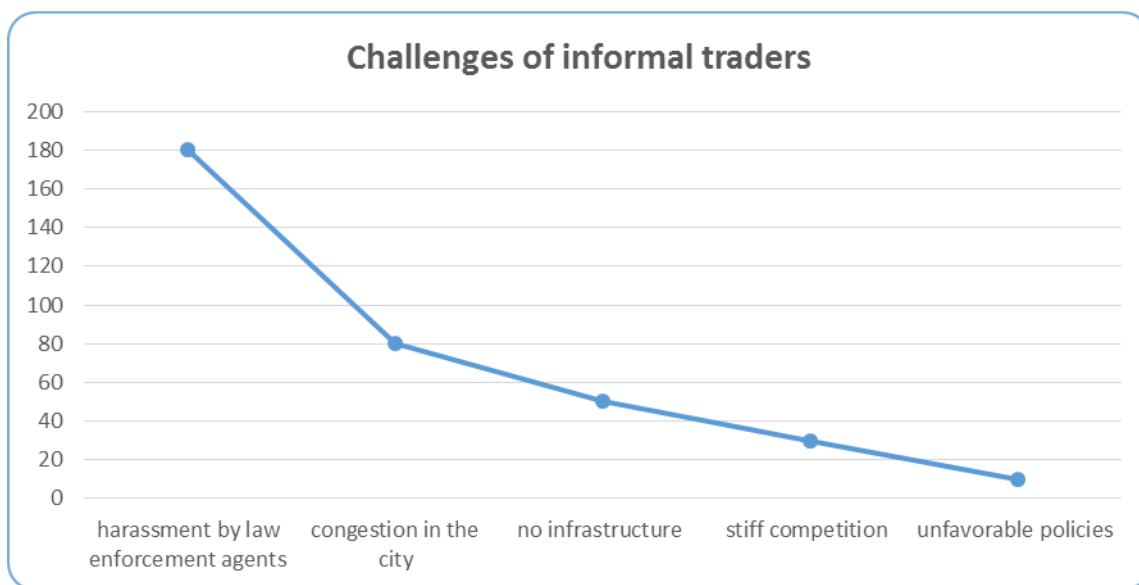
Source: Survey (2021)

This study reaffirmed the notion that informal traders contribute towards economic growth. One of the interviewees from SMEDCO pointed out that informal trading is a livelihood option in Gweru. The interviewee said, “People do not go out into the streets for fun, it is because of the fact that they want to earn a living”. One of the reasons for establishing an SME was the desire to meet social obligations through making sure that some products and services are available at convenient places. SMEs bring products closer to the market, break goods into small quantity that low-income earners can afford and can also provide credit facilities. Furthermore, SMEs do come up with innovations. In fact, many technological advancements were made possible through small businesses, which later grew into large corporations.

This study also revealed that informal trading like in any part of the country faced a myriad of challenges. As depicted on the graph below, informal traders highlighted harassment from law enforcement agents (ZRP and Municipal Police) as the biggest challenge they faced in their day-to-day activities. A major problem associated with informal trading, particularly vending in the CBD, was the conflict of land-use between these activities and the designated users, resulting in running battles between the informal traders and the municipal police. The respondents cited congestion in the city as another challenge as there is high demand. Most formal

companies in and around the city of Gweru closed due to the harsh economic environment, hence the skilled and unskilled workforce retrenched from the industries turned to informal activities for survival. The city fathers have also been burdened to provide adequate infrastructure for the ever-increasing business traders and there is always a shortage of infrastructure to accommodate these traders who keep increasing due to economic hardships. The shortage of trading infrastructure led to rentals becoming unaffordable, compounded by the fact that they are demanded in US dollars. Furthermore, some informal traders admitted that they faced stiff competition from more established traders especially in a situation where the economy is facing acute shortages of cash. Another source of competition was the influx of imported products from the neighbouring countries such as South Africa as well as cheap imports from Asia.

Figure 3: Challenges of Informal traders

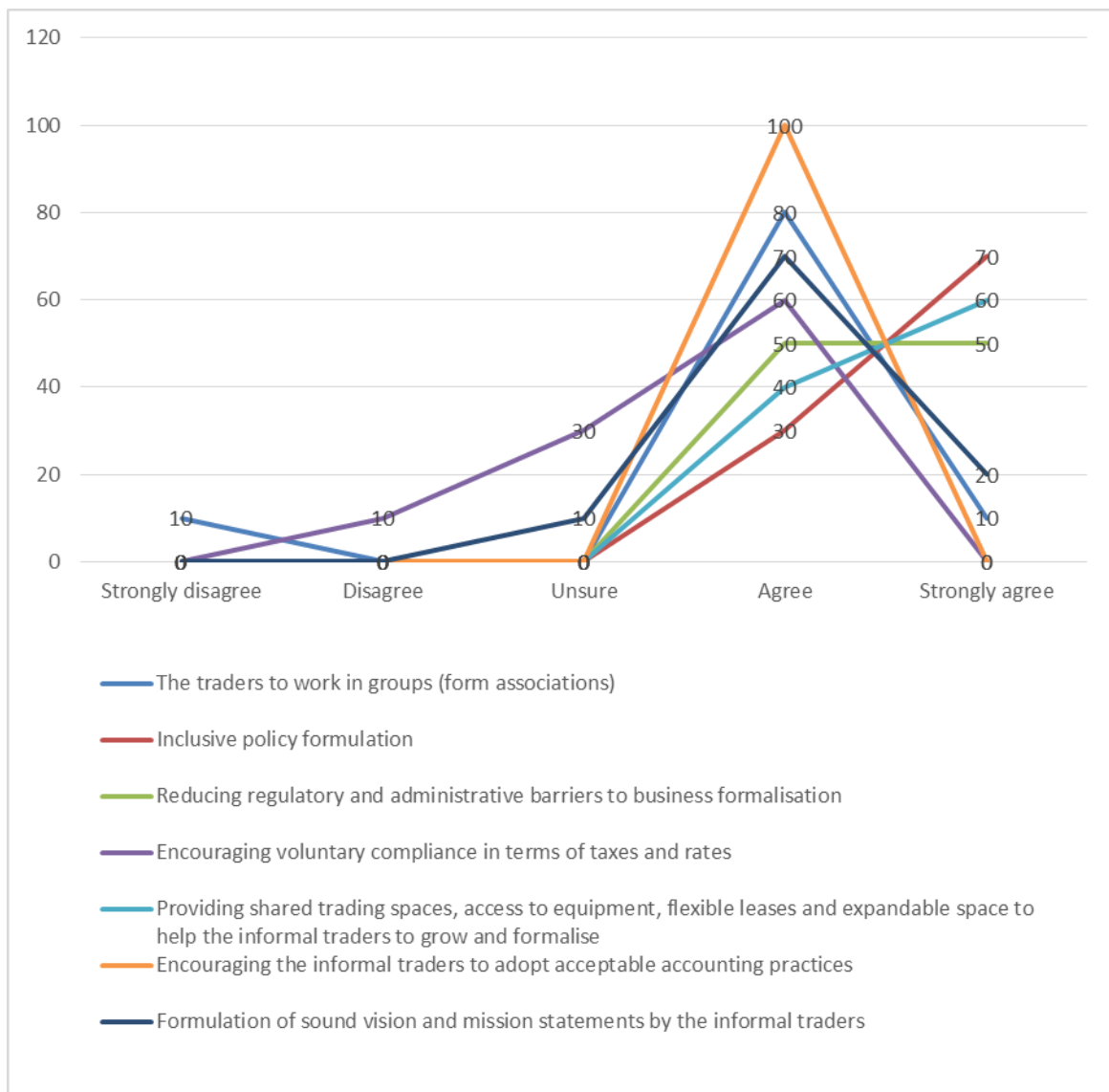


Source: Survey(2021)

The study revealed that policies enacted by both the local and central governments were harsh and grossly unfavourable to informal traders. An interviewee from the SMEDCO said, “The situation in Zimbabwe is characterised by a local authority that is seemingly poised to clean the city of informal traders amid misunderstood, chaotic, and possibly irrelevant policies, a resemblance of The Operation Murambatsvina of 2005.” What comes out clearly is that the local authorities and informal traders in Zimbabwe as well as in other countries have a score to settle as informal traders fight

for socioeconomic rights, elimination of economic bondage and poverty reduction. Grava (2013) supports this notion and mentions that in developing countries they have ineffective policies pertaining to the SMEs. According to Zhou (2010), most of the laws in most developing countries were promulgated in the colonial era and seem to discourage the mushrooming of SMEs. As a result, most of the support, such as tax incentives, is rendered to large companies (Grava, 2013).

Figure 4: Possible Options for Supporting Informal Traders in Gweru



Source: Survey (2021)

Stakeholders participating in informal trading acknowledged that notwithstanding the challenges on the ground, relevant authorities are taking some tangible steps in

promoting sustainable trading activities. These include encouraging traders to adopt acceptable accounting practices, forming of vision and mission statements, reducing regulatory and administrative barriers to business formalisation, provision of shared infrastructure and equipment, and inclusive policy formulation. These were some of the initiatives the Gweru city authorities claimed they were undertaking to promote sustainable trading activities.

The city council is taking an inclusive policy formulation as shown on the line graph with 70 percent of the respondents in agreement. City council was taking that initiative because of the recognition that informal traders were providing real solutions to economic challenges and therefore needed support to reach their potential. This is further strengthened by the fact that the government has established a whole ministry to monitor and implement sustainable ways of growing informal trade to formal business enterprises (National Budget, 2020). In 2020 the government set aside ZWL 500 million to fund SMEs and to grow start-ups.

An official at the Small to Medium Enterprise Development Corporation (SMEDCO) said,

‘it is essential to notice that the informal traders and SMEs represent untapped revenue potential and they need to be formalised and captured by the tax net. There are a variety of ways of trying to reduce informality and growth of the SMEs. One of the ways is increasing services to business. This service-driven approach includes initiatives to provide micro-finance, better infrastructure, procurement opportunities, and other support to informal businesses. There may even be initiatives geared towards reducing regulatory and administrative barriers to formalisation. These are the ‘pull’ effects and reducing the costs of formality includes initiatives such as business registration reform and simplified tax administration.’

The growth of the informal sector is possible through encouraging tax law compliance (60 percent of the response rate). If a firm grows in size and becomes visible in the market, it would be difficult for that firm to avoid tax (Autio, 2008). Moreover, Tubualt (2010) argues that direct and indirect taxes would improve once there is growth due

to increases in turnover. In addition, creating awareness of formalising businesses is paramount Cai and Wong (2010). Sometimes, lack of adequate knowledge and ignorance prevent entrepreneurs from expanding their businesses. Yaobin (2007) argues that special tax regimes for SMEs may be applicable policy instruments for minimising the price of tax compliance. Pro-business (and pro-SME) tax regimes and enforcement should be simple, consistent, predictable and should lower compliance and administrative costs. The idea would be to reduce the uncertainty faced by taxpayers as well as improve the levels of voluntary compliance Kasipillai (2005).

3.1 Informal Trading Policy Formulation and Implementation in the City of Gweru

A good policy is one that is inclusive and relevant to all stakeholders. Hence sustainable policies need all stakeholders to participate. Furthermore, the city fathers need to have controls to implement these policies, such as the accessibility of formal business premises in Gweru, affordability of formal business premises, licenses, and rates.

3.2 Stakeholder Participation

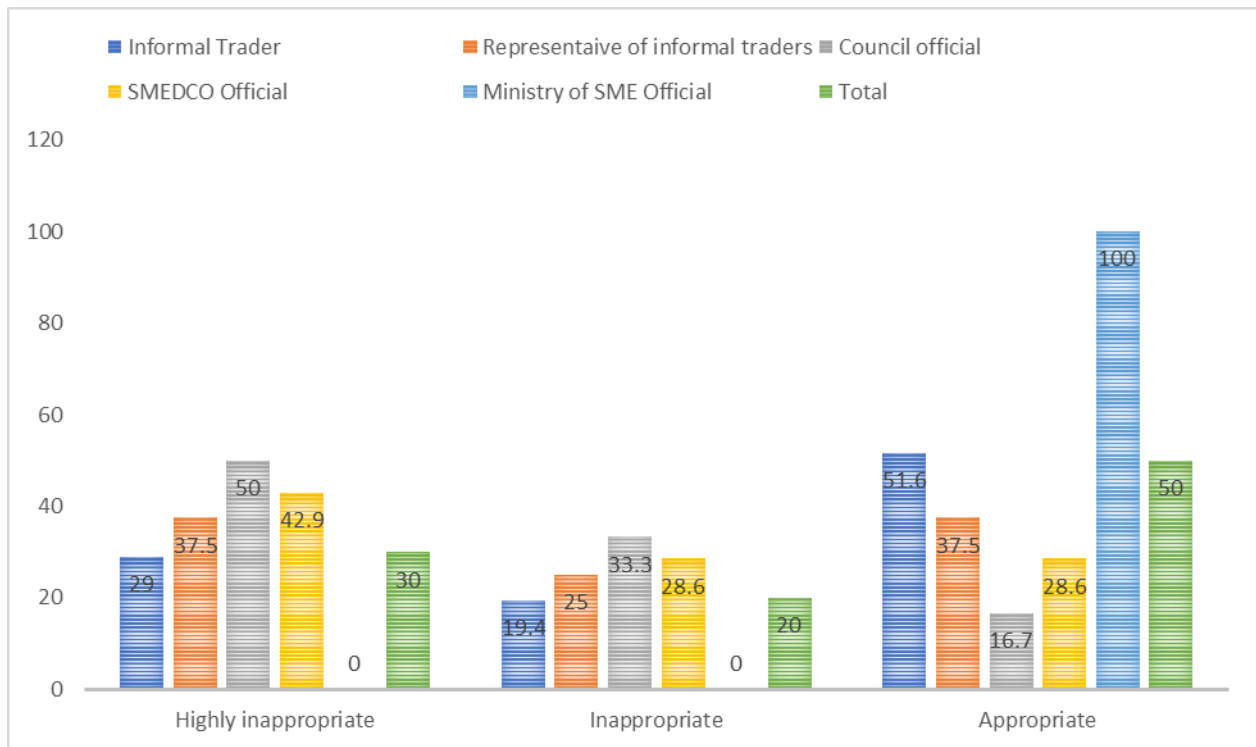
It is essential to note that participation is vital in improving the empowerment of traders. This is because it allows vulnerable groups to decide suitable interventions to their own problems. Vulnerable groups will benefit from gaining increased representation. Increase in participation makes it possible for the people to organise themselves and work collectively, thus attaining greater control over matters that affect them. For effective participation, the people's ideas must be considered, so that they feel involved in the identification and ratification of decisions made. This also enables people to hold the authorities accountable in terms of implementing policies and how funds are being used in different schemes and projects. This effort to maintain informed participation requires the creation of space for people to hold debates on issues affecting them at all levels.

In addition, an official from SMEDCO, who was interviewed said, "participation entails that stakeholder effectively perform their roles in policymaking. The leaders, for instance have a role to play in policymaking." This finding on the role of leadership in policymaking is supported by literature. According to Makinde (2005), leaders, elites, and coalitions are the key to overcoming the many collective actions, problems that

plague weak states and frustrate development. By creating vision, direction, and collective purpose, leaders can secure an effective set of institutional arrangements and policies, which interact to mediate and organise relations between the private and public spheres of society to resolve multiple collective action problems. Social development and economic growth require cooperation and synergy between the state and the rest of society, and without human agency and effective leadership, even the most progressive of institutional forms will fail to achieve this.

Moreover, effective participation requires adequate interaction among stakeholders. Accordingly, an official in the Ministry of SMEs who was interviewed said that it is critical to examine the role of policy networks. Howlet *et al* (2015) point out that a policy network denotes relationships among policy actors with common interests and cooperate with one another. In any policy sector, there are dominant actors who work together in the formulation of policies. In the informal trading sector in Zimbabwe, there are dominant and cooperating policy actors like the Ministry of Local Government, Urban Councils, representatives of informal traders, and international and local development partners who work together and consult one another when solutions to problems bedevilling informal trading are sought. The cooperation among the actors shows that policymaking involves a variety of actors. Thus, the concept of policy networks seeks to demonstrate that there are institutional relations among state and non-state actors in policymaking. The concept of policy networks shows that there is need for cooperation among policy actors. Lack of cooperation brings discord and stalls solutions to policy problems. Part of implementation of policy towards informal traders is measured by the appropriateness of actions that have been taken by the City of Gweru in enforcing of informal trading policies.

Figure 5: Appropriateness of Enforcement Actions



Source: Survey (2021)

Figure 5 shows results of the appropriateness of actions in enforcing informal trading policies according to occupation. The level of enforcement of informal trading policies is at 50%. However, there are variations based on occupation. All Ministry of SMEs officials indicated that the laws were appropriately enforced and the majority, 51.6% of the informal traders shared the same view as the SMEs officials. Council officials were pessimistic; half of them felt that the informal policies were highly inappropriate. Occupational differences in terms of perception existed in this regard. There is evidence from this study that there are challenges in terms of the implementation of informal trading policies in the City of Gweru. It is essential to note that the enforcement of policies is done through policy instruments. One of the representatives of the informal traders argued that the City of Gweru used inappropriate policy instruments in their enforcement of by-laws. Examples of improper instruments included enforcement rules on operating hours for vendors. In this regard, one of the representatives of the informal traders argued that, in 2010, the City of Gweru tried to impose operating hours for airtime vendors (8 am to 5pm), a move that was not successful because people wanted to trade without time restrictions. In addition to regulatory policy instruments (sticks), there is also a need

for appropriate economic instruments (carrots), which are incentives or rewards that must be given to the informal traders who abide with the by-laws. The economic instruments can also be in the form of support, for example facilitation of access to loans and business assets. Finally, there ought to be adequate informative policy instruments (sermons), which are knowledge tools. The sermons are aimed at providing information to change or encourage certain behaviour.

3.3 Affordability of Formal Business Premises in Gweru

Informal traders are also affected by pricing of business premises by the city council. Pricing ensures that informal traders can fully pay for their preferred premises and continue trading their goods. Most of the times informal traders have abandoned well-built business premises largely because of the unaffordability of such premises.

Table 5: Age Analysis on Affordability of Business Premises

Age (Years)			Highly Unaffordable	Unaffordable	Total
Less than 25 years	Count	0	32	32	
	%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
25-35 years	Count	16	64	80	
	%	20.0%	80.0%	100.0%	
36-45 years	Count	0	16	16	
	%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
46-55 years	Count	0	16	16	
	%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
above 55 years	Count	16	0	16	
	%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	
Total	Count	32	128	160	
	%	20.0%	80.0%	100.0%	

Source: Survey

Age differences were noted regarding the affordability of vending bays, the statistical tests support this argument with the Chi Square (4) = 80.000, $p=0.000$, $p<0.05$. Results might suggest that formal business premises are unaffordable in the city of Gweru.

Table 6: Chi-Square Tests on Affordability of Vending Bays

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	80.000 ^a	4	.000

Source: Survey

The affordability of vending bays seems to be a major concern as most traders have arrears. The table above shows arrears for Gweru City Council registered women entrepreneurs trading in fruits & vegetables, clothing, and footwear.

Table 7: Vending Bays at Main Bus Terminus

Zone	Number of Bays	Female Bays	Percentage women	Average Rental Arrears
A	38	18	47.3	US\$30
B	42	22	52.4	US\$30
C	83	56	67.4	US\$30
W	30	15	50	US\$30
Durawall	36	19	52.7	US\$30
ZUPCO	76	45	59.2	US\$30
TM	20	7	35	US\$30
Morah	158	99	62.6	US\$30

Old Post Office	310	112	63.8	US\$30
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Source: City of Gweru: Housing and Community Services (2021)

These results demonstrate that rentals for the bays are not manageable as shown by the level of arrears. Council is charging more for the size of a bay which is 2m*2m=4 square metres with most of them at makeshift state of construction. More so, there is uncertainty by council and the community it serves as to whether the trading activities are a poverty reduction initiative, or a 'cash cow' for council. According to participants from a focus group discussion, several notices issued by council to the traders demanding rental arrears was indicative of council's focus on its registered informal traders as a source of council income. The research showed that informal trading in Gweru had more female players than males. Female participation might be attributed to empowerment programmes being initiated by national government in partnership with empowerment groups.

3.4 Affordability of Business Licenses and Rates in Gweru

Affordable business licences and rates enabled traders to boost council revenue coffers. Moreso, payment of rates and licences empowered the local authority to build infrastructure and deliver services. Furthermore, affordable rates ensured that traders make long term plans and aim to formalise their business activities.

Table 8: Gender Cross-Tabular Analysis on the Affordability of Business Licences and Rates

Gender		Unaffordable	Affordable	Total
Male	Count	64	16	80
	%	80.0%	20.0%	100.0%
Female	Count	48	32	80
		60.0%	40.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	112	48	160
	% of Total	70.0%	30.0%	100.0%

Source: Survey

Table 8 illustrates findings with regards to the affordability of business licences and rates in the city of Gweru based on gender. Results indicate that business licences are beyond the reach of many traders (70%). Gender differences were noted, more females (40%) than males (20%) felt that the rates and licences were affordable. One informal trader interviewed said generally the economy is hard for them to budget for rates & licences as the little income they make is for livelihood. On the same note, Ministry of SME officials stated that, “informal trading in the city was for survival. Most informal traders were poor economically. City council demands for rates and licence fees added to the financial burden they were already experiencing”.

4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

Informal trading is increasing as economic prospects dim. Formal organisations are retrenching workers to cope. Universities are churning out graduates who will find it hard to get jobs and thus end up in informal trading to survive. While on the one hand Informal trading is creating employment, sustaining livelihoods, producing cheap goods and services, on the other hand, their operations are hampered by difficulties such as harassment by law enforcement agents, stiff competition, lack of infrastructure and capital, as well as negative perceptions by established operators. Considering the significance of free enterprise in economic development in the city of Gweru and Zimbabwe as a whole, the study recommends that.

- The City of Gweru adopts international best practices in dealing with informal trading. As a country, all urban areas in Zimbabwe should have sound twining arrangements with other cities in the international community.
- There is need to adopt incubator models which facilitates the growth of informal trading. It has been observed that such models have borne fruits where they have been implemented,
- Incentives should be provided for formalised SME traders,
- Administrative barriers in company registrations should be removed and a favourable tax regime specifically for SMEs be introduced.

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Development of an Afrocentric Effective Leadership (AEL) Instrument for Zimbabwean SMEs.

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Abstract

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are fundamental to a country's economy. However, the challenge is that there is a high failure rate among SMEs which can be attributed to lack of effective leadership. This paper seeks to present and validate an Afrocentric Effective Leadership (AEL) instrument to measure effective leadership in Zimbabwean SMEs. A survey was conducted with quantitative data collected from 241 respondents from Bulawayo's Central Business Area (CBA) chosen through proportional stratified sampling. The AEL instrument was validated using exploratory factor analysis. A total of ten factors resulted, namely, leadership style, effectiveness of the situational leadership theory, leader characteristics, follower characteristics, culture, ubuntu, traditional leadership, history of the country, stage of economic development of the country and effective leadership. The perception of the existence of effective leadership in African SMEs so that early interventions are implemented to avoid high failure rates.

Key words: Afrocentric; Effective leadership; Leadership; Instrument; SMEs

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1.0 Introduction

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are fundamental to any country's economy because they act as a catalyst for industrialisation (Muriithi, 2017). This is the reason why most African governments have started to regard them as the solution to a myriad of economic problems on the continent (Tinarwo, 2016). SMEs have great potential to benefit Zimbabwe in terms of employment creation (Mugozhi and Hlabiso, 2017; Maseko and Manyani, 2011; Chinembiri, 2011) and the birth of large organisations (Chipangura and Kaseke, 2012) among other notable benefits.

According to FinScope (2012) 2.8 million people in Zimbabwe participate in SMEs as owners while a further 2.9 million participate as employees. Most SMEs in the country have been established for subsistence purposes (Karedza, Sikwila, Mpofu and Makurumidze, 2014). Rather than being opportunity based, most Zimbabwean SMEs are survivalist in nature (FinScope, 2012). The adoption of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) and its resulting deregulation can be credited with laying the fertile ground for the emergence of SMEs (Chivasa, 2014; Zindiye, Chiliya and Masocha, 2012; Chipangura and Kaseke, 2012).

Although SMEs offer a great potential for the country, the challenge is that there exists a high failure rate among the SMEs (Mudavanhu, Bindu, Chigusiwa and Muchabaiwa, 2011) which can be attributed to ineffective leadership (Lekhanya, 2015; Chipangura and Kaseke, 2012). Currently, there is no data collection instrument that has been developed specifically to measure whether Zimbabwean SMEs are effectively led or not. As such, there is need to equip scholars, managers and policy makers with a reliable instrument which can be used to measure the existence of effective leadership in Zimbabwean SMEs so that appropriate interventions are implemented early to avoid the high failure rate. As such the study sought to develop and validate an instrument to measure effective leadership in Zimbabwean SMEs.

2.0 Literature on Leadership

Even though leadership is one of the most important topics in the human sciences, it is among the least understood (Hogan and Kaiser, 2005). Leadership has been defined by Northouse (2004, p. 3) as “a process whereby an individual influences a

group of individuals to achieve a common goal”. For leadership to be effective, it requires the leader, followers, process, and goal.

Effective leadership should be a two-way process between the leader and followers, with followers believing in the vision of the leader and being inspired to accept and work towards mutual goals (Mwangi, 2014; Youssef, 2013; Uchendu et al., 2010; Killian, 2007). Successful leaders should be sensitive towards their followers (Mwenje, 2015). They should listen to their followers so that they understand their needs. Effective leaders are caring and supportive (Masango, 2002). They develop a cohesive team through nurturing followers and allowing them to participate in leadership activities (Mwenje, 2015).

Effective leadership demands active followers who are prepared to hold their leaders accountable (Poncian and Mgaya, 2015). Followers should be enlightened, educated and confident to have the capacity to keep their leaders in check (Uchendu et al., 2010). Failure to challenge the decisions of leaders may have a negative effect on the ability of followers to demand accountability from their leaders. When employees work in an organisation with effective leadership they will be satisfied (Dalluay and Jalagat, 2016; Albloshi and Nawar, 2015). They will feel enthusiastic and connected to organisational activities (Gabriela and Dorinela, 2017).

3.0 Methodology

The study was quantitative, guided by the positivist research philosophy with a deductive approach. The philosophy was chosen because it emphasises on objectivity (Saunders et al., 2016) while the approach enabled facts to be measured quantitatively. The study employed a survey strategy because it is common in management research (Neuman, 2014) and allows for the collection of quantitative data which can be analysed statistically. A questionnaire was used to collect primary data.

3.1 Population and sampling

All non-managerial employees, supervisory employees, managerial employees, and owner-managers of SMEs in Bulawayo’s Central Business Area (CBA) constituted the population of the study. These groups were selected because of their participation in SMEs one way or the other.

Proportional stratified sampling was used because the researcher had knowledge pertaining to the population under study (Jawale, 2012) and the technique enhanced the representativeness of the sample (Saunders et al., 2016). The sample size was derived by multiplying the 5-point Likert scale by the number of items in the scale (Gerber and Hall, 2017). As such, the minimum number of respondents expected was 265 (5 x 53 items). The researcher added 35 participants representing participants who might fail to respond and questionnaires that may be returned with insufficient information for analysis. As a result, the ideal sample for the research was 300 participants.

3.2 Questionnaire

The AEL instrument was developed with 53 closed ended items based on the theoretical framework and the extant literature. A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure the respondents' perceptions of effective leadership. The scale ranged from strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4) and strongly agree (5). After coming up with the item statements, they were subjected to validation by a team of four experts who were experienced in leadership and management of SMEs (Olson, 2010). The experts recommended the amendment of certain statements to make them clear and the elimination of statements that were not essential. Some statements were added at the suggestion of the experts.

A pilot study with 30 participants, representing 10% of the intended sample of actual respondents was conducted (Aithal and Aithal, 2020). This was done for the purposes of checking face validity (Saunders et al., 2016) and increasing content validity (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). The pilot study showed that 20 minutes were sufficient to complete the questionnaire and that respondents had no problems responding to the questionnaire.

The AEL instrument was split into two sections namely section A and section B. The aim of section A was to obtain demographic information such as position in the organisation, gender, age, level of education and tenure with the organisation. Section B was aimed at establishing the respondents' perceptions of the existence of effective leadership from an Afrocentric viewpoint in SMEs using nine constructs namely leadership style, effectiveness of the situational leadership theory, leader

characteristics, follower characteristics, culture, ubuntu, history of the country, stage of economic development of the country and effective leadership.

3.3 Questionnaire administration

Hard copies of the questionnaire were given to respondents because most of them had no access to e-mail facilities at work and for those who had access to personal e-mails, the cost of data was prohibitive. The distribution of the questionnaires followed all ethical considerations and Covid-19 protocols. Questionnaires consisted of a cover letter containing the title of the research, rights of the participants and contact details of both the researcher and academic supervisors. A presentation covering the purpose of the research and assurances of confidentiality and anonymity was done prior to informed consent forms being completed by the participants. The completed questionnaires were collected by the researcher.

3.4 Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 was used for data analysis. Instrument validation was done using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (BTS), factor analysis and Cronbach alpha analysis.

4.0 Results and Discussion

241 questionnaires were returned from the 300 questionnaires that had been distributed giving a response rate of 80.3%. The returns were deemed sufficient for statistical analysis of the data (Saunders et al., 2016; Cohen et al., 2007). 62.2% of the respondents were non-managerial while supervisory respondents accounted for 26.1%. 6.6% of the respondents were owner-managers while the remaining 5.0% were managers as shown by table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Organisational position of respondents

Demographic characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Position	Non-managerial	150	62.2
	Supervisor	63	26.1

	Manager	12	5.0
	Owner-manager	16	6.6
	Total	241	100

Table 4.1 above shows that most of the respondents were non-managerial respondents followed by supervisory respondents. This is in line with expectations in most organisations where non-managerial employees will constitute the highest number followed by supervisory employees. Owner-managers were more than managers because most SME owners started their businesses and became actively involved in managing those businesses.

4.1 Validation of the instrument

4.1.1 KMO and BTS

KMO and BTS were used to test for sample adequacy and whether it was viable to proceed with Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) (Gerber and Hall, 2017). The results obtained are shown in table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Sample adequacy and significance

KMO and Bartlett's test				
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy				0.915
Bartlett's Sphericity	Test	of	Approx. Chi-Square	13541.836
			Df	1128
			Sig.	0.000

The KMO value of 0.915 was achieved and was above the threshold of 0.50 (Gerber and Hall, 2017; Gie and Pearce, 2012). This proved that the sample was adequate and it was appropriate for EFA to proceed (Maguraushe, Da Veiga and Martins, 2020; Hair et al., 2014). We can therefore conclude that a strong correlation structure was present (Gerber and Hall, 2017; Gie and Pearce, 2012). The large KMO value indicated that factor analysis unquestionably extracted dependable and distinct

factors. A BTS value of 0.000 for overall statistical significance disclosed that the sample was statistically significant for EFA to proceed since $p < 0.05$ (Gie and Pearce, 2012; Cohen et al., 2011). As a result, we can conclude that there were correlations among the variables and a proper and expressive factor analysis was conducted (Hair et al., 2014).

4.1.2 Factor analysis

The principal components analysis technique was utilised because the primary objective was on data reduction (Hair et al., 2014). VARIMAX orthogonal factor rotation was utilised to come up with the final 10 factor rotated matrix shown in figure 4.1 below.

Figure 4.1: Rotated component matrix

Rotated Component Matrix ^a										
Item Number	Factor									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Q6	0.889									
Q4	0.869									
Q3	0.851									
Q8	0.837									
Q18	0.816									
Q17	0.789									

Q7	0.76 1									
Q5	0.74 3									
Q2	0.73 1									
Q16	0.72 3									
Q23	0.59 6									
Q9		0.85 8								
Q10		0.66 2								
Q11		0.64 2								
Q13			0.94 0							
Q12			0.92 0							
Q14			0.90 8							
Q19			0.76 1							
Q25				0.993						
Q24				0.992						
Q26				0.992						

Q22				0.779					
Q27					0.773				
Q28					0.772				
Q30					0.655				
Q29					0.583				
Q36						0.906			
Q31						0.889			
Q32						0.886			
Q38						0.853			
Q35						0.830			
Q39						0.623			
Q34						0.463			
Q44							0.78 3		
Q45							0.72 7		
Q43							0.68 9		
Q1							0.44 4		
Q40							- 0.638		
Q41							- 0.619		
Q42							-		

								0.540		
Q46									0.912	
Q47									0.912	
Q48									0.873	
Q51										0.853
Q49										0.844
Q50										0.809
Q52										0.779
Q53										0.693

The statement which said *‘leaders seek advice from employees when making decisions’* was removed since its factor loading was less than 0.4 (Hair et al., 2014). The statement which read as *‘employees in this organisation treat each other as family’* and the one which read as *‘employees in this organisation treat the young who are in positions of leadership with respect’* successfully loaded on one factor and were eliminated because the accepted criterion was to group at least three items per factor. Two additional statements, one which read as *‘in this organisation we cooperate with each other’* and the one which read as *‘in this organisation we work together in harmony’* also successfully loaded on a single factor and were also eliminated for the same reason. 11 items successfully loaded in the first factor with the aim of understanding the principal leadership style that was in use in the different SMEs as shown by table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3: Instrument items on leadership style

Dimension	1	2	3	4	5
A. Leadership style					
1. Our leader motivates and inspires us.					
2. Leaders in this organisation show concern for employees.					

3. Leaders in this organisation are approachable.					
4. Employees are rewarded when they do what is expected of them.					
5. Leaders are responsive to the needs of employees.					
6. In our organisation, leaders listen to their employees.					
7. Our leader pays special attention to our individual needs.					
8. Employees are given authority to carry out specific tasks.					
9. Employees receive clear and precise instructions from their superiors.					
10. Our leader works with us in an inclusive manner.					
11. Leadership in this organisation is shared with educated employees.					

The leadership style that is employed in an organisation has a great bearing on whether leadership will be effective or not. As such, to understand perceptions of the existence of effective leadership, there is need to understand perceptions of the leadership style used. 3 items successfully loaded in the second factor with the aim of understanding whether situational leadership theory was effective or not as shown by table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4: Instrument items on effectiveness of the situational leadership theory

Dimension	1	2	3	4	5
Effectiveness of the Situational Leadership Theory (SLT)					
1. Our leader gives us freedom to decide what, how, when, and where to do tasks.					
2. Our leader is patient when giving instructions.					

3. Our leader decreases control when we show that we are responsible.					
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The effectiveness of the situational leadership theory depends on how leaders give freedom to employees to decide what, how, when, and where to do tasks in line with their level of maturity (Henkel and Bourdeau, 2018; Shonhiwa, 2016). It also depends on whether leaders are patient when they are giving instructions to subordinates and whether they decrease control when subordinates show that they are responsible. A total of 4 items successfully loaded in the third factor with the aim of understanding leader characteristics essential to stimulate effective leadership as shown by table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5: Instrument items on leader characteristics

Dimension	1	2	3	4	5
Leader Characteristics					
1. Knowledgeable leaders effectively lead their followers.					
2. The level of education contributes to the way leaders discharge their responsibilities.					
3. Skilled leaders effectively lead their followers.					
4. Our leader shows respect to followers who are older than him/her.					

Certain characteristics of the leader such as the knowledge they possess, their level of education, the requisite skills they do have and the level of respect they exhibit towards employees who are older than them may have an influence on whether leadership will be effective or not in an African setting. These characteristics may also influence the perception of whether leadership is effective or not. A further 4 items successfully loaded in the fourth factor as shown by table 4.6 below.

Table 4.6: Instrument items on follower characteristics

Dimension	1	2	3	4	5
Follower Characteristics					
1. Employees in our organisation respect each other.					
2. Employees in our organisation care for each other.					
3. Employees in our organisation feel for one another.					
4. Employees with the requisite knowledge and skills contribute meaningfully to the organisation.					

These items were aimed at understanding follower characteristics that are essential to stimulate effective leadership. Leadership in an Afrocentric perspective may be affected by whether followers respect and care for each other. It may also be affected by whether the followers feel for one another and whether they have the requisite knowledge and skills to contribute meaningfully to their respective organisations. Another 4 items successfully loaded in the fifth factor intended to understand the role of culture in engendering effective leadership as shown by table 4.7 below.

Table 4.7: Instrument items on culture

Dimension	1	2	3	4	5
Culture					
1. Our leaders value group solidarity.					
2. Our leaders value good social and personal relations.					
3. Our leaders believe in consensus.					
4. Our leaders believe in compromise.					

Effective leadership in an Afrocentric environment depends on whether leaders value group solidarity (Wanasika et al., 2011) and whether they also value good social and personal relations (Magang and Magang, 2017). It is also influenced by the extent to which leaders believe in consensus and compromise (Kuada, 2010). 7 items successfully loaded in the sixth factor with the aim of understanding the role ubuntu plays in stimulating effective leadership as shown by table 4.8 below.

Table 4.8: Instrument items on ubuntu

Dimension	1	2	3	4	5
Ubuntu					
1. Our leaders care for us.					
2. Our leaders exhibit the value of humanness.					
3. Our leaders respect the dignity of their employees.					
4. We are free to express our opinions.					
5. Leaders in our organisation tolerate divergent views.					
6. In our organisation the interests of the group take precedence over the interests of individuals.					
7. In our organisation we stand together as a group.					

Effective leaders in an Afrocentric setting should lead in line with the ubuntu philosophy (Volmink, 2019; Galperin and Alamuri, 2017). Leaders should care for their employees (Nyanga, 2013) and respect their dignity (April and Peters, 2011). Effective leadership demands that leaders should allow followers to freely express their opinions and when freely expressed, the leaders should tolerate the divergent views. Where effective leadership exists, organisational members stand together as a group, prioritising the interests of the group instead of individual interests (Metz, 2019; Grobler and Singh, 2018).

4 items successfully loaded in the seventh factor and were intended at understanding how traditional leadership engenders effective leadership. The 4 items are shown in table 4.9 below.

Table 4.9: Instrument items on traditional leadership

Dimension	1	2	3	4	5
Traditional leadership					
1. Employees participate in key activities such as planning.					
2. Decision making is distributed.					
3. Leaders make decisions based on the agreement and consent of all.					
4. Employees participate in decision making.					

Afrocentric effective leadership demands that followers participate in the decisions that affect them and participate in key activities of the organisation. This is in line with how leadership was traditionally practiced before the continent was colonised. In addition, effectiveness depends on whether decisions are made based on the agreement and consent of everyone. 3 items successfully loaded in the eighth factor with the aim of understanding the impact of the history of the country on effective leadership as shown by table 4.10 below.

Table 4.10: Instrument items on history of the country

Dimension	1	2	3	4	5
History of the country					
1. Our leaders are domineering.					
2. Our leaders discriminate against us.					
3. Our leaders make us look inferior.					

To understand the existence of effective leadership in an Afrocentric perspective, there is need to understand whether leaders are domineering and discriminate against followers. There is also need to understand whether leaders make followers look inferior. The history of colonialism that most African countries including Zimbabwe endured left an indelible mark. Certain behaviours that were practiced by colonialists were accepted and continued by African leaders even after the demise of colonialism. These behaviours such as domination, discrimination and making followers look inferior are passed to succeeding generations with notable negative effects on effective leadership.

A further 3 items successfully loaded in the ninth factor and were aimed at understanding how effective leadership is impacted by the stage of economic development of the country as shown by table 4.11 below.

Table 4.11: Instrument items on the stage of economic development of the country

Dimension	1	2	3	4	5
Stage of economic development of the country					
1. Employees are afraid to challenge their leaders.					
2. Employees are afraid to demand accountability from their leaders.					
3. Employees are afraid to demand transparency from their leaders.					

In order to assess whether effective leadership exists or not, there is need to gauge whether followers in an African setting are afraid to challenge their leaders. There is also need to interrogate whether followers fear to demand accountability and transparency from their leaders. The numerous economic challenges that the country has experienced have seen its economic development being negatively affected. As such, followers, though an important constituent in the leadership matrix, might fail to do what is expected of them to enhance effective leadership because of fear that

their job security might be compromised. The final 5 items successfully loaded in the tenth factor and were intended on understanding whether leadership was effective in the different SMEs as shown by table 4.12 below.

Table 4.12: Instrument items on effective leadership

Dimension	1	2	3	4	5
Effectiveness leadership					
1. Employees are excited to come to work and provide their all.					
2. Employees are motivated to take on additional responsibilities.					
3. Employees are committed to the decisions made by their superior.					
4. Managers assist employees in career development.					
5. The goals of the organisation are consistently met.					

Where effective leadership exists employees will be excited to come to work and provide their all. While they are at work, they will be motivated to take on additional responsibilities (Naile and Selesho, 2014) and be committed to the decisions that their superiors would have made. Effective leaders actively assist their followers in career development (Mourao, 2018; Litano and Major, 2016). In an organisation where leadership is effective, goals are consistently met (Madanchian and Taherdoost, 2019; Su and Baird, 2017).

4.1.3 Instrument reliability

Cronbach alpha coefficient was used to measure the internal consistency of the instrument (Hair et al., 2014). The Cronbach alpha values for the new factors are shown in table 4.13 below.

Table 4.13: Cronbach alpha values

Theme/ Dimension	Number of items	Cronbach alpha
Leadership style (LS)	11	0.957

ESLT	3	0.804
Leader characteristics (LC)	4	0.702
Follower characteristics (FC)	4	0.878
Culture (C)	4	0.902
Ubuntu (U)	7	0.944
Traditional leadership (TL)	4	0.815
History of the country (HC2)	3	0.766
SEDC	3	0.961
Effective leadership (EL)	5	0.896
Total	48	

The Cronbach alpha coefficient values for all the 10 factors were above 0.7. This showed that a strong and solid item covariance existed (Maguraushe et al., 2020; Gerber and Hall, 2017; Saunders et al., 2016). It can therefore be concluded that the values were appropriate and acceptable for the objective of the study. For new instruments, a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.6 is appropriate and acceptable (Banerjee, 2015).

5.0 Conclusion

An AEL instrument was developed and validated for this research to measure respondents' perception of the existence of effective leadership in Zimbabwean SMEs. The results from the validated questionnaire led to the devising of 10 new factors with a total of 48 instrument items. The questionnaire can be used by other researchers and policy makers to measure perceptions of the existence of effective leadership in African SMEs so that early interventions can be implemented to avoid high failure rates.

6.0 Limitations and guidance for future research

The research was limited to Bulawayo's Central Business Area (CBA). Future research should aim to extend the study to other geographical areas in Zimbabwe and Africa.

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The Factors Influencing Effective Policy Implementation in Remote Rural Areas: A Case of Gokwe District

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Abstract

Development policies, if effectively implemented can bring a lot of improvement in the livelihoods of the targeted population as well as economic growth at national levels. Many developing countries have formulated and implemented policies with questionable results where people continue to ail in poverty despite the existence of seemingly sound development policies. This paper argues that the different levels of success of development policies are influenced by some existing factors, which the paper intends to explore and discuss. The information presented here was gathered using a questionnaire and some focus group discussions during the period May 2020 and May 2021. The study found that factors ranging from corruption, inefficiency on the part of Government officials, lack of technology, funding, and negative perceptions from the policy recipients, among other factors, contributed immensely towards the success or failure of development policies in remote rural areas. The paper recommends that the policy cycle be followed with strict Government monitoring, evaluation and inclusion of other stakeholders like the policy recipients, local businesspeople and NGOs amongst others. This can lead to increased transparency and increased participation of all sectors of the population irrespective of gender, age, race, or beliefs so more people, especially rural women can enjoy the benefits of development policies in their respective areas.

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Key Words: Development Policy, Multi-stakeholder approach, Corruption, Inclusive Policies, Policy Implementation

1.0 Introduction

Development policy refers to deliberate efforts by the Government to plan and map ways to improve the status and livelihoods of communities. The objectives of policy formulation include providing a guide or a course of action, to reach certain goals and objectives in sync with national priorities. Policy formulation and implementation can be subject to change due to a variety of environmental factors (Soltan 2020, Uguanyi and Chukwuemeka 2013). Ezeani (2006) and Ikelegbe (2006) concur as they proffer that a policy is an integrated course of action that Government has set and the framework it has designed to direct actions and activities to solve a certain problem. Policy implementation has a wide range of activities ranging from issuing and enforcing directives, disbursing funds, making loans, assigning, and hiring personnel and so on. The definitions above all indicate that there must be goals and objectives to be achieved, which means any policy is not successful unless it achieves its goals and objectives. Most developing countries like Zimbabwe have formulated policies with objectives and goals as in any other country in the developed world but with minimal or no success. If these goals and objectives had been achieved since independence in 1980, in the case of Zimbabwe, then the country would have reached significant levels of economic development. Nonetheless, different factors have led to the failure of these development policies. This paper argues that if policy formulation and implementation were rationally done for rural and urban areas in Zimbabwe, then economic growth should have been realised each year. The little realisation of economic growth and the policy failures could be due to various factors which this paper intends to examine and discuss.

1.1 Background of the Study

According to Sibanda and Makwata (2017) development policies in most post-colonial states were meant to redress imbalances perpetrated by the unjust colonial rule. These injustices were along racial and gender lines and they had double barreled negative effects on rural women. Now that colonialism has come and gone and the indigenous majority democratic Governments have ruled for decades, the paper finds it necessary to examine how these underlying factors and many more

have been addressed for the good of the general populace, particularly those in rural areas like Gokwe.

When Zimbabwe attained independence in 1980, the Government recognized the role of women during the liberation struggle and new laws were put in place to ensure that women reap the benefits of independence. Some changes were noted for the women and the whole population in general. As noted by Mungwini (2007), one thing that was clear from the outset was that the government was committed to changing the plight of women in Zimbabwe since independence in 1980. At independence, women were for the first time in the history of the country officially recognised as an oppressed group and as such were the target of a conscious government policy to change their situation. The government wanted to transform the status of women so that they could assume their rightful position in society and work alongside their male counterparts in the development of the nation. To achieve this goal a number of initiatives were undertaken that ranged from landmark legal reforms that were meant to safeguard the rights of women to inclusion of women in adult education and cooperatives for enlightenment and economic engagement.

The point being made is that the commitment of the government to raise the status of women has never been in question right from the beginning. The policies and pieces of legislation range from the reconciliation policy, the Growth with Equity Policy, the Growth Point Policy, the Legal Age of Majority Act of 1982 (LAMA), the Sex discrimination Removal Act of 1985 to the National Gender Policy of 2013 – 2017. The Reconciliation Policy intended to build sustainable peace, sustainable development, equality, creation of equity, forgiveness of yesteryear war crimes, and peaceful co-existence between ethnic groups and races in the country. This policy gave birth to the signing of the Unity Accord in 1987 between the two main conflicting parties of the time (ZANU PF and PF ZAPU). Key policies of reference in this study are: The Growth Point Policy and the Growth with Equity Policy both of 1981, but the benefits of these policies were hardly recognized on rural Gokwe women, thus the thrust of this paper is to analyze the factors which deter the successful implementation of development policies as well as recommending possible strategies for effective policy implementation.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Most development policies continue to fail even though a lot of time, effort and resources are used to plan and implement these policies. The targeted beneficiaries remain poor particularly the historically marginalised groups like rural women. Communities, especially rural ones remain stagnant without any growth or improvement although many policies intended for the same communities have been implemented. This paper therefore intends to explore the factors which affect the success or failure of these development policies in remote rural areas like Gokwe district and make an attempt to proffer alternative measures for effective policy implementation for rural women like Gokwe North and Gokwe South.

2.0 Theoretical and Empirical Review

The status of women in Zimbabwe is not different from other African women and the rest of the world. Gender inequalities continue to hinder the progress of women in most facets of life. Colonial policies which had racial segregation connotations had more negative effects on women, (more so for rural women) who neither had voting rights nor access to education and work opportunities compared to their male counterparts. A brief examination of the history of development policy in Zimbabwe reveals that development policy has been skewed against the rural areas. A close examination of instruments such as the Native Reserve Act in 1899, the Native Land Husbandry Act in 1930, the Land Tenure Act of 1969, the Hut Tax, the bottle neck Education System among others, meant improved economic, political, and social advancement for the white minority at the expense of the black majority in specific geographical locations. The impacts of just one of these policies may help shade light on how bad the situation was for the blacks and the women in general. The Land Apportionment Act for example, shaped the situation of landlessness in the country, a situation which was further aggravated by natural population increases leading to pressure on the land due to high population densities. Results of the Land Apportionment Act included inequitable land distribution, submission to over-exploitation of natural resources all leading to environmental degradation and a threat to sustainable livelihoods. Moyo (2000) has noted that the colonial government established state forests, in the same place the local people used to rely on for resources like firewood, thatching grass, building timber, wild fruits, mushroom, honey and so on. In fact, the forest was just a source of life sustenance for the black

majority and the exclusion meant overexploitation in the few areas left available to them, leading to serious land degradation. It can therefore be argued that colonial legislation could be responsible for the current state of rural areas in Zimbabwe due to skewed land tenure policies and the manner in which the cited pieces of legislation were implemented. These pieces of legislation marginalized rural areas in favor of urban areas and the rural areas remained excluded, marginalized and a domain for women because men resided in the urban areas, close enough to offer the much-needed cheap labour in the mines, factories, industries and the low density white residential areas, *kumayadhi*, as gardeners and maids. Three factors can be identified here: racial discrimination, rural exclusion, and gender discrimination, leading to the feminization of rural agriculture and the feminization of poverty. As expressed by Mapuva (2015), the colonial legislation can be attributed to the deterioration of rural areas in Zimbabwe, and not much gain or reversal of the situation has been attained to date, the status quo remained horizontal for the rural folk, particularly women in remote areas like Gokwe.

When Zimbabwe attained independence in 1980, the ZANU-PF-led Government had a mammoth task at hand to redress the imbalances brought to the populace by the white dominated colonial rule. This was done by changing the inherited policies which had so much racial segregation, to bring about democratic, egalitarian, and inclusive policies which would reverse inequalities and benefit the majority of the population. Some of the major policies included the Growth with Equity and the Growth Point policies both launched in 1981. The Economic Adjustment Programs dominated the 1990 to 1995 era, while the Land Policy and the Indigenization and Empowerment policies were formulated during the years 2000 to 2010. While these policies were formulated for the general populace in the country, they had their successes and failures, a situation which is true for most development policies or just policy in general. Taking the growth pole theory as an example, (Growth point policy in Zimbabwe), Zimbabwe was taking Françoise Perroux's idea that devolution and decentralization would curtail rural urban migration through the creation of a better economic space in the rural areas. With industries, factories, Government departments offering services like birth and death registration, passports and many more available in the remote districts of the country, it was presumed not many people would need to travel to the urban areas anymore since the same services will

be available in the local environment. The introduction of these new services was expected to generate employment opportunities for the youth, a sector of the population, which is very mobile, encouraging them to remain in the rural areas and make contributions through the much-needed labour pool, knowledge and skills. However, most of the growth points did not yield the intended benefits and the rural areas remain underdeveloped to date, with little or no improvements as compared to the colonial era, a situation further compounded by cultural practices like patriarchy, which negatively impact on women more than their male counterparts. Being the majority in the rural areas, women were supposed to benefit more should the development policies meant for equity have been successful. A close examination on the effects of development policy on this sector of population is a necessity in order to assess levels of inclusion and exclusion in the mainstream economy due to geographical location or gender lines. Literature is however silent on the effect of these policies on women.

2.1 Factors Influencing Development Policy Implementation Globally

Policy implementation is influenced by a host of factors ranging from lack of commitment on the part of the policy implementers to negative attitudes and perceptions of the policy recipients. In the opinion of Brynard (2009), the factors influencing policy formulation and implementation include: Institutional environment, the way people value training, private/public partnerships, contextual factors, inter-organizational cooperation, and the behavior of the political and administrative role of the players involved. In concurrence is Salvesen et al (2008) who also adds that policy implementation is influenced by the capacity and the resources available to the public agencies. While intergovernmental cooperation is also critical in the effective implementation of policy, effective conflict resolution has positive benefits in effective implementation of development policy. These factors clearly show an indication that policy formulation and implementation should be a multi-stakeholder approach with transparency and objectivity. If people have different views of a certain development initiative, disagreements may occur leading to policy failure, abandonment, or abortion before, during or after implementation. Effective policy implementation involves coordination and cooperation so that no grey areas are left. Effective communication, good governance, transparency as well as monitoring and evaluation

are priorities for the sake of effective policy implementation, otherwise there will be very limited success stories to record.

According to Ahmed (2016) policy formulation appears to be a rationale activity for most governments, but the implementation stage becomes the graveyard for most policies. Failing to implement development policy effectively has become the nemesis of most national goals, objectives and overshadowing the good intentions of the national leaders. When leaders fail to translate objectives into reality, then policy failure results due to failure of implementation strategies. The factors discussed by the author (ibid) include policy content and context, corruption, and lack of appropriate technology among other factors. In Nigeria for example, most policies failed due to lack of continuity in the leaders. Whenever a new leader comes in, new policies and new key persons are ushered in to further the interests of the new leaders at the detriment of national development. Besides the policies will also be lacking specific goal definition and clear-cut duties and responsibilities. Under such circumstances, it is difficult for policies to succeed or meet the intended objectives.

3.0 Methodology

The study used mixed methods in collecting data to satisfy its objectives. A questionnaire was administered to 260 respondents who successfully managed to complete the research questions between May 2020 and May 2021. In addition, 8 focus groups were conducted to collect qualitative data which was very useful in validation of the data collected through the quantitative instrument. The data was then processed with the assistance of SPSS and thematic qualitative analysis.

4.0 Summary of Findings

Table 1 summarises and categorises the factors influencing development policy implementation into Government factors, policy recipient factors and general factors.

Table 1: Factors influencing Development Policies

Government Factors	Policy Recipient Factors	General Factors
Lack of Funding	Negative attitude	Geographical location

Lack of training	No commitment	Poor infrastructure
Incompetent Officials	Social exclusion	World economic trends
Aborted Programs	Tolerating Corruption	Effect of wars and pandemics
Failure to eliminate Corruption	The way education and training are valued	
Reactive policies	Politics	
Lack of monitoring and evaluation		

Source: Primary Data 2021

Table 1 shows that Government factors which include lack of funding, lack of training, incompetent officials, abortion of programs, the use of reactive rather than proactive policies and the failure to eliminate corruption all cost the nation in terms of gains in development. The little development achievements made will be biased towards the powerful and influential minorities while the majority and vulnerable communities like women and the youth remain excluded. In addition, policy recipient factors which include, negative attitude, lack of commitment, perceptions on education and training as well as the community’s continued tolerance of corruption. These factors are critical, and they should be resolved through awareness and sensitisation campaigns to enable development policies to have maximum gains for the people. Lastly the general factors which came from the participants include poor infrastructure, geographical location, world economic trends and the effects of wars and pandemics cannot be underestimated as they affect the way development policy is implemented successfully by delaying access to resources.

4.1 Results from Qualitative Research

Table 2 below shows the results from the 8 focus group discussions used by the study to explore the factors which influence the success or failure of development

policies in Gokwe district. The responses in the table are critical to development. The success or failure of development policy on marginalised groups like rural women largely depends on the way those factors are taken care of and they include corruption, lack of awareness, exclusion of other sectors of the population, tribalism, and general poverty in the policy implementers which lead to theft, greediness and conversion of public resources to personal use (Table 2).

Table 2: Responses from Focus Group Discussions

Group	Factors Influencing Development Policy Success
1	Corruption, lack of awareness, lack of funds, abortion of programs, converting public resources to personal use
2	Thefts, public resource conversion to personal use
3	Corruption, individualism, selfishness, incomplete policies
4	Excluding others, poverty in the leaders, abandonment of programs
5	Poverty in the policy implementers so they convert resources to personal use
6	Lack of commitment from the policy recipients, laziness in the women
7	Lack of all resources, lack of unity, corruption in the leaders
8	Corruption, tribalism, lack of knowledge, corrupt leaders, excluding others from Government programs

Source: Primary Data

All groups interviewed indicated that they were all concerned by the way development policies and programs for rural women are implemented in their area. The summarized responses above (Table 2), are in line with the responses from the quantitative responses. The answers which were not clear during questionnaire administering came out clearly when they were explained by the respondents during the focus group discussions., which assisted the study to get in-depth answers, thus showing the importance of triangulation in research.

One of the participants, a young woman of 28 years had this to say:

“There are generally poor implementation strategies across the board. Sometimes it’s the local leaders stealing the money meant for projects, or giving priority to their relatives alone, but sometimes it’s the Government officials channelling resources meant for the public to personal use, while sometimes the women themselves may not know exactly what is expected of them in that policy because they are never consulted and trained. This will lead to people thinking that women have negative attitude towards development while in fact they are left out of these programs. Sometimes you are just hated for being a hard worker by your neighbours, or for being outspoken claiming justice. That will make you excluded from development projects if the local leaders are the ones selecting the beneficiaries. Government should therefore bring more professional officials for objective and efficient implementation of development programs”

The themes emerging from the extracts above are some of the officials implementing the Government programs are corrupt and all intended beneficiaries will not benefit fully from the development policies Government support initiatives are lacking and should be improved. In addition, the women are excluded so they tend to lay back and wait for things to happen because of the historical exclusion which can be ended through more inclusion of the recipients through wide consultations with them at the planning stage of the policy. Another villager, a 35-year female also had this to say:

“More monitoring and evaluation are needed because a lot of Government resources have been stolen and benefitted only a few. If equity existed, then more people could have benefited and women could have improved in status and levels of development. Greediness is the cancer leading to high levels of corruption everywhere. Public resources have been converted to personal use and it is not fair. Women rarely benefits unless they are wives or girlfriends of the leaders”

4.2 Results from Quantitative Research

The factors which influence development policy implementation are shown in Table 3 Using Component Factor Analysis (CFA); the study summarized the variables which had greater loading values ranging from .503 to .810. (Table 3). CFA was also used by Cirnar (2018) to measure the determinants of women empowerment in Turkey,

and provided more breathe as well as more generalizable results because of the larger samples involved. Two major components namely: corruption negatively affects the success of development policies (component 1) and absence of accountability and supporting initiatives (component 2); emerged in this study describing the factors affecting the implementation of development policies on Gokwe women, based on the strong association or relationship of the variables. Component 1 had 8 variables, namely: incompetence on the part of Government Officials (0.810), lack of involvement of policy recipients at planning level (0.777), lack of funds (.772), lack of appropriate technology (.764), negative attitude of women (.666), the age of the targeted women (.627), lack of education in the recipients (.585) and corruption (.576), ideas also emphasized by Sell and Minot (2018), Cirnar (2018) and Asaolu (2018) as major factors affecting women empowerment. All these variables were summarized to mean absence of supporting initiatives and accountability, as the major theme affecting the implementation of development policies. These ideas were also raised by Ahmed (2016) and Brynard (2009) as they argue that proper structures for training Government officials, elimination of corruption, provision of technological equipment and inclusion of the recipients in the planning stage of policies is very crucial, if development policy has to be successfully implemented for women. For component 2, only two strong variables emerged with loadings above 0.5 and these were: negative attitude of the women leads to policy failure and lack of education in the recipients lead to policy failure with loadings of 0.576 and 0.503 respectively. The emerging theme was therefore anchored on lack of education and awareness on the recipients of policy, which negatively affects the successful implementation of development policy (Salvesen et al 2008, Asaolu 2018).

Table 3: Factors influencing Policy implementation for Women in Gokwe - Component Matrix^a

Factors influencing implementation of Development Policies on Women	Component	
	1	2
Incompetence on the part of Government Officials leads to failure of development policy	.810	

Lack of involvement of policy recipients at planning levels leads to policy failure	.777	
Lack of funds negatively affects the way development policy is implemented	.772	
Lack of appropriate technology leads to failure of development policy	.764	
Negative attitude of women leads to policy failure	.666	.503
The age of the targeted women has a lot to do with success or failure of policy	.627	
Lack of education in the recipients leads to policy failure	.585	.576
Corruption negatively influences development policy implementation	.576	-.497

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Source Primary Data

Table 3 above shows that incompetence of Government officials, lack of involvement of the women, lack of funds, the age of the targeted women and lack of education in the women have led to some policies failing in Gokwe district. Corruption for example, includes conversion of public resources into personal use, nepotism and accepting of bribes which leads to unequal access to resources and promotion of inequality. Lack of involvement of women in development policies during the planning and implementation stages leads to social exclusion of certain sectors of the population and it promotes further corruption as the excluded groups try to use other means like paying bribes to get recognition and inclusion. The results show that the age of the targeted women is an important factor and programs which are suitable and age specific should be introduced so that the policy recipients are motivated to participate in the development activities. Without enough education, the women themselves face challenges as they fail to understand and participate meaningfully in the development initiatives thus ensuring higher education attainment for the women becomes very necessary for Gokwe district. Lack of appropriate technology and funds for the programs lead to abortion of projects and becomes a waste of time for the women and everyone else in the district thus it is necessary to ensure availability of funds and technology for the projects before initiation.

5.0 Discussion of Findings

There are a lot of factors which influence development policy implementation in Gokwe district as indicated by results from both research instruments. The factors were grouped into Government related factors, policy recipient factors and general factors. The Government has a key role to play in terms of policy implementation because they have the power to plan and control resources. This is when the policy cycle comes. Engaging competent officials will enable the policy cycle to be followed strictly without skipping any stages for the benefit of the people. In Zimbabwe most policies are formulated and implemented but they are never monitored and evaluated. An example can be cited of policies like ZIMASSET, a good policy whose achievements and challenges were never evaluated, and feedback never given to the public for future improvement. Following effectively all the stages of the policy cycle is very critical in effective policy implementation to enable measurement tools to be used to assess which groups of the population was included or excluded from mainstream development policies.

Corruption came out to be on the top of the list of factors influencing development policies. Most of the respondents (63.3%) in the quantitative research strongly agreed that the success or failure of development policy depends on the levels of corruption in the area under consideration, while another 31% agreed to the same variable. High levels of corruption negatively affect the success of development policy because resources may be channeled towards personal use or the objective selection of beneficiaries

may be overshadowed by social ills like nepotism, favoritism, bribery and so on. With lack of accountability systems in place for all development programs, it will be difficult to reap the best rewards from development policies in remote rural areas like Gokwe.

Most respondents indicated that women rarely benefit as individuals because they will not have the resources to use for improvement of their own businesses, an idea agreed to by more than 90% of the residents during the focus group discussions conducted in Gokwe district. Elimination of corruption through tightening of the policy cycle procedures is highly recommended by the study so that there are no porous stages where resources can leak and /or be converted to personal uses at the expense of the majority of the people in rural areas. Continued corruption leads to

the people losing trust in their government as they wonder whether the Government is not aware or they just do not care or worse still, the people would assume the government is part of the corruption (Dantamna 2016, Hussein 2018, Zhou and Zvoushe 2012).

Another factor which was found to affect the way development policy is implemented successfully is lack of funds. The respondents were asked to give their opinions on whether lack of funds is a critical factor in the success or failure of development policies in rural areas and all the 8 focus group discussions agreed that without funds there is no project which will succeed. Most projects were reported to have been aborted due to the lack of funds. The participants also indicated that they were not sure if the funds are lacking from the source or they are converted to personal use along the way by the implementers of the development programs. This idea calls for stricter measures to monitor and evaluate development programs at all levels. In addition, 62.6% of the respondents in the quantitative research strongly agreed while 32.3% agreed, to give a cumulative percentage of 94% agreeing on different levels that the variable has a lot to do with effective implementation of development policies. The Government is the major stakeholder in any development policy being implemented in the rural areas, providing financial, human and material resources directly and indirectly. Shortage of these resources means the project cycle cannot be completed, leading to abortion of such critical development projects. These negative factors affect women more than their male counterparts as was alluded to by FAO (2017) who lamented that, women are not fully equipped to perform well in any economic, political or social sector as compared to their male counterparts.

It is therefore critical for the Government to plan projects within their capacity to raise funds or on the other hand to involve other stakeholders like Non-Governmental Organisations, private enterprises and many more non-state actors available at national and international levels. In addition, the role of appropriate technology was also noted by the study as being very critical in determining the levels of success of any development policy. Without the correct technology, the policy implementation cannot meet the time limits within the project plans and this means the project can be aborted or is overtaken by other events, which may lead to irrelevance of the policy if it takes too long to complete. It is also strongly recommended by the study that the

Government engage other stakeholders to mobilise resources with enough accountability, monitoring and evaluation to avoid the ugly hand of corruption into preventing women and other vulnerable sectors of the population like the elderly and children to benefit from development policy. It is the same situation when incompetent Government officials are given the mandate to implement these development programs in rural areas. Some factors which will be blamed on the Government might be emanating from the incompetence of the Government officials, a variable which had 51.9% of the respondents strongly agreed to and an additional 42.25% agreed. Education and training of the officials to implement Government programs should always be a priority before the officials are deployed on the ground to avoid misrepresentation of the Government, thus the recruitment and selection process of the implementers of the policy should be thorough, based on meritocracy rather than bribery, seniority, or political affiliation.

The study also sought to establish the importance of the characteristics of the policy recipients in the successful implementation of the policies. Four variables namely lack of education on the women, lack of involvement of the women at the planning stage, the age of the targeted women and the negative attitude of the women themselves were examined. The focus group discussions clearly indicated that women are not a homogeneous group and some may be lazy or have some negative attitude towards developmental work, but the majorities are hard workers. From the quantitative research, a total of 95.3% of the respondents agreed that lack of involvement of the women at the planning stage is a very important factor which affects the success of development policies in Gokwe district (50.2% strongly agreed and 45.1% agreed). This was a clear indication that the policy recipients felt that programs should not be imposed on them since they are the residents of the area who know their priorities and sectors which really need improvement, or which have potential to improve the sustainability of their livelihoods. This view was once posited by Mtetwa (2014) in (Tebele 2016) who said in South Africa, rural women are never consulted on what their priorities are in terms of development so that when policies are planned such views are incorporated. Instead, top-down procedures are used, and they do not help the policy recipients much. The study therefore suggests that women should always be included during the policy formulation stages so that they

input their views to enable them to own the programs when they are implemented for them.

During the focus group discussions, 80% of the respondents indicated that they are not happy by the exclusions, and they are treated like people who do not know anything while in actual fact they can also contribute to viable plans for sustainable development. In most cases the men tend to take part at the expense of the women, who strongly feel that they have the ideas, but they are not involved or given that chance to air the views thus the exclusion is costly to the success of most development policies in rural areas like Gokwe district. The age of the targeted women in the policy being implemented was also presented as one of the important factors. About 43.8% of the respondents strongly agreed to this factor while 48.8% agreed. Only 1.6% and 1.9% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagree respectively, an indication that the majority of the respondents felt that the age of the policy recipients has something to do with the levels of success of any policy being implemented.

During the discussions, it came out that elderly women are more resistant to negatives and more stable in terms of mobility thus involving them in development project will increase the chances of success. On the other hand, some respondents felt that younger women have the energy, sharp minds and better access to technology and exposure to internet where they can source better information useful for development from other communities which may then benefit their own rural communities, thus the views were that all age groups should be involved when development projects are implemented to harness all strengths from all age groups in a spirit of unity in diversity. Lack of education was also discussed, and the respondents strongly felt that the women are better placed if they get access to higher and tertiary education, in concurrence with UNCTAD (2012), while some elder members of the qualitative inquiry indicated that women can perform the same with or without education. The majority validated the facts emanating from the quantitative inquiry in which 34% strongly agreed and an additional 53.5% agreed that lack of education in the women was a factor which negatively affected the success of development policy implementation in rural areas like Gokwe district. The respondents strongly indicated during the focus group discussions that adult literacy

classes were very important during the 1980s and should be re-introduced so that women can benefit. While enrollments in schools currently indicate some gender balance, school dropouts are still found due to lack of fees and early pregnancies, thus such groups will be assisted significantly by adult literacy evening classes

6.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

This paper concludes that there are various factors which influence the success of development policies and they include: Government related factors like lack of funding, lack of training and failure to eliminate corruption, recipient factors like negative attitude, lack of commitment, lack of education, discriminating others, historical factors like colonial marginalisation, lack of infrastructure and physical factors like geographical location. The policy cycle is a straightforward tool which, if effectively followed can benefit communities and nations in terms of successful policy implementation. The paper therefore recommends that the Government continues to be the major stakeholder in policy implementation but at the same time involve other stakeholders like NGOs, business sector in rural areas, traditional leaders and many more to increase transparency and objectivity. In addition, continuous monitoring and evaluation, include the review and feedback to civil society on the status and achievements of certain policies is critical for motivation and improved involvement of the policy recipients.

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Mashurugwi: A Manifestation of a Weakening Human Security Situation in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

Human security has been observed by the United Nations as a framework for assisting countries to identify and address several cross-cutting challenges that impact the survival, livelihood, and dignity of people. Zimbabwe has experienced a myriad of challenges that have affected young people. Over the past decade, cases of death, murder, rape, and robberies have increased and small-scale gold miners, illegal miners, and gold panners have been singled out as some of the key culprits. The term Mashurugwi has been used as a derivate to refer to a group of young people from the Midlands Provincial district of Shurugwi accused of terrorizing communities around the country. This article interrogates the assumption that Mashurugwi is a terror group from the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe. Using the human security framework, the article demonstrates how the murders, rape cases, and robberies experienced around the country are a product of the weakening human security situation in Zimbabwe. The article calls for the application of human security to advance comprehensive responses that address the multidimensional causes and consequences of complex challenges being experienced in Zimbabwe.

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Keywords: *Mashurugwi, Makorokoza*, Human security, illegal miners, small-scale gold miners.

1.0 Introduction

Human security has in the past been limited to international relations with a special focus on inter-state conflicts. The strengthening of collective security among regional and international bodies like the United Nations and the African Union respectively has seen a reduction in inter-state wars and conflicts. At the global level, conflicts between states are arbitrated by such organs as the United Nations and its agencies thereby preventing the possibility of wars between states. Recently, there has been an upsurge in intra-state conflicts which has prompted interest in redefining the notion of security to include human security (Hove, 2017).

The traditional understanding of security revolved around the use of the military in the protection of a nation's citizenry and resources. Modern conceptualizations of security have shifted to include every threat to human well-being. The United Nations General Assembly resolution 66/290 of 2012, defined human security as a method used in assisting states in identifying and addressing pervasive and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood, and dignity of their people. Specifically, the world body observed that,

For many people, today's world is an insecure place, full of threats on many fronts. Natural disasters, violent conflicts, persistent poverty, epidemics, and economic downturns impose hardships and undercut prospects for peace and stability as well as sustainable development. Such crises are complex, entailing multiple forms of human insecurity. When they overlap, they can grow exponentially, spilling into all aspects of people's lives, destroying entire communities, and crossing national borders (United Nations Trust Fund for human security, 2012).

Human security grew to prominence in the early 1990s, when states and international bodies realized that poverty and vulnerability cannot be achieved through a thematic approach to development. The concept utilizes an integrated methodology that acknowledges the linkages and interdependencies between development, human rights, and national security. The world body has singled out seven major human security threats identified as; economic security, food security, health security,

environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security (United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, 2012, p. 4)

Zimbabwe's human security record has deteriorated over the past two decades due to various factors. The scenario of the 2000 Fast Trek Land Reform program which to some commentators justified the use of violence as a revolutionary weapon has been seen as a typical case of a need for strengthening the human security situation of the country. Armed with the slogan *Land is the economy and the economy is the land*, veterans of the war of liberation violently invaded farmland owned by white farmers. Government-backed the invasion with legislation to protect the new settlers (Chitsike, 2003).

Violence in Zimbabwe did not remain limited to land invasions only but extended to inter-party conflicts as political parties did not share a common view regarding the manner in which the government embarked on the land reform program. According to the Zimbabwe Human rights NGO Forum political violence report of February 2009, in the period between January 2008 to December 2008, there were, "6 politically motivated rape cases, 107 murders, 137 abductions, 1913 cases of assault, 19 cases of disappearances, 629 cases of displacements, 2532 violations on freedom of association and expression" (ZHR NGO Forum, 2009, p. 2)

Zimbabwe's current wave of criminal activities under the banner of violent machete-wielding gangs called *Mashurugwi*, demonstrates an increase in the country's human security threats. The term *Mashurugwi* is a derivative name given to machete-wielding gangs that went about terrorizing people during the 2018-2019 period. Their escapades included robbing people of their money, raping women, and children, and forcing people to flee their homelands in the mineral-rich provinces of the country. A concern on the deteriorating human security situation in the country was voiced by the Zimbabwe Heads of Christian Denomination (ZHOCD) in their pastoral letter titled *Deteriorating human security and economy in Zimbabwe* (ZHOCD, 2019). This cautionary statement was ignited by the observation that Zimbabwe's human security index shows a poor performance on all the seven forms of human security threats.

The thesis of this article is that the problem of *Mashurugwi* is one of lawlessness due to the deteriorating human security situation in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe held disputed elections in 2008 that led to the creation of the Government of National Unity in 2009.

Economically, the country went into recession after the Fast-Track Land Reform Program of 2000. Several companies stopped operations while the country was slapped with sanctions by the United States of America and the European Union for human rights abuses. Many young people found themselves jobless and politicians took advantage of the desperate situation for their political expediency. The collapse of the Zimbabwean economy, the skewed political terrain, rampant corruption among the leaders, and the lack of employment opportunities ignited a spate of lawlessness in the country.

Against this background, this article traces the challenges caused by the *Mashurugwi* in the context of human security. The article is organized as follows: the first part explains the human security situation in Zimbabwe in relation to the identity of the group code-named *Mashurugwi*. The second part evaluates citizens' responses to how the government responded to the case of *Mashurugwi* destabilizations. In the final section, the article provides perspectives on policy alternatives regarding the problem of *Mashurugwi*.

2.0 Background to the study: Informal mining in Zimbabwe

Informal gold and diamond mining and panning is not a new phenomenon in Zimbabwe as the existence of gold miners pre-dates Zimbabwe's independence in 1980 by several centuries. The colonial administration through the Mines and Mineral Act of 1975 had strict rules regulating gold mining in the then Rhodesia³ as it was considered a preserve of the colonial elite and informal mining was taken as a threat to the environment. The richness of the natural endowments is reflected in the Zimbabwe Miners' Federation report, which says 95% of the mining licenses along the Great Dyke were held by big foreign conglomerates (Zimbabwe Miners Federation, 2009). These include companies like Zimbabwe Mining and Smelting Company, Zimbabwe Alloys, and Zimbabwe platinum. These companies continued to enjoy the mining monopoly years after independence signalling a colonial legacy (Mugandani, 2017).

At independence, Zimbabwe adopted a raft of policies aimed at empowering the previously marginalized populace. These policies included the Growth with Equity

³ Rhodesia was the colonial name of the current independent Zimbabwe. The change from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe took place at the country's independence from British rule in 1980.

policy of 1981, the Transitional National Development Plan 1981-1990, the Zimbabwe Program for Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST), the Zimbabwe Millennium Economic and Recovery Program (MERP) 2000-2001, and the National Economic and Recovery Program (NERP) among others. Zimbabwe's economic situation started to change soon after Zimbabwe's adoption of the Structural Adjustment policies under the influence of the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the early 90s. As people lost their jobs due to the Bretton Woods institutions' austerity measures, many unemployed men and women turned to informal gold and diamond mining as alternative sources of livelihood (Rindayi, Chimonyo, Magure and Scott, 2014).

Bhebhe *et al.* (2013) estimate that by 2001, close to 350,000 small-scale miners were operating in Zimbabwe. Illegal gold miners were counted among the small-scale gold miners who were contributing more than 35% of gold export in Zimbabwe (Mukumbira, 2002). Over the years, Zimbabwe crafted several legislations that guide small-scale mining most of which are contained in the Amended Mines and Minerals Act, Chapter 21:05 of 1996. Due to the bureaucratic nature of acquiring a mining license, the costs associated with the formalization of mining, and the mobile nature of most small-scale miners, many of the informal small-scale gold miners operated without mining licenses thereby earning the title of 'illegal' miners.

The government tried to stop informal mining activities based on the logic of the negative impact it had on the environment and the limited contribution to the fiscus through tax evasion. Realizing the possible threats to the environment caused by informal gold mining, the government promulgated Statutory Instrument 275 of 1991, Regulations on Alluvial Gold Panning in Public Streams Act. This legal instrument gave rural district councils the authority to offer mining licenses to prospective small-scale miners. In 1993, through the assistance of the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Development, Zimbabwe adopted a decentralized mining policy strategy for informal miners under the name "Harare Guidelines on Small-Scale Mining." The guidelines were meant to formalize small-scale miners as a poverty alleviation strategy. Under this arrangement, small-scale miners got the funding support from German and Swedish Development Agencies (Spienegel, 2015).

The formalization of small-scale mining led to conflicts between the Ministry of Finance as the authorizing ministry, the local government authority, and the Environmental Management Authority due to the damage it was making to the environment. These conflicts emerged when the government went on to enact several statutory instruments some of which were contradictory. The formalization of small-scale mining testified to the government's commitment to poverty alleviation resulting in several donor agencies coming on board to offer financial support (Masiya, Mlambo, and Mugoni, 2012). The cordial relationship between the government and small-scale gold miners was short-lived as the government struggling to contain the spiralling inflation in the aftermaths of the Land Reform Program of 2000, used the Gold Trade Act Chapter 21:03 in 2006 to direct all small-scale gold miners to sell their gold to Fidelity at a third of the international gold price. This instrument made riverbed gold panning illegal and took away local authority powers for giving licenses to small-scale gold miners. Consequently, all local authority licensed miners had to register with the central government to avoid being labelled illegal miners. It emerged that the bureaucratic process of registration and the depressed price at which Fidelity was buying gold, forced the small-scale miners back into illegal mining (Spienegel, 2015).

3.0 Research Methodology

The research approach used in gathering data for this article was qualitative using both primary and secondary data. A total of 32 participants took part in the research. Instruments used for collecting primary data included interviews with small scale miners, affected community members, and the traditional leadership in the Midlands province of Zimbabwe. The selection of respondents was done through a purposive sampling technique. Data were analyzed thematically. Secondary data was collected from journal articles, newspapers, internet articles, and books on human security.

4.0 Findings

A common perception among key informants is that the name *Mashurugwi* is an appellation given to machete-wielding gangs, sometimes confused with 'illegal' artisanal miners, who rob artisanal miners of their ore and sometimes leaving them dead. One key informant opined that the name came because of association with the rampant gold panning around the small mining town called Shurugwi in the Midlands

province of Zimbabwe. Shurugwi town, which is situated along the Great Dyke is rich in mineral deposits of different kinds with the bulk of them being Gold, Chrome, Platinum, and asbestos. The small town was known for harbouring illegal artisanal miners and licensed small-scale miners who ploughed the land in search of gold and chrome deposits. These Illegal miners who are not of a homogenous origin operated often as individuals and sometimes in groups for security reasons.

This supports research by Sivanda (2020), who makes a distinction between machete-wielding gangs, *Mashurugwi*, that are notorious for criminal activities, and small-scale artisanal miners. He argues that machete-wielding gangs are not miners but criminals who rob people of their gold, gold ore, money or dislocate other miners from their prolific gold sites. These criminals owe their motivation to the deteriorating human security situation in the country. Consequently, the use of the term *Mashurugwi* (as will be used in this article) was used to label these machete-wielding criminals.

According to the respondents, the term 'Illegal miners' is used to refer to small-scale miners who often invade and start mining operations in any disused mine or area that has gold deposits without mining licenses. These are often called *makorokoza*, a generic term for both illegal and licensed small-scale gold miners. They are distinguished from *Mashurugwi* by the fact that they carry out the actual mining and seldom rob others for gold. Illegal miners often clash with police as well as other artisanal miners with mining licenses whenever they illegally invade lucrative privately owned claims. Among the *makorokoza* are small-scale miners with mining claims. These often do not engage in criminal activities as they have their own claims. In trying to understand the nature and origins of this group, four conspiracy theories have been suggested by respondents which will be discussed below.

The first theory which gives identity to the group under study is that a group of illegal artisanal miners originally from Shurugwi are behind the lawlessness committed in all the provinces of Zimbabwe. A deeper analysis of this theory shows that Shurugwi though popular for its mineral deposits is not the only town that has experienced the problem of machete-wielding gangs but can be said to have been the most protuberant. Violence perpetrated by machete-wielding gangs came to prominence towards the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020 due to reported criminal activities

most of which revolved around murders, rape cases, and assaults. According to this theory, any form of murder, rape, or assault perpetrated by *makorokoza* (illegal miners) suggest the presence of illegal miners' from Shurugwi.

This theory while strong on association fails to provide credible evidence that every case of rape, murder, or assault by any person deemed illegal miner suggests the presence of people from Shurugwi. It must be noted that the nature of the criminal activities committed by *makorokoza* in Shurugwi slightly deviates from those recorded outside the district. Most of the murders recorded among the illegal miners in Shurugwi were directly related to mining activities. Often, illegal miners in Shurugwi committed crimes of economic nature associated with gold mining, prostitution, or drunkenness. Seldom did the miners commit crimes against members of the community as alleged to the *Mashurugwi*.

When one compares the nature of criminal activities perpetrated by illegal miners in Shurugwi with those reported throughout the provinces, there appears a slight difference. In Bindura, the criminal activities of murders, rape cases, and assaults were not directly related to *chikorokoza* (Sithole 2020). Perpetrators may have been illegal miners but committed crimes against community members suggesting a new breed of robbers outside the normal *chikorokoza* (Chirisa, 2020). Machete-wielding gangs were reported in all provinces putting to question whether all these gangs originate from Shurugwi. Consequently, most participants in this study believed crimes committed outside Shurugwi had nothing to do with illegal miners from Shurugwi but were criminal acts perpetrated by people pretending to be Shurugwi small-scale gold miners.

The second theory is that *Mashurugwi* is a product of the ruling party's youth empowerment policy. This theory is based on several media stories that point towards the various youths' programs that the government implemented to empower youths as guided by the National Youth Policy, the Youth Council Act Chapter 25:19, and the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act of 2008. However, the letter and spirit of these policies does not discriminate based on political affiliation. Some, participants had a feeling that the policies are partisan since they are led and implemented by individuals affiliated with the ruling party (Chitumba, 2019).

According to this theory, politicians have always engaged the youths in their election campaigns since 2000 and promised them several benefits including mining claims and protection against rival claimants. Consequently, many young people rallied behind candidates who promises such deliverables. This explains why some sections of the population mistakenly believed that *Mashurugwi* is a political project originating from the Midlands province (Tinh, 2020).

This theory sounds credible if taken from the context that lawlessness among illegal artisanal miners and the community in most parts of the country went unabated for several years and in most cases, it took place where the miners professed their allegiance to certain politicians. However, the theory lacks scientific and empirical evidence on why politicians would influence criminals to commit acts of rape, murder, and robbery outside the election period. Criminal activities perpetrated by the so-called *Mashurugwi* do not show discrimination based on affiliation to any political party. Secondly, it must be asserted that empowerment policies are government policies and not party policies and hence youth empowerment cannot be associated with party politics. This is not to deny that politicians can abuse government policy for their political advantage through false promises

The third theory common among local media is called the Third Force theory. This theory holds the opinion that there is a clandestine force responsible for a surge in violence that is neither affiliated to the ruling party or opposition, and whose objective is to tarnish the ruling party. This Third Force is believed to be the force behind the organization of the various criminal activities in the name of *Mashurugwi* as a way of creating antagonism between the people and the Second Republic. This is demonstrated by their use of the term *Mashurugwi* which has strong linkages to the birthplace of several politicians and government officials.

According to this theory, illegal artisanal miners from Shurugwi have been unleashed throughout the country to terrorise people and cow them into supporting the ruling party as a way to tarnish the party and its leadership. In the process, the gangs use all sorts of criminal activities from rape, robbery and murder targeting those perceived to be against the current regime. The theory also bases its arguments on the lack of urgency by the government that characterized the initial years when the

problem started. The government only deployed the military to the affected areas months after the group had inflicted massive damage to the community.

The Third Force Theory is grounded on the existing polarized economic landscape in Zimbabwe. Since 2018, there was a feeling that some politicians under the banner of Generation 40⁴ (G40) were intent on sabotaging the efforts of the Second Republic (Raftopolous, 2019). Proponents of this theory are of the opinion that, some politicians in their efforts to tarnish the new government, came up with the idea of *Mashurugwi*. However, the proponents of the theory cannot separate crimes related to *Chikorokoza* from the general lawlessness caused by the so-called *Mashurugwi*.

This theory lacks substance due to lack of evidence on the identity and origin of the so-called third force that has remained anonymous. It was based on assumptions and guesses which in a polarized situation like Zimbabwe can take various forms. Second, the existence of the third force could not be established empirically. Perpetrators of the various criminal offenses in different parts of the country could have brought to the surface the hand behind the activities.

The fourth theory opines that *Mashurugwi* is a manifestation of the decline in the human security situation of the country. This is an academic theory that brings together the first two theories discussed above as part of multiple factors behind the *Mashurugwi* menace. The central thesis of this theory which this article subscribes to, is that *Mashurugwi* is a derivative appellation given to criminals who are taking advantage of the lack of coordinated approach by the government's youth empowerment program among small-scale mining. It further argues that the recent lawlessness exuded by illegal artisanal miners is a product of a perceived deteriorating economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security in Zimbabwe. Consequently, the so-called *Mashurugwi* represent criminals with links to illegal artisanal mining who are taking advantage of the weakening human security situation to commit various acts of lawlessness.

⁴ Generation 40 was a name given to young politicians during the reign of Robert Mugabe as president who were accused of trying to usurp political power from the old politicians. These included politicians like the Jonathan Moyo, Saviour Kasukuwere, Grace Mugabe (Wife of Robert Mugabe) and Patrick Zhuwao.

5.0 Discussions

There is a thin line between human insecurity in Zimbabwe and the lawlessness exuded by *Mashurugwi*. This section highlights how the menace of *Mashurugwi* can be explained using the United Nations human security framework.

5.1 Economic Security

According to the UNDP Human Development Report of 1994, economic insecurity is defined by persistent poverty and unemployment. Zimbabwe's persistent poverty and unemployment can be historically traced to the Western influence on government policies chief among them being the adoption of the Economic Structural Adjustment program in the 90s (Mpofu and Chimhenga, 2016), corruption, the polarised political environment (Hove 2017), and the impacts of the Western sanctions brought upon the country in the aftermath of the Fast Track Land Reform Program (Matondi, 2012).

Zimbabwe's unemployment rate has generated several theories. The Zimbabwean statistical office suggests that the country's unemployment rate is around 4.9% while some analysts are of the opinion that it hovers around 85% (Dodo, 2012). According to the latter view, all informal traders including illegal miners are not counted among the unemployed. While analysts might not agree on the method to measure Zimbabwe's unemployment rate, there is a consensus that the manufacturing sector in Zimbabwe has collapsed, and that formal employment is limited to the civil service and a few companies.

Against this background, illegal mining as a form of poverty alleviation and employment creation has grown tremendously. The policy inconsistencies on small-scale mining (Nest 2017), the raids carried out by the uniformed forces (Chirisa, 2020), and the corruption associated with gaining mining licenses (Bonga, Chiminya and Mudzingiri, 2015), are among the drivers of Zimbabwe's economic insecurity that drives the illegal miners and criminals to defy government directives and engage in acts of lawlessness.

5.2 Food security

Zimbabwe's food security situation has worsened during the past two decades. In March 2020, nearly 4.3 million people in Zimbabwe survived on food assistance (USAID, 2020). According to World Food Summit (1996), food security is a situation

that exists when all people, always, have physical, social and economic access to *sufficient, safe and nutritious foods* that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for a healthy life. Zimbabwe's food security situation has been compromised by corruption among the leaders responsible for government agricultural programs, the persistent draughts due to climate change, and the lack of proper agricultural technology. This has forced the country to rely on emergency food appeals from the international world.

In the Zimbabwe Humanitarian Appeal Revision made between February 2020 and April 2020 and signed by President Mnangagwa, Zimbabwe needed 469.7 million United States dollars to feed 5.1 people in need of food assistance. The appeal that was jointly signed by the United Nations Resident Coordinator acknowledged that Zimbabwe's food supply gap stood at 900 000 tons (UN Humanitarian Country Team, 2020). Zimbabwe was rated amongst the hungriest nations in the world by the World Food Program when it reported that a total of 5.5 million people in Zimbabwe needed food assistance during the period of January to April 2020 (Chingono 2020).

To avert the impact of food insecurity, several professionals left the country in search of employment outside the borders. It is estimated that Zimbabwe's brain drain stands at around 4 million with most of these being productive ages (Gumbo 2020). Young people with limited academic skills who failed to make it to the international world found illegal mining as the most feasible alternative for augmenting household food security. While the government through its land reform program tried to parcel out pieces of land to interested candidates, the perennial droughts and lack of farming inputs daunted the country's dream of being food secure. In Zimbabwe, the mining sector underpins Zimbabwe's growth prospects and Illegal mining remains the most lucrative alternative source of income. Where it fails, illegal miners and other individuals join in committing criminal activities which earned them the title of *Mashurugwi*.

5.3 Health security

Zimbabwe's health sector deteriorated since the second decade after independence due to a myriad of reasons (Khameer, 2018). The country failed to retain its health professionals most of who fled into the diaspora leaving the country with a lean workforce inadequate for the health demands of the country. On several occasions,

the existing workforce has complained of low salaries, lack of drugs, and poor working conditions

Health security implies protection against deadly infectious diseases, unsafe food, malnutrition, lack of access to basic health care (UNFTNH 2006). In Zimbabwe, many people no longer trust the government's health delivery system as most hospitals are operating at minimal levels (Dzirutwe 2019). Access to private medical care has become the preserve of the few elites. People are now resorting to traditional medicine for respite (Madamombe, 2006, Moyo, 2019). Health insecurity increases when citizens feel overburdened by infectious diseases, malnutrition, and the absence of basic health care. Criminal activities emerge as a way of raising income to mitigate against health insecurity.

5.4 Environmental security

Illegal mining is the major cause for environmental degradation, resource depletion, natural disasters, and pollution. Wherever, illegal miners operate, they leave behind craters filled with stagnant mercury-polluted waters, mounds of sand, and fallen trees (Chiwanga 2018). Motivated by the desire to eke out a living, the miners leave open pits which are a danger to people and animals, water sources which are polluted, and riverbeds open to siltation. It is estimated that there are close to 400 000 illegal miners operating in Zimbabwe (Dalu, Wasserman, and Dalu, 2017). Their illegality implies that they do not take into consideration the necessary environmental protection law and policies.

The Lack of consistent policies guiding environmental protection is the cause of these challenges. The government introduces youth empowerment programs that allow small-scale miners to operate sometimes without a mining license. Some analysts are of the opinion that illegal miners corruptly collude with law enforcement officers in their operations to avoid prosecution (Spiegel 2015). According to this school of thought, securing protection for criminal activities from law enforcement agents comes as an incentive for lawlessness among illegal miners. According to GAN Anticorruption Portal (2016), the police suffer from poor working conditions, a lack of training, a shortage of resources, and low salaries leading to their failure to contain the challenge posed by these criminals.

5.5 Personal security

Personal security encompasses protection against physical violence, crime, terrorism, domestic violence, and child labour. Violence among small-scale miners occurs regularly and these often went unreported. For example, in November 2019, the Zimbabwe Peace Project recorded 105 deaths from machete-wielding gangs in the mining town of Kadoma alone (ZPP, 2019). Where such incidences are reported, it is claimed that the police often take it as a common crime among machete-wielding gangs. Illegal miners have a culture of violence which is cemented by inadequate law enforcement (Sivanda 2020). Sometimes, law enforcement agents fail to meet the demands for small acts of violence among illegal miners as these happen daily. According to Masiwa (2019), the culture of violence does not have limits and sometimes ends up being committed against innocent members of the community in the form of robbery, rape, or murder.

Personal insecurity often leads to defence consciousness. Inadequate legal provision for dealing with violent conflicts among illegal miners means people must protect themselves against possible attacks. For illegal miners, the machete has proven to be the best weapon for defence. However, possession of a defence weapon sometimes compels someone to initiate a conflict leading to murder or fatalities. This is how machetes became the defining weapon of *Mashurugwi*. Upon realizing how machete wielding often leads to violence, the government banned them in January 2020. The ban followed the revelation by the police that machete-wielding gangs were now being hired by individuals to terrorise people (Matendere 2020).

5.6 Community security

Mashurugwi menace became prominent late 2019 and early 2020 after they took their violence from within the small-scale mining to the wider community. Various atrocities were recorded including the killing of a police officer in Kadoma in January 2020 (Sivanda 2020). In December 2019 and January 2020, the media was awash with reports of murders, rape cases, hackings, robberies, and assaults all attributed to *Mashurugwi* (Tinhu, 2020). The atrocities were reported mostly in Kwekwe, Shurugwi, Kadoma, Mazowe, Bindura, Gwanda, and some parts of Matabeleland. Fear gripped the communities and most rural people started to have nightmares. The fact that the gangs were called *Mashurugwi*, their activities started to gain political

and tribal connotations. The *Mashurugwi* took advantage of the political polarization and the slow reaction by the law enforcement agents. This increased community insecurity.

5.7 Political security

Political security entails the promotion of freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of movement, and respect for human rights. Zimbabwe's political environment has always been highly polarized. Instead of assessing *Mashurugwi* as acts of criminality, many people appealed to tribal politics (Tinhu 2020). The lack of political security creates anarchy as individuals aligned to powerful politician abuse and oppress those not politically connected. In its bid to promote youth empowerment, the Second Republic offered small-scale miners the opportunity for improving their livelihoods. However, the policy was interpreted by some to imply protection against criminal activities leading to the abuse of privileges. This in turn increased the political insecurity of members of the community especially those who did not share the same political affiliation.

5.8 Government policy on *Mashurugwi*

Mashurugwi as a criminal group is not condoned at law. While the government has policies on small-scale miners and allowed some illegal mining to proceed unabated, the violence, rape, and murders committed by *Mashurugwi* remain illegal. Many people questioned the laxity with which the government responded to the menace created by the gang. Reports of their criminal activities were rampant in the media, but it took long for the government to move in to stop the menace. To gain the confidence of the community, reported cases of criminal activities should be investigated and perpetrators arrested without fear or favour.

The experience of the *Mashurugwi* atrocities was disturbing among the communities. Several calls were made by the community for law enforcement agents' intervention in the problems of *Mashurugwi*. It was only in January 2020, that the police and the army moved in to stop the menace through raids and issued a prohibition order against the possession of machetes in terms of section 14 (1) of the Public Order and Security Act Chapter 11:17. The prohibition covered "weapons such as catapults, machetes, axes, knobkerries, swords, knives, spears and daggers and is effective for the next three months" (Matendere 2020). The police had to engage the army in

quelling the menace in accordance with the law which allows the Police Commissioner to seek army backup in the event of overwhelming cases. The government intervention through the Act managed to quell the *Mashurugwi* problem. This proved that the government has the capacity to improve the human security situation in Zimbabwe.

6.0 Conclusion

This article has noted that *Mashurugwi* is a gang of criminals that emerged out of the weakening human security situation in Zimbabwe. The government's use of law enforcement agencies to curb lawlessness of *Mashurugwi* appears to be an attempt to treat the symptoms only while the real problem remains. Zimbabwe needs to improve its human security through improvements in economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security. Economic security calls on the government to improve access to income-generating economic activities like employment and small-scale businesses for youth people. Personal security invites the government to protect individuals against political violence, crime, or lawlessness that militates against human dignity. Food security demands the government to initiate programs that ensure access to adequate and nutritious food for everybody. Health security implies access to quality and affordable health care for everyone in the country. Political security invites the government to provide protection against politically motivated violence and the creation of national dialogue among political parties. Last, community security calls for the government to make available social services and the protection of the country's cultural heritage.

The use of the military in preventing criminal activities is provided for in the country's law but has the weakness of possible militarization of civilian rule. Experience has shown that the intervention of the military in civilian rule breeds militarization of government in contradistinction with democratic principles of governance. *Mashurugwi* cannot be eliminated by enacting stiffer laws. Laws have been in existence ever since, but in the absence of the promotion of human security, the impoverished populace will undermine them. This article affirms its thesis that, only by addressing the human security threats to people's well-being will the problems like the *Mashurugwi* be eliminated.

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Traditional conflict prevention and resolution strategies among the Manyika people of Zimbabwe: A spiritual dimension.

By Deliah Jeranyama¹ & Nomalanga Mpofo-Hamadziripi²

Abstract

This paper emanates from a qualitative study which was conducted in the Manicaland province of Zimbabwe whose aim was to explore how peace and conflict are interpreted in the context of traditional resolution and prevention strategies and models. There is wide acknowledgement that there exists a spiritual facet to conflict in the Manyika traditional setting. Focus was put on exploring the conflict resolution and prevention strategies that are in place as far as the spiritual dimension of conflict is concerned. It analyses and connects the uncelebrated models for conflict prevention and peacebuilding between members of the living and the dead. The paper also discusses the responsible individuals and institutions who take the responsibility to engage the spirit community in negotiation and mediation processes in the context of ChiManyika tradition. A clear distinction of the traditional practices which are specific for conflict prevention and those which resolve conflicts is made with emphasis on how they both emphasise sustaining relationships. Other peace concepts of reconciliation, justice and human security are also analysed within the cultural traditional framework. The paper makes some recommendations which could contribute to the alignment of these traditional strategies to the current policies and peacebuilding frameworks.

Keywords: Conflict, Conflict prevention, Conflict resolution, Traditional strategy

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1.0 Introduction

Global conflicts have attracted and received much attention and publicity from the international community which in reaction deploys peacekeeping and security forces, formulates peace resolutions and in some instances, provides financial aid. Among the different reactions to conflict are the United Nation's Uniting for Peace Resolution 377 (1950), Resolution 2131 which is a Declaration on the inadmissibility of intervention in the domestic affairs of states and the protection of their independence and sovereignty and the Manila Declaration on the peaceful settlement of disputes (1982) and many others. Peace mechanisms and models that have been crafted with a one-size-fits-all approach continue to be universalised as the standard for peacebuilding in any possible context, Africa included. However, these mechanisms and models seek to address violent conflicts whose causes have been explained by various scholars as key elements of global power such as natural resources (Bannon & Collier, 2003) and their unsatisfactory governance (Collier & Hoeffler. 2005), corruption and inept leadership (Olaosebikan, 2010), human insecurity and bad governance (Collier, 2007) and economic causes (Collier& Hoeffler. 1998).

However, in African tradition, conflict can take a spiritual facet which goes beyond conversations and physical fighting but is characterized by disharmony with the spirit community. This paper will focus on that conflict between the living and the dead. The spiritual dimension of conflict has been overlooked by authorities and writers in the field of peace and conflict who limit the indicators of conflict to social disorder, destruction of physical environments, looting of resources, rise of informal economies and economic failure, violence, human rights abuses, human displacement, and death. The kind of conflict which considers the socio-cultural beliefs, fears, values and interests of the African people continues to be missed, probably because it does not manifest in more visible ways.

However, under-documentation of this conflict dimension does not translate to Africa surviving merely by adopting the Western-designed models for the sustenance of her peace. Instead, Africa has resorted to peace institutions and traditional mechanisms that include rituals for purposes of conflict resolution, prevention, and transformation. Institutions include the African Union's Peace and Security Department and Economic Community of West African States at regional level while mechanisms

include the *Gacaca* courts of Rwanda, the *dare* (traditional court) among the Shona people of Zimbabwe, the *inkundla* among the Ndebele, *mato oput* used in Uganda and the gamba ritual of Mozambique that are used at local levels.

Despite their significant role in mending broken relationships, cleansing and reintegrating former soldiers back into communities, and building peace through resolving conflicts, these models do not adequately fulfill the aspiration for peace as it is interpreted by the Shona people, among other African cultures. This kind of peace is attained through observing certain practices that include, but are not limited to harmonious living relationships, payment of debts, honoring parents and elders as well as valuing and performing all traditional rituals prescribed by culture at various stages of life from birth, marriage through to death. Peace is, therefore, not only construed in terms of positivity or negativity as suggested by Galtung (1996) but is construed, particularly by the Shona people, as a combination of *rugare* (self-sufficiency), *runyararo* (tranquility), co-existence and good fortune. Against this background, the purpose of this study was, therefore, to explore the traditional conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms that are observed by the Manyika people because traditional beliefs and values vary and hence there is no straight jacket for the different ethnic groups, although similarities may be identified. The Manyika people are in the Manicaland province of Zimbabwe.

2.0 Peace within African Tradition

The conception of peace in African cultural beliefs is influenced by the perceived purpose for life. For the African people, peace is not a single dimensional phenomenon but rather has personal and communal dimensions which encompass names, rituals, and collective memory. As such, both conflict and peace are inheritable in the African context. Thus, one's past experiences impact them and those with whom they share relations (Taylor, 1963; Appiah-Thompson, 2019). For instance, a person may suffer the wrath and should pay for a sin committed by either living or long dead biological parents, generational cousins, forefathers or anyone of their bloodline. It is at this point that rituals are used to restore a state of equilibrium (Sarping, 1989). Peace is, therefore, not a mere post-conflict phenomenon whose establishment is achieved following violence, but a desired ongoing condition that is preserved within a people's cultural beliefs and values.

Communities across Africa share a deep and socially constructed understanding of peace at local and micro levels which is not adequately defined by the visibility of normatively defined peace indicators as they have been identified on the Global Peace Index. This understanding is not limited to the conventional construction of the phenomenon but is defined by the supposed purpose of life. Peace is fabricated around how individuals live their life, whether or not they live in harmony with the natural and human environments. There is no measure for peace just as there may not be any visible indicators for conflict which sometimes manifests in latent ways such as inherited long-standing unsettled debts and unresolved inter or intra family disputes and misunderstandings. Instead, building peace may not necessarily be achieved through clearly cut defined systematic steps as prescribed by Lederach (1997) in his peace building theory, but through sustaining fair and just relations. For the African people in general, the Manyika people included, sustainable peace is not a phenomenon that can be said to be achievable after the eruption of violent conflict, but rather is an ongoing process that progresses at every stage of human life. Therefore, the uncontested Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) model for sustainable peacebuilding tends to be inapplicable when addressing the personal, social, and spiritual dimensions of conflict. This is because the model is designed for safeguarding communities by taking away weapons from armed groups and prepare them for integration into communities. In that regard, the kind of conflict under study is without firearms, machetes, or militia. Instead, the traditional and more local approach could be a solution to this kind of conflict.

Studies from cultures have shown that traditional conflict prevention and resolution strategies such as *nhimbe* have been used by the Shona and Ndebele people of Zimbabwe (Sithole, 2020) to pull community members together for agricultural and non-agricultural activities. Chivasa (2019) has also identified the practice of *kuripa ngozi* as another conflict resolution model among Shona communities. Other strategies such as death, appeasing the dead, *chisahwira*, *bira* concept, *jakwara*, as well as storytelling have also been identified in previous studies among the Zezuru (Dodo, 2015). Given that these studies focused on the Shona people in general, this study focused on the Manyika people, which are a subset of the Shona people to explore any and variations that could be specific to the group under study.

3.0 Methodology

The study was purely qualitative, and four villages were purposively selected from Mutare Rural District, namely, Chishakwe and Mwaamba villages in Chishakwe and Mwandambira and Chikwanha villages in Marange. A sample size of forty people was selected at household level from the population. Data saturation was however reached at 37 and a stopping criterion of 3 more participants was observed as suggested by Francis, Johnston, Robertson, Glidewell, Entwistle, Eccles, and Grimshaw (2010).

Participants were selected using purposive sampling method. This method was used to select from the general population, some village elders, traditional healers, traditional leaders and spirit mediums that were thought to most likely contribute with appropriate data in terms of depth and relevance. Ten participants were selected from each village and in-depth interviews were conducted. Of the ten informants from each village, eight were ordinary individuals and two were pulled from custodians of tradition that include village elders and traditional leaders. Traditional healers communicate with the ancestors because they are spirit driven, therefore are directly involved in traditional issues. The primary reason for collecting data from the different categories of people was to collect the views and experiences of people of all age groups and social standing. This was also done to triangulate the data collected from the selected communities. Age of the respondents was an important factor because undocumented information is often passed on through oral tradition by the village elders. This qualifies them to be the custodians of culture, traditional values, and customs.

In addition, elderly people often facilitate all rituals, and they are an invaluable archive. They were deemed important in this study on the basis that they are the custodians of how rituals are performed, and social memory is created and handed down because of their age and experience. Likewise, traditional healers and spirit mediums play a key role in mediating spiritual processes under which rituals and social memory fall.

Consent to participate in the study was sought and given. Face to face in-depth interviews were conducted. This was the most appropriate data collection method because of the nature of the study which required to tap the participants' views,

experiences, and interpretation of the concepts under study. It was semi-structured therefore, critical to capture the various interpretations through open-ended questions.

4.0 Results and Discussion

The study outlines the realistic nature of spiritual conflicts and confirms some of the findings by Dodo (2015) and Chivasa (2019) thereby indicating some similarity between the Manyika and the other tribes. Traditional leaders, traditional healers and spirit mediums tend to share the same view that when spirits, especially ancestors are angered, they create situations which pushes the family to react and traditional strategies are therefore used to address the situation. Further, only traditional mechanisms can yield the desired results because there are no other means, other than the traditional ones, of engaging the spirit community for a negotiation to be done. Traditional healers and leaders shared the sentiment that conflicts with the spirit community are better-off prevented than resolved because any attempts to resolve them attracts more harm if not done well. This group also made clear indications that the spirit community can, in fact, be negotiated with and in some case, spirit mediums take a mediatory role in facilitating communication between the living and the dead. It also emerged that the strategies that are used vary on how the conflict manifests.

Prevention strategies	Resolution strategies
Traditional beer	Traditional beer
Death rituals (kupeta mufi, kugova nhumbi, nyaradzo)	Kuripa ngozi
	Kutanda Botso

Table 1 Traditional strategies for conflict prevention and resolution

4.1 Negotiating peace with the spirit community

There is acknowledgement of the spiritual dimension of conflict within the traditional communities and such acknowledgement leads to strict adherence to certain clearly defined rituals and practices which should not be broken, lest the spirits are offended. But what is peace and how can it be achieved through traditional conflict resolution and prevention strategies? Out of this question arose a multitude of responses that

pointed to peace as a state of mind which comes with the knowledge that there is a balance of power between the living and the dead. Findings revealed that death does not signify the end but one's entrance into the community which is closer to Mwari (God). This is achieved through elevation of the dead to a point where they can communicate with both Mwari and the living, hence the need for spiritual appeasement through homemade beer, commemoration, and memorialization ceremonies. All these ceremonies are construed as negotiation models for justice, peace, and security by the living.

Negotiation and mediation are therefore not western concepts that are new knowledge to the Shona cultural setting; neither are they unique to political spheres but have been known to local communities for ages. The findings revealed the role played by traditional healers, spirit mediums in negotiating for justice and equality through dialogue between the dead and the living. Not only do they negotiate when there is physical harm on the living or demand for justice, but they also take preventive measures to calm the potential anger of the dead. As such, rituals are a form of a negotiation tool and do not only focus on one dimension of conflict but also addresses relationships and bring about a win-win result. These rituals include *kuripa ngozi* and *kutanda botso*. The concept of *kuripa* would be equivalent to an admission of guilt which is followed by an appeasement of the wronged spirit. This comes in different forms and for various reasons as discussed below.

4.2. Conflict Prevention and Resolution Strategies and Platforms

The study revealed that some mechanisms do apply for the purposes of preventing the conflict while some specifically resolve the conflict already in existence. The latter do become relevant as both conflict resolution and peace building as it mends relationships that would have been dented. This section discussed these strategies and what they are meant to achieve, in the understanding of the Manyika people.

4.2.1 Death rituals

Evidence shows that the Manyika people, do subscribe to the death rituals as part of their tradition. Death is believed to be a transforming force that does not strip away the identity of the dead. As such, the dead do expect to be treated as equals with the living in the sense that they need to be recognized and identified with their families,

relatives and friends and this identification can be strengthened by means of passing down individual names of the dead to the living. The practice also serves the purpose of eliminating potential conflict with the dead and ensures enhancement of the well-being of both the dead and living. It also symbolizes the legitimate domestication of the spirit of the dead, an act that is presumed to foster a sustainable peaceful relationship between the dependents and the provider. In return, the study revealed that the living are provided with security through financial blessings, rain, successful reproduction and good health. Therefore, rituals regulate power relations between the dead and the living, thus, creating a conducive environment for a peaceful relationship to thrive. Figure 1 below demonstrates this relationship.

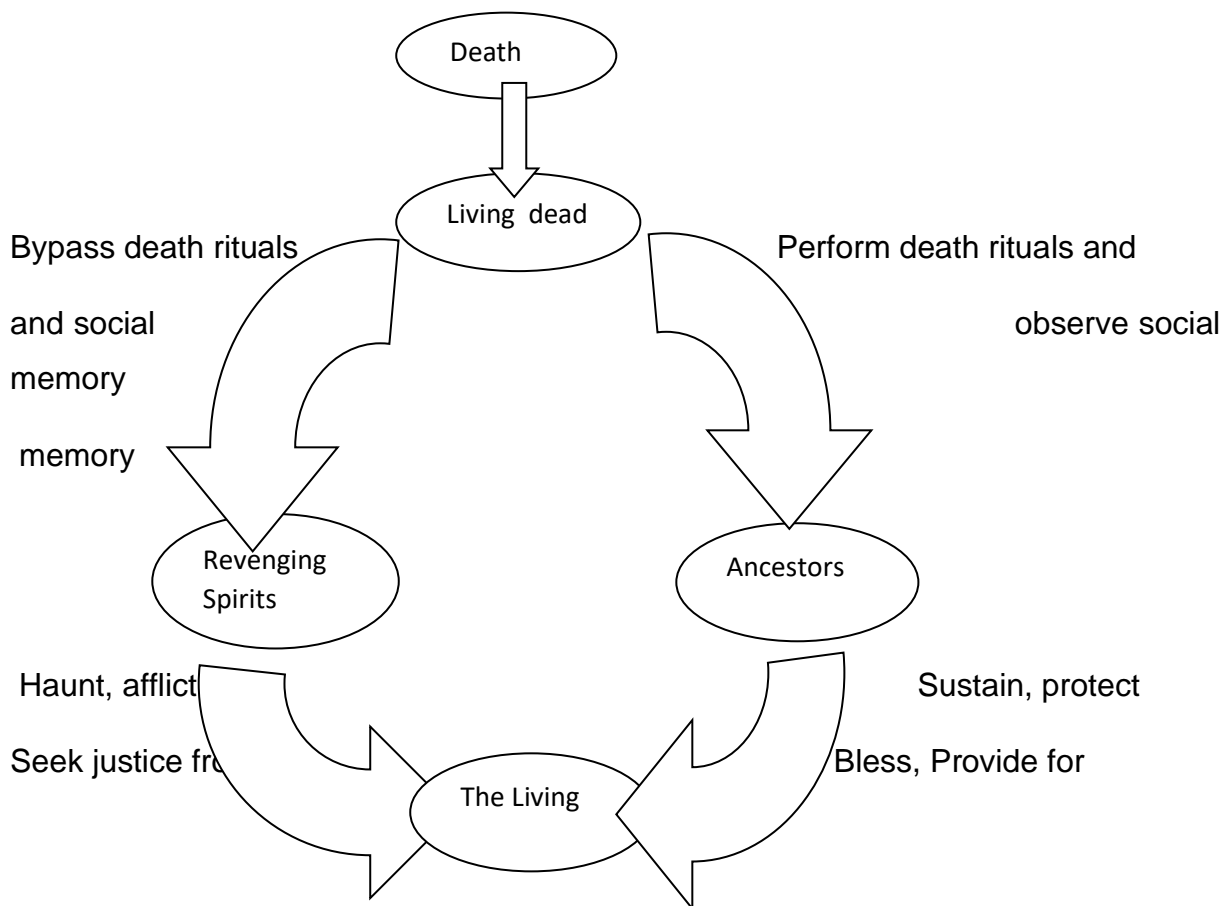


Figure 1: Life after death in relation to peace (Jeranyama, 2014)

Whilst focusing on the living-dead relations, these findings clearly identified the rituals that are conducted upon the death of an individual and how identity influences specific decisions and responsibilities. Death rituals are practiced from the moment

an individual is pronounced dead through to post burial. Specific rituals are conducted by specific individuals who have that obligation to take the leading role as prescribed by culture. These include the mother of the deceased. These rituals involve folding the dead (*kupeta mufi*), a process conducted by a niece, nephew, or wife to ensure that all body parts are positioned well for burial before covering it with a blanket. The relatives of the deceased are informed by word of mouth and a small cash amount or domestic edible animal before mourning is officiated. This is followed by washing the body of the deceased by the same person who folded the body. In the absence of the culturally designated persons, totems can be used to single-out the appropriate individual to stand in as the relative. When that alternative is chosen, any individual who shares the totem with that of the desired relative takes over the responsibility. For example, where the mother, with the (*Shumba*) lion totem would have participated, any woman of the same totem may take over the responsibility. If the deceased has a house, it is required that their body lays in state overnight in that house as it is believed to be an opportunity to bid their house and farewell as well as to give the family an opportunity for closure through any final ritual³. Those who die single still have their bodies spend a night in their parent's house. Everyone attending the funeral gets an opportunity to view the dead body as farewell. When the time comes to dig a grave, the deceased's father or nephew presides over the process by marking the four corners of the grave. After burial the belongings of the dead are distributed among their family and relatives (*kugova nhumbi*).

Resulting in conflict with the ancestral community are some of the emerging memorialisation practices that comprise of the seemingly anti-cultural practices that were reported as the causes of family disputes and potential anger-stimulating practices which result in spiritual conflict with ancestors. Interviews with the village elders who also are the custodians of tradition revealed that while some have slowly abandoned certain traditional practices for Christianity, the new ways of memorialisation involve practices that they are not comfortable with and are not willing to partake in. Traditional healers and faith-based healers from apostolic

³ This practice had been stopped during the Covid-19 pandemic and this significantly changed the mourning and funeral rites of the Shona people.

churches strongly argued against the filming of funeral proceedings, particularly body viewing as these practices show lack of respect for the dead.

4.2.2 Kuripa Ngozi

In this study, the adopted concept of *ngozi* is that when the spirit of a dead person haunts the living, demanding a decent send-off or seeking explanation for their failure to perform a specific death ritual for them. Admission of guilt is then expressed by fulfilling the demands of this spirit through a ceremony, during which, family elders call upon the angry spirit and present their appeasement. Those from a more traditional background indicated that it is the spirit that, when consulted, gives direction on what should be done, by whom and when. The result is the appeasement of the angry spirit, with peace guaranteed thereafter.

4.2.3 Kutanda botso

The other facet of *kuripa* manifests through *kutanda botso* (self-shaming). There is a unanimous understanding that should a child wrong (especially by scolding, beating, or despising) their mother and she dies before the child has sought forgiveness, this child will eventually have to pay for their wrong deeds even after their mother's death. The Shona people believe that a mother is a very important member of the family and should be treated with caution as she comes from a different bloodline. In that regard, if wronged and dies without settling issues with her child, the child will have to seek peace with their deceased mother. The ceremony involves cleansing the spirit of the aggrieved biological mother so that the spirit of vengeance may be exorcised, and the perpetrator forgiven (Chavasa, 2021). These peace negotiations involve the relatives (brothers and sisters of the wronged mother), who often are recipients of the peace offering that can be in cash or gifts. However, they do not just receive but further present this reparation to their late sister. This study revealed that, ignoring this process results in bad luck, failed marriages, and lack of social security in all its forms. This backs up the African Philosophy that death renders the dead some power to influence the lives of the living as "living dead" coined by Mbiti (1969), the "living-timeless" (Banana, 1991) and "intangible assets" (Mararike, 2011). Hence, in the absence of peace, there is no development.

4.2.4 Dare

Dare is a traditional court system where decisions are taken by consensus at family level, this is where conflicts are deliberated with the intention of resolution, through accommodation of all parties involved in search of an effective compromise. This platform creates a conducive and neutral venue for issues to be deliberated and resolved. This study clearly showed how this system remains uncontested both at family and community levels. Reparations are also discussed on the platform.

4.2.5 Conflict resolution and prevention strategies: For peace or out of fear?

From a traditional perspective, there are strategies and models to create harmony with the departed and create transformative relationships. This harmony guarantees positive interaction through provision of social and financial security, material blessings, fruits of the womb, bumper harvests, and good health. The strategies also symbolically explain commitment to reinvent relations between the living and the dead to create a smooth and beneficial relationship. Although death ritual processes are described as an expression by the living for the need to build sustainable peace with dead relatives who in turn provide relational and material peace, narratives of fear are not dismissed as unworthy. Indeed, these strategies are a vehicle for peace building but fear of possible wrath from the dead also drives such practices.

Despite that these strategies serve to build peace; some have also become major sources of conflict at family levels due to different religious denominational beliefs and traditional values. For instance, passing on the names of the dead may be done with good intentions but can also fuel conflict within families. While the traditional intention of the rite was to keep the name “alive”, fear of witchcraft and negative spirits may cloud the decision to pass down a name. Further, rituals such as *kurova guva* which are common among the Zezuru, are replaced by *nyaradzo* which is a memorial service whose proceedings are conducted by the church.

5.0 Conclusion

The study managed to bring out strategies that the Manyika people practice as ways of preventing both human to human as well as human to spirit conflicts. These strategies could be designed in a manner that can inform policy, particularly those who guide the traditional justice system. There is a very high acknowledgement of

traditional conflict prevention and resolution strategies within the Shona family setup. These strategies emerge as facilitative measures emanating from the belief that, death transforms one into a member of the ancestral community which can either invite positive or negative forces into the life of the living. However, these positives are guaranteed by adequate observation of rituals as they are believed to be facilitators of the entrance of the dead into the community of ancestors. Within this traditional framework, the conventional conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms tend to be inadequate and almost inapplicable as far as this nature of conflict is concerned. Hence, it was the objective of this paper to bring out a unique conflict nature that can only be resolved through traditional conflict resolution techniques.

Within the Manyika and wider Shona traditional setting, relationships do matter and have influence in as far as development and sustainable peace are concerned. Building peace need not be expensive, but could follow traditional processes at the local level, using local resources and strategies. The study therefore makes the following recommendations to the government of Zimbabwe:

Firstly, that these conflict prevention and resolution strategies be revisited and modelled in a manner that aligns them to other complementary frameworks, such as those which focus on human rights protection and promotion. This would require complementary effort by the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission and the Human Rights Commission.

Finally, that these traditional practices be designed into a documented peacebuilding model that can be the basis for unlocking potential for restoring and strengthening relations for sustainable communities.

Author contribution statement

Both authors of this paper have directly been involved in its development and analysis and have approved its submission.

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Challenges Women face in Accessing the Benefits of Development Policies in Rural Areas: A case of Gokwe District in Zimbabwe.

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Abstract

This paper examines the challenges women face in accessing the benefits of development policies in remote rural areas like Gokwe district. Rural women can be effective at increasing national development growth rates if they are included in development policy formulation, planning and implementation phases. However, their contribution is not significant because they are excluded from mainstream development activities. The study employed a mixed methods approach to identifying the challenges that rural women face in accessing development policy benefits. Using Gokwe as a case study the researcher administered 260 questionnaires to participants in the district in addition to 8 focus group discussions comprising 10 participants each during the period May 2020 and May 2021. The results showed that rural women are aware of the challenges which deter them from accessing development policy benefits. These challenges include lack of education on the part of the women, strict traditional structures, lack of supporting legislation, and male dominance amongst others. The paper recommends that Government should continue formulating inclusive policies specifically meant for women. Strict monitoring and evaluation at all stages of project formulation and implementation should be observed so that maximum development policy gains can be realised for rural women. In addition, some development programs can be introduced for

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both boys and girls right from high school so that women's empowerment starts earlier in their lives.

Keywords: Challenges, development policies, policy implementation, social inclusion and exclusion, women empowerment

1.0 Introduction

This study takes its main argument from the phenomenon of gender disparity in the world. Women have been discriminated against in many ways because most countries in the world have patriarchal societies, in which men are given preferential treatment in all facets of life (African Development Group 2015). This scenario has made women remain economically dependent on their spouses. Statistics indicate that women remain the poorest in the world because two-thirds of people living on less than \$1 per day are women, a scenario which is deplorable and needs improvement in all sectors of the economy across the world (Africa Partnership Forum 2007, UN Women, 2017, and UN Women 2018). A UNDP report indicates that the world's richest 225 people are all men and more than 70% of the poorest people are women because they earn less than men for the same work, a situation that continues to perpetuate gender inequality across the world (UNDP 2021). This is an indication that women are the lowest in numbers in terms of property ownership, which makes poverty feminised in most parts of the world. In addition, women are rarely found to be leaders in political parties or executive branches of Government the world over (UN Women 2018). Very few countries have reached the 30% target outlined by the Beijing platform for action for women parliamentarians, let alone the 50% current guideline in international, regional, and national policies as specified by Africa Partnership Forum (2007 and UN Women 2017). It is from this background that this study seeks to explore the challenges women face in Zimbabwean rural areas in terms of accessing benefits from development policies, whether it is due to deliberate social exclusion, or a lack of understanding of the benefits of inclusive policy implementation.

1.1 Defining Concepts

According to Uguanyi and Chukwuemeka (2013), a policy is a course setting that provides the direction, the guide, and the way to the achievement of certain goals or objectives desired by the Government. In addition, Ezeani (2006) and Ikelegbe

(2006) concur as they proffer that a policy is an integrated course of action that the Government has set and the framework or guide it has designed to direct the actions and activities to solve a certain situation. According to Obor (2005), policy implementation means all activities done to achieve the goals of an established policy. It is concerned with the process of converting financial, material, technical, and human resources into outputs, which are goods and services. Edwards (1980) (in Obor 2005) explains that policy implementation is the stage between the establishment of a policy and the consequences for the people it affects, with its activities ranging from issuing and enforcing directives, disbursing funds, making loans, assigning and hiring personnel and so on.

Social exclusion is a complex and multi-dimensional process that involves the lack/or denial of resources, rights, goods, and services, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people in a society, whether in the economic, social, cultural or political arena (United Nations 2013:19, Mack 2016, and O'Donnell 2016). The paper notes that social inclusion is found along the lines of gender, age, tribe, religion, and political affiliation amongst others. This paper also notes that social exclusion due to age has significant effects because it starts at the household level where the parents own all the family assets while children, even those above 18 years, do not have any properties registered in their names. This situation promotes deep-rooted inequality, especially on the part of female children who would enter into marriage without anything of their own as compared to their spouses. Social inclusion is a process that ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social, political, and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living that is considered normal in society in which they live (United Nations 2013:20, Bellani and Fusco 2018, World Bank Group 2020).

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Economic and Social status of women and Development Policy Globally

Development policy has been tackled internationally through so many forums which should be emulated by individual nations for the benefit of their populations (Kraay 2020). Agenda 2030 or the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is one such international framework that gave priority to gender equality at the international level

(SDG 5), which countries should emulate and make national plans and frameworks to promote gender equality (OECD 2019). According to Howes (2020), the formulation of any development policy should be critically analysed for its effectiveness in solving the problems at hand. Although many countries have enacted laws on gender equality, the last 20 years have been patchy and unequal (Amnesty International 2018). According to the World Economic Forum (2021), very few countries have closed the gender gap which appears to be persistent. Women continue to face challenges of exclusion and vulnerability despite the existence of policies (African Union 2021). Even before the enactment of the SDGs, Gender equality has been a priority on the development agendas for a very long time (Ortenblad 2017). UN (2005) avers that the Beijing Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 proposed strategic objectives and specific actions in critical areas of concern, which, taken together, would contribute to building an enabling environment for women's participation in development. It also stated that it is essential to design, implement and monitor effective, efficient, and mutually reinforcing gender-sensitive policies, programs, and institutional mechanisms that foster the empowerment and advancement of women. Whenever a policy is drafted and implemented, women themselves should be part and parcel of the planning team so the long-standing negative attitudes obtained through institutions like socialization and patriarchy can slowly be eliminated (Badey 2015). However, it is rarely the case as women continue to be excluded from participating in the policy cycle, making them passive recipients of policy benefits (Moodley et al 2019, World Economic Forum 2021 and African Union 2021). Empowering women and leaving out men in the whole equation will be futile since men are a critical part of the equation (Maphosa et al 2015). When men understand the rationality behind giving women the wings to fly and contribute to the economy and other special development sectors, then it will be easy to achieve all the strategies and mechanisms arranged for women.

In concurrence is the UN (2002) emphasizing the need for gender mainstreaming in development policy for effective results and offering some strategies which can be used to ensure that development policy is impacting men and women. While mainstreaming is essential for securing human rights and social justice for women as well as men, it is also increasingly recognized that incorporating gender perspectives

in different areas of development ensures the effective achievement of other social and economic goals (Hivos 2017). Mainstreaming can reveal a need for changes in goals, strategies, and actions to ensure that both women and men can influence, participate in and benefit from development processes. This may lead to changes in organizational structures, procedures, and cultures and the creation of new organizational environments which are conducive to the promotion of gender equality (Moodley et al 2019 and Andrus 2021). The stakeholders should be consulted on their views about the responsibilities, activities, interests, and priorities of women and men, and how their experience of problems may differ (Otenblad 2017, Kraay 2020 and African Union 202). Gender mainstreaming involves the appreciation of differences between men and women which is inevitably visible when special lenses are used to view the needs of each individual. This heterogeneity will reveal the differences in approaches used by the two groups of people which should never be overlooked or overshadowed but treated with particularity (Moodley et al 2019). Involving everyone will ensure that no single individual is left behind irrespective of colour, age, ethnicity, or physical and mental ability (OECD 2019). An example can be cited where very few development programs are lined up for women with mental challenges for example their sexual reproductive rights, which includes access to condoms or family planning tablets. Including men and women in all development initiatives on equal representation presents a better chance of remembering all vulnerable groups of people to be included in national economic activities.

2.2 The Economic, Social and Political Status of Women in Africa and other Selected Developing Countries

In Africa and other developing regions, corruption (Ruzengwe 2019), lack of continuity of Government policies, inadequate human and material resources, and lack of knowledge of the policy cycle have promoted implementation gaps due to unplanned leadership changes have always become the nemesis of these policies (Makinde 2017). According to Moodley et al (2019), Africa has so much potential economically but the persistent failure to embrace gender diversity is leading to missed opportunities. Poor policy formulation and strict implementation procedures promote the failure of development initiatives. In Nigeria for example, the story of the three first ladies from 1983 to 1998 indicated that the policies were never really meant to empower the ordinary poor woman but to pursue the individual egos of the

power-hungry first ladies (Ajulor 2018 and Makinde 2017). Each first lady would come and change the names of programs, and start their own committees and strategies in a bid to outsmart the former first lady and this did not help women's empowerment at all but rather wasted state resources at the expense of the poor women. In Malawi, policies for women's empowerment fail due to, the financial incapacitation of the institutions, lack of human resources, and politicisation of the policy implementation process.

These challenges are more or less the same across Africa (Cloete and De Coning 2011, Hussein 2018). In South Africa, Tebele (2016) posits that policies had to be formulated to benefit the poor and to redress the colonial injustices but real women empowerment still failed due to poor planning (Vengesai 2019). The policies showed the 'what' and 'why' of policy formulation but lacked the 'how' part. Education and training, awareness and sensitisation, and lack of consultation and involvement of the concerned beneficiaries greatly affected women's empowerment and the success of development policy in South Africa (Cloete 2011, Mtetwa 2014, Mkhize 2015 and Tebele 2016)

In other developing countries like Saudi Arabia, women wish more challenges could be eliminated instead of a simple lift of a ban on driving (Takenaga 2018). Structural challenges, lack of empowerment, lack of resources, strict guardianship policy, and exclusion from public life are among the challenges Saudi women face that bar them from equal treatment in their country (Al -Ahmed 2011, Rajkan 2014). More research is needed on how development policies can be implemented for the meaningful inclusion of women since strategies employed in most countries discussed in this empirical research appear to have flaws here and there.

2.3 The economic, social, and political status of Women in Zimbabwe and Gokwe District

In Zimbabwe, rural women continue to be poor even though they are the backbone of agricultural production (Nyamudeza 2012, Sawu 2018, and Vengesai 2019). According to (Sawa 2018), Women are the poorest and they fail to send their children to school. Their businesses and livelihoods are on a small scale, and they fail to raise enough income for basic needs like clothes, education, and food). When Zimbabwe attained independence in 1980, the Government recognized the role of women

during the liberation struggle, and new laws were put in place to ensure that women reap the benefits of independence. Some changes were noted for the women and the whole population in general. As noted by Mungwini (2007), one thing that is clear from the outset is that the government was committed to changing the plight of women in Zimbabwe since independence in 1980. At independence, women were for the first time in the history of the country officially recognised as an oppressed group and as such were the target of a conscious government policy to change their situation. The government wanted to transform the status of women so that they could assume their rightful position in society and work alongside their male counterparts in the development of the nation. To achieve this goal several initiatives were undertaken that ranged from landmark legal reforms that were meant to safeguard the rights of women to inclusion of women in adult education and cooperatives for enlightenment and economic engagement. However, all these efforts have not yielded the much-desired goals and objectives, thus this paper intends to examine the challenges which have led to the exclusion of rural women in the Gokwe district. According to Chichester et al (2017), Zimbabwe has taken more important steps in ensuring that gender equality is promoted through legislative procedures is the inclusion of a section on gender balance in the 2013 constitution as shown by the extract from the constitution below:

“17. Gender Balance (1) The State must promote full gender balance in Zimbabwean society, and in particular-(a) the State must promote the full participation of women in all spheres of Zimbabwean society based on equality with men; (b) the State must take all measures, including legislative measures, needed to ensure that-(i) both genders are equally represented in all institutions and agencies of government at every level, and (ii) women constitute at least half the membership of all Commissions and other elective and appointed governmental bodies established by or under this Constitution or any Act of Parliament; (c) the State and all institutions and agencies of government at every level must take practical measures to ensure that women have access to resources, including land, based on equality with men. (2) The State must take positive measures to rectify gender discrimination and imbalances resulting from past practices and policies” (GOZ 2013:8).

The above part of the constitution clearly defines the duties and responsibilities of the state in ensuring that women and men are on equal footing in all aspects and all spheres of life.

In addition, the Government of Zimbabwe has drawn up and adopted a National Gender Policy that aims at providing guidelines and institutional frameworks to engender all sectorial policies, programs, and activities at all levels of our society and economy. It endeavours to improve the lives of both women and men by removing the various discriminatory customs and legislations. According to GOZ (2013), the policy sets out eight priority policy interventions around which policy objectives and strategies, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation are formulated.

The policy intervention areas are: (i) Gender, Constitutional and Legal Rights; (ii) Gender and Economic Empowerment; (iii) Gender, Politics, and Decision Making; (iv) Gender and Health; (v) Gender, Education and Training; (vi) Gender Based Violence; (vii) Gender, Environment, and Climate Change, and (viii) Gender, Media and ICTs. (Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development 2013) Section 5.3 and 5.5 of the same policy makes special reference to the importance of ensuring the attainment of a 50/50 representation of men and women in politics and other decision-making positions as well as ensuring equal access to education for boys and girls and their retention at all levels, respectively. Such policies if implemented as outlined, monitored, and evaluated for success periodically are likely to go a long way in ensuring gender equality.

Zimbabwe also signed the SADC Protocol on gender and development in 2008 along with other 14 African states as a way to show commitment in matters concerning gender equality. The articles in this protocol promise a lot of measures that should be undertaken by state parties to empower women and create inclusively and enable economic, political, and social environments for the participation of men and women in the continent. If all these instruments could be followed meaningfully, then gender equality may be a reality in the foreseeable future.

However, despite the existence of all these blueprints for gender equality, gender disparities are still evident in Zimbabwean society (Gudhlanga et al. 2012). Girls continue to be marginalized and gender parity is still an illusion for most societies, particularly the rural areas where the majority of people reside (ZimStats 2014). In

critical fields like education and political participation women and girls continue to be outnumbered by men (Hivos 2017). According to Maphosa et al (2015), the discrepancy between the perceived and actual realities of women's participation in politics is not by accident but is founded on a manoeuvre by politically dominant males to open up the political space when necessary and convenient for them. Research has shown that societies and communities fare better when women are educated on the same level as their counterparts because there will be improved health through reduced child mortality and higher nutrition levels (UNESCO, 1996, Chabaya and Gudhlanga 2013). In addition, Matera (2016) posits that policies are not working as they should be and they have to be strengthened through sanctions that punish those companies and parties that do not meet the stated local gender quotas, as well as giving incentives to those organisations adhering to the stated gender parity targets. Unless the state takes a leading role in effectively implementing its blueprints in favour of gender equality, then gender disparities will persist for generations to come (Gordon 2006 and 2010). It is against this background that this paper intends to explore the challenges which continue to deter women from accessing development policy benefits in the rural Gokwe district, to generalise the same challenges to the rest of the country.

There are some scholars like Nyambara (2002), Nyamudeza (2012), and ZimStats (2012) who wrote about the Gokwe district before it was divided into two districts and they portrayed the district as a remote place with economic and political participation of women very low. The situation in the Gokwe district is further aggravated by the fact that Gokwe is a very remote marginalised area where development initiatives were never a priority. This gave the district a disadvantage compared to other districts in Zimbabwe. Gwimbi (2009) posits that Gokwe, which has been divided into Gokwe North and Gokwe South, is the largest district in Zimbabwe and lies to the northwest of the country. Like any other rural district in Zimbabwe, poor infrastructure, lower levels of education and lack of initiatives that keep girls in schools remain some of the major challenges hindering women and girls from accessing the benefits of development policies in Gokwe district (Musasa 2020).

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Description of Study Area

The study was carried out in Gokwe North, an area in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe. Gokwe North is a remote rural area with Nembudziya Growth Point as the Administrative centre. Nembudziya growth point is 72 kilometres from Gokwe town, 165 kilometres from Kadoma, and 305 kilometres from Harare (Gwimbi 2009). Gokwe region, which used to be one district, and now divided into Gokwe North and Gokwe South is delimited by the Sanyati River to the east, Chemagora forest and Nkayi districts to the South, and Kariba and Binga to the West and North respectively. Gokwe is in ecological region 4 experiencing very high temperatures (26 degrees Celcius on average), and low rainfall (250-500mm/year) (Nyambara 2003). Figure 1 shows Gokwe North and South.

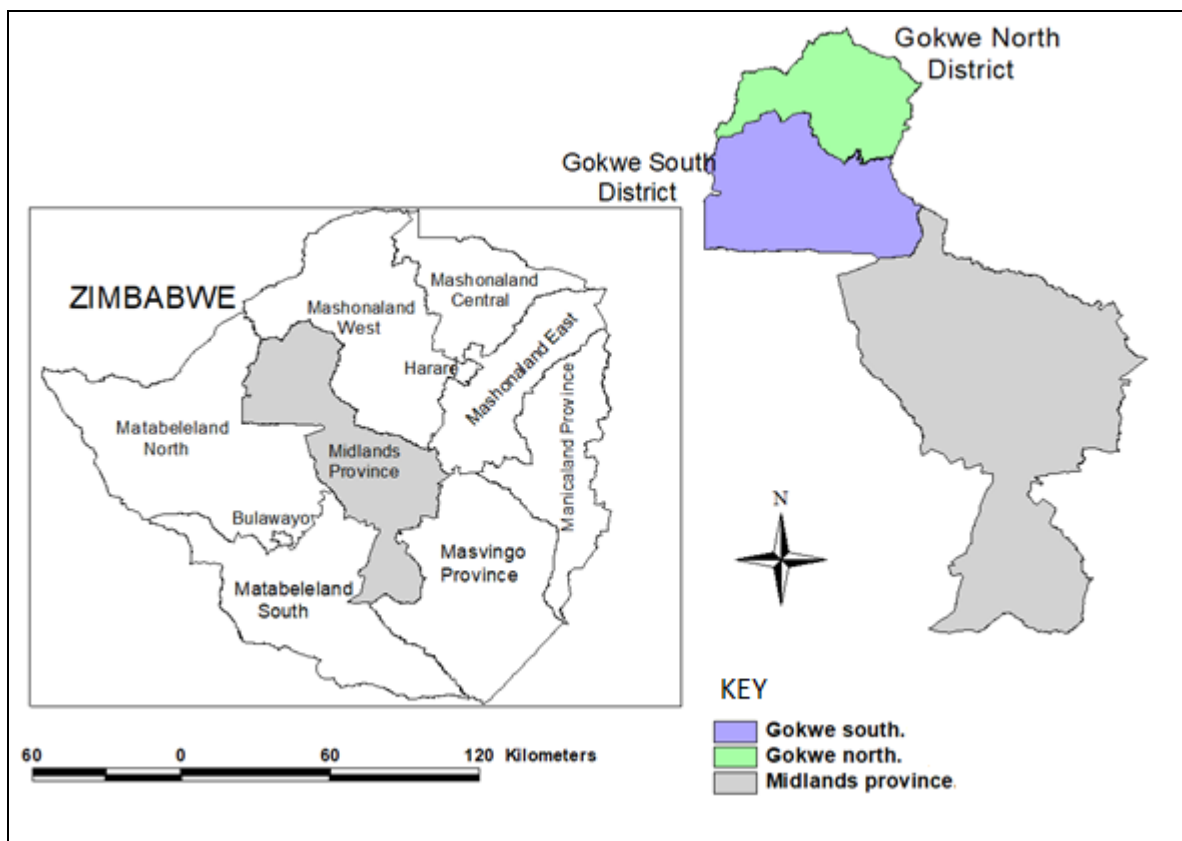


Figure 1: Gokwe North. Source: Author (August 2022)

3.2 Research Methods and Strategies

The study employed mixed methods in data collection and analysis. Questionnaires, focus group discussions, and interviews were employed for the sake of triangulation so that responses from one method can be validated with responses from another method. Questionnaires were self-administered to 260 participants from the Gokwe district while eight (8) focus group discussions consisting of 10 participants each, were conducted during the same period of May 2020 and May 2021. The total sample in the study was 340 women. Follow-up interviews were made through teleconferencing, WhatsApp calls, and messages. The respondents were selected using purposive sampling, and adult women above 18 years voluntarily consented to participate in the study with full knowledge of the purpose of the study. The participants were made aware of the objectives and purpose of the study and they voluntarily participated.

4.0 Results/Findings

The study presents the following findings, gathered through desktop research and primary research tools which are mainly questionnaires and interviews in addition to observations made during the data-gathering process.

4.1 Challenges from Reviewed Literature

The following challenges were gathered from the literature reviewed by the study:

- a) Lack of inclusive policies (Tebele 2016, Moodley 2019)
- b) Male dominance (Maphosa et al 2015, Moodley 2019)
- c) Terrorism and conflicts (African Union 2021)
- d) Marginalisation due to distance, poor roads, and poor infrastructure, leaders prioritise those in urban areas (Kraay 2021). This was termed urban bias by Sawa (2018)
- e) The historical triple effect of exclusion, being a woman, being rural, and being in a remote area (Chichester et al 2017, Tebele 2016, Vengesai 2019)
- f) Lack of girl-child empowerment initiatives. (Otenblad 2017, Musasa 2020)
- g) Lack of education for women (African Union 2021, Amnesty International 2018)
- h) Persistent gender gaps (World Economic Forum 2021)

4.2 Challenges from Quantitative Findings

Table 1 below presents the variables associated with the challenges women face in accessing the benefits of development policies. The Principal Component Analysis (PCA) method used extracted 3 components that are detrimental to women in their quest to access the benefits of development policy. Components 1, 2, and 3 had 4, 1, and 2 variables respectively. However, the other variable for component 3 was ignored since it was a negative loading value, and only values close to 1 were chosen ranging from .499 – to .937 (Virupashka and Puranik (2016)). The variables used to determine component 1 were: Strict traditional structures (.756), male dominance (.715), Poor communication (.706), and nepotism and corruption (.641), and all these components show that women exist in over-controlled environments (spouses and society) where they do not have the freedom to exercise their potential without interference. These ideas are in line with ideas from (Wodon 2018, Ajulor 2018, Makinde 2017, and Hussein 2018) outlining a host of challenges women face in accessing the benefits of any development program in third-world countries. Component 2 only had one variable, the laziness of women while component 3 also had one variable, the issue of male dominance.

The two components had values of .937 and .499 respectively. Despite having single variables, the two components could not be discarded because of two reasons. The first reason is that component 2 had the highest loading value of .937 and its relevance could not be ignored. The second reason was that the two components are both widely discussed in the literature in this study, so they could easily be concluded to have the same characteristics as women in other rural areas from other African countries. Scholars like Cloette 2011, Siambombe (2015), Chigudu (2014), and Zhou and Zvoushe (2012) all concur that woman in third-world countries, always face challenges in accessing benefits from developing policies.

Table 1: Challenges Women Face in Accessing Benefits from Development Policy

	Component		
	1	2	3
Strict traditional structures are a challenge to the success of development policies for women	.756		
Male dominance is the greatest challenge to women’s empowerment	.715		.499
Poor communication channels are one of the challenges negatively affecting development policy implementation	.706		
Nepotism and corruption negatively impact policy implementation	.641		-.619
Development policies face challenges because women are lazy		.937	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Source: Primary Data

4.3 Challenges from Qualitative Findings

Table 2 below shows the responses from the participants to the Focus Group Discussions. The challenges which came from the participants include the distance women have to travel to the main centres to source raw materials and other necessities, while lack of education, particularly higher education remains a hindrance to women’s empowerment and access to benefits from development policies.

Table 2: Qualitative Responses from Focus Groups

Group	Challenges Women Face
1	Distance from the main centers, exclusion, male dominance
2	Lack of education in the women, lack of vocational colleges in the district, more tertiary education needed for women in the district
3	Lack of inclusion, Women are not consulted, traditional structures are too

	strict and segregate women
4	Women exclusion, distance from main service centers, male dominance
5	The triple exclusion, being a woman, being rural and being in a remote area.
6	Lack of education for the women, lack of resources, exclusion of the women
7	Corruption, laziness in some married women, excluding widows and single women
8	Marginalization due to distance, poor roads, and poor infrastructure, leaders, priorities those in urban areas

The responses above (Table 2) from the 8 focus group discussions indicate that women are aware of the barriers to their empowerment. One middle-aged woman in the 25-35 age group lamented their disadvantaged position in which they enter into marriage without anything of their own. As a result, the women are always frustrated, threatened, and constantly reminded that they do not have anything in the family since everything belongs to the man. This was recorded here during the discussions:

“Young women enter marriage without anything of their own and that is a disadvantage. If only our maiden families could equip us with all the education, the money, or the businesses so that I enter marriages as an empowered equal partner then one would not suffer from unequal treatment at the hands of spouses, in-laws, and communities. It is not possible to be innovative when you are controlled and never given a chance. There is no room to be creative”

This response shows that the women in the Gokwe district are not happy with their status quo. Most indicated that they could change their situation if only the hand of time could be turned and they would not rush into marriage without anything to their names.

5.0 Discussion of Findings

The demographic analysis of the participants in the focus group discussions shows that very few women in the Gokwe district attained degrees and the majority only attained secondary education, an area that needs improvement in line with sustainable development goals (Goal number 4) which emphasizes the achievement of universal and primary education for all as well as affordable tertiary and vocational education for all (UN 2018). Implementation of development policies in rural areas of Zimbabwe and Gokwe in particular is full of challenges that hinder women from accessing the benefits of those development policies. The study revealed the following findings as the major challenges: poor communication channels, strict traditional structures, and male dominance. These were the most outstanding challenges, while lack of education due to early marriages in rural areas was also among the hindering factors.

In most cases when individuals seek to market their businesses, they have to look for contacts, who are usually friends, family, and other colleagues. Women lack these connections because of the lack of social lives that men have in beer halls and workplaces. This will hinder their ability to be known for anything they are good at; thus, it is very essential to increase the communication channels for women for the success of their businesses and projects. This factor was also echoed by UNCTAD (2012). The latter also emphasizes the lack of communication channels, lack of education, and lack of resources among other bureaucratic challenges which hinder successful policy implementation for women. Samman (2016) also summarized the challenges as a lack of education and training, lack of skills, lack of access to quality paid work, the burden of unpaid work at home, and lack of access to assets and property among others.

The study established that lack of access to the internet and social media and in some cases, lack of contacts and famous colleagues hinders the ability of rural women to be connected to better-paying jobs and they remain with their low-paying vegetable markets. An increase in communication channels is a good initiative which should be encouraged at all levels.

Strict traditional structures also hinder the potential of women to perform to their maximum potential because they are expected by society to be in the home where

no opportunities for employment and promotions are ever found. This is so because in the home the woman does unpaid work which no one appreciates or recognizes as worthy of payment. During the quantitative inquiry, 52.2% of the respondents agreed that strict traditional structures are a hindrance to women's empowerment while 41.9% strongly agreed to the same hindrance to women's empowerment. This is an indication that women have been restricted for centuries and African countries have lost out on economic benefits had these women been given a chance to contribute according to their skills, potentialities, and intelligence. Male dominance was seen to be the worst challenge women face when they try to access benefits for women's empowerment. Any development policy is dominated by men even though women are the majority in the communities or the nation at large. Evidence can be seen even in ministries that were crafted for women where men still dominate the leadership positions. About 52.9% of the respondents agreed while 40% strongly agreed that women cannot be expected to surpass men in anything no matter how good they are. Detailed explanations came from the focus group discussions in which participants lamented that women are never seen as able-minded partners in development. Even simple matters like when to plant, when to harvest, what to sell, and when are all delayed until the husband gives their consent which is anti-developmental due to time wasting. Some programs especially in the farming business are time bound and they should not be delayed because a husband is not there to give consent. Even when a woman does anything good for the family, the man will be praised for marrying a good wife rather than the woman receiving the praise and the encouragement as an individual in her own right. Some respondents even indicated that their in-laws would prefer to call them using the totems of their married families rather than their totems which they feel is a lack of acknowledgment and appreciation that they are also individuals who came from well-respected families as well. This is the reason why some women have resorted to initiatives because they are always overshadowed by this male dominance at home and away.

Scholars like Ferim (2013), Mkhize (2015) in Tebele (2016), and Siambombe (2015), all concur that all women, particularly rural women are never consulted in any policy plans even if they are the beneficiaries and this leads to exclusion of the female beneficiaries to development policy. Even if the women have the willpower to improve their status and livelihoods, they lack adequate resources (Ajulor 2018 and

Makinde 2017) because everything they have ever worked for does not belong to them as individuals, but belongs to their male counterparts. Their projects, therefore, become less viable as compared to their male counterparts who can quickly make decisions to sell the property or other resources owned to improve their businesses without many bureaucratic consultations. Instead of empowering the women, society expects the women to do more tasks for the family as was once expressed by Nyamudeza (2012) on the situation of cotton production relationships in the Gokwe district where tasks for the women are increased on the introduction of any new activity in the family, but not their access to income, decision making or empowerment in general.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The paper makes conclusions that rural women in the Gokwe district are marginalised and they are excluded from meaningfully enjoying the benefits of the development policy. These challenges include neglect of rural infrastructure leading to marginalisation as transport operators shun such remote areas, strict traditional structures, male dominance, lack of education for the women, poor communication channels, lack of girl-child empowerment initiatives, and the historical (colonial) triple effect of women exclusion among others.

The paper makes the following recommendations:

- 1) Special Social inclusion programs should be done by the government based on age, gender, geographical location, ability, or disability so that development policy does not leave anyone behind.
- 2) Uproot corruption and social exclusion at all costs. This requires a multi-stakeholder approach where everyone is educated.
- 3) Socialisation processes should incorporate gender equality aspects at tender ages so that women are seen as equally competent partners in households, communities, and the nation at large.
- 4) Increased education, sensitisation, and awareness programs on the need to keep the girl child in school no matter what the circumstances.
- 5) Re-introduce adult literacy classes for everyone.
- 6) Include women in the planning, implementation monitoring, and evaluation of development Policies.

- 7) Allocate major resources like land and residential stands to women in their names so that they benefit directly from development policies not as beneficiaries of men.
- 8) Promote women's empowerment and participation in politics and leadership based on merit so that they can be competitive role models to their counterparts.
- 9) Reduce the distance between schools to 5 kilometres, especially in rural areas like Gokwe district where schools are found between 15 kilometres. Less distance will promote school attendance and eliminate school dropouts and child marriages.

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Rethinking Sacramentology in the post-Covid 19 era: Contestations around the virtual Eucharist.

By Blazio M. Manobo¹

Abstract

Never in the history of the Christian faith, has there been a universal occurrence in the form of a pandemic capable of preventing all Christians throughout the world from celebrating the Easter mystery in the traditional way as has been experienced with the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the years, the Easter festivities have been used to celebrate the epitome of hope under the most desperate situations signifying the triumph of life over death. The abolishment of the 2020 Easter gatherings all over the world by the respective governments and churches, including Sunday/sabbath services and the Eucharistic celebration put to question the traditional personal contact characteristic of sacramental celebrations especially the sacrament of the Eucharist. This article interrogates the call by all Churches to suspend 2020 communal Easter celebrations in preference for live-streaming broadcastings. It interprets the April 2020 Easter experience as an invitation to reflect on new ways of theologizing sacraments in the post-COVID-19 eras without substituting the fundamental tenets that characterize the sacrament of the Eucharist. The article seeks to demonstrate that live streaming of the Eucharist celebration cannot be equated to the real-time community celebration of the eucharist.

Keywords: sacraments, live streaming, COVID 19, Virtual Eucharist.

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1.0 Introduction

Theological debates on Eucharistic contestations have preoccupied theologians since the beginning of the Christian faith. Classical theology of the early to middle age centuries is awash with discussions on the Eucharistic real presence, symbolism, and ministerial efficacy, among others. The 21st-century new theological challenge has emerged in the form of a 'virtual Eucharist' necessitated by the emergence of COVID-19, a Corona Virus that began in China's Wuhan province in December 2019. Never in the history of the Christian faith, has there been a universal hazard in the form of a pandemic capable of preventing congregants from celebrating the Easter mystery at a global level as has been experienced with COVID-19 that forced all religious gatherings and churches to close doors for an extended period of time. Traditional face-to-face interaction between the ministers and their congregants during the Eucharistic celebrations was suspended due to the infectious nature of the pandemic. Among the innovative alternative means of participating in the Eucharist celebrations, was the recourse to the use of technology by way of videoconferencing, live streaming, pre-recorded videos, and several other methods.

As the adage goes, necessity is the mother of inventions, disasters often present themselves as opportunities for renewal through the deepening and clarification of religious perceptions. Like the People of Israel during Babylonian deportation, the Church in 2020 found itself quarantined into the Babylon of COVID 19 where access to the 'temple' was no longer possible. For the people of Israel, the exile was interpreted to signify both a punishment and a blessing. That the Chosen nation was forced to leave the promised land with its Temple significance was seen as a demonstration of God's displeasure for Israel's disobedience (Farisani, 2008). However, it was during this period that the Hebrew alphabet was adopted replacing the Paleo-Hebrew alphabet. It emerged as the last climax of biblical prophecy in the person of Ezekiel. The vital role of the Torah in Jewish life arose as the authoritative text for the Jews. It was during the exile that Israel was transformed into an ethnoreligious group that could continue to exist and worship without a central Temple (Augustyn 2019). The same period saw the emergence of scribes and sages as Jewish leaders and the birth of the Jewish diaspora (Barton 1911). Today's Christians are like the people of Israel in Babylon calling for what Tilby (2020) calls

“discerning the body” (1 Cor 11:29) through a reflection on ‘what’ and ‘how’ it means to be the body of Christ.

This article revisits the theology of the Eucharist in light of the coronavirus-induced quarantine precedence. The purpose of the article is to interrogate the theology of the virtual Eucharist. It seeks to answer the question: What reflections can the churches make from the experience of COVID-19 virtual participatory live-streaming church services? The article responds to the call by Mickens (2020) for the churches to do some serious soul-searching about the theology of the Eucharist. It is not within the scope of this article to revisit in detail the theology of the Eucharistic ‘real presence’ despite its significance in defining the virtual Eucharist. However, reference to this theology will be alluded to. The focus of this article shall be limited to reflections on the innovative alternate liturgical practices of the Eucharistic celebrations which were initiated by the churches because of the pandemic.

Of significance in this discussion is the observation that the lockdown measures coincided with the traditional Easter celebrations which in 2020 were celebrated virtually. COVID 19 came not as a single event, a but process which shocked the whole world. However, reflections on the significance of virtual sacrament cannot be limited to the COVID 19 alone. Disasters like wars, civil and religious conflicts, and floods throughout the world have had similar impacts on the celebration of Eucharist where physical access to a minister or priest was compromised. Historically, the sacrament of Eucharist has undergone several transformations from its New Testament beginning prompting the call for further reflections to the liturgical practice.

1.1 Background to the problem

According to the World Health Organization (2020), COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by the coronavirus that was declared a pandemic in January 2020. This disease was unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. It was declared a Public Health Emergency of international concern on 30 January 2020. On the 11th of February 2020, the World Health Organization named the pandemic COVID-19. The disease affects people of all ages though old people have a higher risk of severe infection. The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, dry cough, and tiredness (Kumar et al, 2020). This highly infectious disease spreads primarily from person to person through small droplets

from the nose or mouth, which are expelled when a person with COVID-19 coughs, sneezes, or speaks. During its peak, the disease had an estimated fatality rate of 1.4% (Ioannidis, 2020). By the end of June, the disease had infected about 7.5 million with half a million deaths in all the countries of the world except Antarctica. (Worldometer 2020). No vaccine for the pandemic had been found by the end of June.

Guided by the World Health Organization, countries adopted some mitigation measures most of which revolved around social distancing, physical distancing, lockdown to flatten the curve, and adoption of strict hygiene practices. National responses on social distancing incorporated instructions that individuals maintain social distance when in public, school closures, limitations on gatherings and business operations, and instructions to remain at home (Mohler et al. 2020). Limitation of gatherings included closing of schools, bars, gyms, football matches, religious gatherings, weddings, and funerals. Religious leaders supported national protocols on lockdown by advising their followers to follow official call by suspending all religious services and the Eucharist during the lockdown period. Pastors, priests, and other church leaders were asked to live-stream their services and to use innovative methods that adheres to social distancing call.

In the Vatican, the head of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis invited the Church all over the world to find innovative ways to celebrate 2020 Easter liturgy. Faced with the challenge of the ban of church gatherings due to the COVID 19 pandemic, the Catholic Pontiff presided over Ester liturgy without the physical presence of the faithful and called on the congregants to be present spiritually through radio, television or the internet (Vatican News 2020). The Vatican reported a surge in online visitors' views, followings, and comments during the Easter Triduum (14.5 million versus 1.5 million the previous year). As Gisotti, the vice editorial director of the Vatican media reported, "We have been struck by the many emails we have received, comments and posts on our social media from people, even agnostics and nonbelievers, who say they have been moved by the words and gestures of the Holy Father during this very difficult period" (Gisotti 2020).

In some churches, Christians were asked to send their pictures as substitutes for their physical presence. The Evangelical priest Waldemar Pytel celebrated the Easter

mystery in an empty church but with names and pictures of his congregants placed on seats and benches replacing their physical presence at the Evangelical Church of Peace in Swidnica, Poland. In some areas, drive-in services were held with congregants participating from the seclusion of their cars (Dickerman 2020). In the UK, the archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, led a service on Sunday broadcast from an iPad in his kitchen, while his wife, Caroline, read a lesson joined online by Rose Hudson-Wilkin, the bishop of Dover, in a service that was broadcasted live on BBC Radio 4 and streamed on the Church of England's Facebook page and website (The Guardian 2020). In Zimbabwe, a pastor was interviewed during national television news on how he celebrated the 2020 Eucharistic amid COVID-19 lockdown. The pastor responded by saying, "I invited my congregants to tune to my Facebook live streaming service with their bread and wine before their computers or phones, where I consecrated them online" (ZBC-TV News 2020). To the pastor, this online consecration had the same effect as the physical celebrations.

These unique experiences have ignited the debate on whether the COVID 19 induced virtual celebration of the Eucharist has the same sacramental efficacy as the physical participation in the Eucharistic celebration. Christians who believe in physical participation have denied the efficacy of virtual celebrations. Others have embraced the virtual celebrations and hope that such practices would remain as it sometimes appears more convenient to attend Sunday services at home than going to the parish. It is the contention of this article that the COVID 19 experience challenges the efficacy and necessity of the physical participation that characterized the traditional understanding of the theology of the sacrament of the Eucharistic. This study problematizes the virtual celebration of the Eucharist and seeks to theologially analyze the several perceptions associated with the new challenge.

2.1 The Eucharist in historical perspective

There are various debates on the theology of the innovative practices of celebrating the Eucharist in the post COVID-19 eras. Such debates are not new to the Christian tradition. There existed various contestations around the foundational liturgical practices of the sacrament of the Eucharist from the apostolic period (Page, 2010). Johnson *et al.* (2002) proposed that there must have been a multitude of contradictory Eucharistic practices among the early Church. The current form of celebrating the

Eucharist in its various forms but with a common shape is the result of a 'legitimate growth' that took place over a period (O'Donoghue 2011:81).

In the Old Testament, the Eucharist was prefigured in the narrative of the Passover lamb where God instructed Moses to sprinkle the blood of the lamb on the doorsteps of the Israelites, to spare them from death by an angel of God, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt" (Exodus 12:13). The Israelites were saved by the blood of the lamb at *household* level. While salvation was meant for the Israelites as a nation, the saving ritual was undertaken as the local level of the household. In other words, the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb was efficacious, that is, it produced an effect on the lives of the Israelites (Heschmeyer 2011). Eating of the flesh of the lamb was part of the saving ritual commanded by God (Exodus 12:8-11). The ritual of Passover was effected at household level during the Exodus. This cannot undermine the ecclesial significance of the saving event as communal. It saves to identify the implications of personal faith within the community of the faithful.

There are no contestations that Jesus was the initiator of the sacrament of the Eucharist and that he gave the instruction to his disciples to 'eat his body and drink his blood' (Mathew 26:26) in order to gain everlasting life. It is worth noting that the Eucharistic accounts of the New Testament were shaped by challenges that each writer was facing. Paul declares to the Corinthians that Christ is 'our Passover lamb' (1 Corinthians 5:7). Faced with the challenge of the Corinthian church who had begun to use the Supper as means of displaying the disparity between social classes, Paul confirmed that the Eucharist was a meal of loving sacrifice and that the Church is the body of Christ. Thus, Paul confirms that the communion rite is a proclamation of Christ's death and true participation in his life. Participation is efficacious only if the participants had the same attitude that Christ had concerning the meal. Paul's emphasis on designating the Eucharistic elements as a "remembrance" of Christ and as a means to "proclaim the death of the Lord" drew his audience into a much deeper understanding of the rite. Paul's treatment of the Eucharist celebration gave credence to the idea that it is a meal of loving sacrifice that militates against the spirit of elitism, ethnicity, and economic differences (Mitchell 1998).

Mark's Eucharistic account is concerned about the contemporary abuses of the Eucharist especially the growing exclusion of gentiles from the Christian fellowship. This is why Jesus in Mark described the crowds as "sheep without a shepherd," as a way to illustrate that Jesus' mission is to the whole world; that the Eucharist is one bread for all people (Hyde 2014). The feeding stories in Mark and the Last Supper served to teach Mark's audience that Jews and gentiles alike are invited to participate in the Eucharist together in Christ, and to share in his sacrificial ministry. Matthew's accounts, unlike Mark's, did not take place among the gentiles suggesting his Christian bias that Christ was for the Jewish community. For Matthew, the Eucharist feeding is linked with inner healing and forgiveness. Luke speaks of forgiveness as well while at the same time insisting that Jesus is eager to eat with the sinner.

According to Hyde (2014), the significance of these accounts on the institution of the sacrament of the Eucharist is to highlight how each author in the New Testament was influenced by the liturgical traditions of his community without attempting to present the Eucharist in its 'pure form'. Central to all these narratives is the symbiotic unity between the Eucharist as a sacrament and the Institution of the Church. In his letter to Timothy, Paul says, the "Church is the pillar and ground of the truth" (1Tim 3:15). This has serious implications on innovative Eucharistic celebrations in the wake of COVID 19. The question that arises out of this dilemma is: To what extent can innovative Eucharistic celebrations be meaningfully adopted in situations where access to ministers of religion is physically impossible? What happens in situations where there is a positive correlation between lack of physical access to a minister or priest and lack of modern technological connectivity like during times of war, disasters, pandemics, conflicts, or those hindered by physical challenges or diseases? Can the consecrated species of Bread and Wine through a virtual celebration be deemed sufficient to confer the divine grace of the Body and Blood of Christ?

2.2 Conceptualizing the ‘Virtual’ Eucharist

The online Oxford Dictionary of English define virtual as, “not physically existing as such but made by software to appear to do so.” Virtual Eucharist connotes a situation where a person can receive the body and blood of Christ (bread and wine) within the logic of the virtual world, over a network, and by use of a computerized electronic gadget. Several churches adopted live streaming the Eucharistic celebration during the COVID 19 shutdown as a participation in the Eucharistic celebrations. The significance of this change in traditional liturgical practices is found in the assessment of whether such practices can be theologically justified as sacramental or consider it as a mere spiritual participation. Several interpretations were given to the efficacy of this new phenomenon. One such interpretation can be found in the comment by the Catholic Pontifical Council of Social Communications. In the document *The Church and Internet*, the Council stated that, “although the virtual reality of cyberspace cannot substitute for real interpersonal community, the incarnational reality of the sacraments and the liturgy, or the immediate and direct proclamation of the gospel, it can complement them, attract people to a fuller experience of the life of faith, and enrich the religious lives of users” (Foley 2002:6).

Other theologians are of the opinion that a virtual Eucharist can provide the faithful with the desired presence of Christ in the transubstantiated species and the symbolised community (Peters, 2020). Quoting Kathryn Reklis, who insisted that our theology must move beyond “seeing the real versus virtual divide in terms of embodied versus disembodied,” and that people must think more creatively about “the new permutations of digital and virtual technology informing our lives as particular ways we are embodied,” Thompson recommend that the church must “consider the potential power of real presence in virtual spaces to nourish and heal” (Thompson 2020). Two diverse perspectives will be reflected in the light of three major characteristics of the sacrament of Eucharist namely: communion, community, and collegiality herein designated as the 3Cs.

2.3 Community

The Eucharist celebration is an act of the community. It is not a private devotion, but a gathering together of the people of God as a community of believers (Breen, 2012). Christ is present in the Eucharist in four modes of: the community celebrating, the

word being proclaimed, the priest presiding, and in the bread and wine (Pope Paul VI, 1963, no. 7). During the Eucharist celebration, Christians are united together as a body of Christ. Therefore, Slattery (2015) pointed out that in the Eucharist, we discover that, “we are not single individuals, struggling along in a vast sea of humanity. We are a community, a collection of people, sharing minds and hearts and desires. We share the struggles of a life of faith in God, faith for the sake of those who are lost, faith in humanity’s turn to God”.

2.4 Communion

The Eucharist is a Holy Communion, a sacrament of unity (Archbishops’ Council, 2001). It is a gathering of the people of God around one bread and one cup as a sign of Christian unity. As a memorial of Jesus’ death and resurrection, the Eucharist is, “a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet 'in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us” (Pope Paul VI, 1963, no. 47). It effects communion with God through Christ and with one another. As the Lutheran World Federation (2015:20) declared, “We do not become Christ in our participation in the meal; we become the body of Christ at the meal.”

2.5 Collegiality

In the Eucharistic celebration, it is the Bishop who is mandated to officiate at the celebration the Eucharist (Moore, 2011). In most churches, the priest or presbyter celebrates with delegated authority from Bishop. The Bishops share in Christ’s teaching, governing and sanctifying office (John 2001). He is the pastor to the Pastor who is responsible for discerning and promoting unity among Christians (Anglican Admin 2015). For this reason, a priest or presbyter celebrating the Eucharist for the people does so on behalf of his bishop. This suggests that a Eucharistic celebration by a non-delegated minister outside the express mandate of the bishop invalidates the ceremony as a ‘Holy communion’.

3.0 Methodology

This study used a qualitative approach. The research aimed to gather descriptive data on the theological practice of adopting the virtual Eucharistic celebration during the COVID 19 lockdown pandemic that many churches adopted since January 2020. The research tools used in the study were a combination of live observations of

online celebrations, interviews with key informants selected through a purposive sampling technique, and assessment of internet articles and videos. The target population were ministers of religion in mainline churches, academics, and the faithful. A total of 12 interviews were carried out with key informants. Data was analysed using a thematic approach. This was done concurrently with a literature review to compare the findings with another research. This research was carried out during the peak periods of the COVID-19 pandemic. Limitations of the research included; limited literature on electronic-sacramentology since this is a new phenomenon, inadequate face-to-face time with respondents as most of the interviews were online conversations and inadequate guidelines among most churches on how and what to do under such situations.

4.0 Findings and discussions

When COVID 19 pandemic struck the world forcing churches to close doors as a way of promoting social distancing measures, several strategies were implemented by Churches. Among these, the three most common strategies adopted included (1) to permit individual lay faithful to celebrate the Eucharist with their families, (2) to allow priests or ministers of religion to celebrate the Eucharist on behalf of the absent faithful, and (3) to allow priests or ministers of religion to celebrate the Eucharist virtually through live streaming, video conferencing and recorded the Eucharist celebration. These options will be assessed using the 3Cs of community, communion, and collegiality discussed above.

The proposal to authorize lay faithful as extra-ordinary ministers of the Eucharistic celebration during a time of crisis like the COVID 19 lockdown is based on the logic of the common priesthood of all the baptized. While not in competition but in cooperation with ordained priesthood, the common priesthood of the faithful is understood as the vocation of all baptised Christians, who are called to follow in Jesus's footsteps (SOURCE). Ministerial priesthood on the other hand is not appropriated by anyone on merit but conferred to some individuals as a ministry at the service of the common priesthood (CCC 1994:1547).

The proposal to authorize the lay faithful to celebrate the Eucharist can be theologically qualified under the elements of community and communion but fail the test of collegiality. The lay faithful can celebrate the Eucharist in the presence of the

local members of their community. They can celebrate as a family. Under such circumstances, their celebration qualifies and can be validated as a community celebration in accordance with the demands of Eucharistic celebration. The family members can represent the wider community as in the early Christian communities' practice of breaking of bread. For validity, their celebration must adopt and conform to the church's liturgical forms and rubrics as a demonstration of communion with their Church. The challenge posed by this proposal is how to theologically validate collegiality with the Church. The common priesthood of the faithful cannot substitute the rite of ordination (Coffey 1997). The ecclesial communion will be lost when all the faithful assume the role of ministers of the Eucharist. Following this argument, all Eucharistic celebrations administered by the faithful in the absence of the minister of religion during the COVID 19 pandemic lock down may not be validated as sacraments.

The second alternative commonly adopted during the pandemic was authorizing priests or ministers of religion to celebrate the Eucharist on behalf of the faithful. It is not the norm for priests or ministers of religion to celebrate the Eucharist alone. In some traditions and for a special reason, the priest or minister of religion can be permitted to celebrate the Eucharist on behalf of the faithful only with the permission of their bishop (Moore 2011). Some writers would prefer to call this an incomplete Eucharistic celebration (Reynon 2015). The community is said to be present in the sacrifice when the celebration is performed on their behalf. Communion with the body of Christ is present since the Eucharist by its very nature is a sacrifice of the church. Collegiality is present since as an ordained minister, he represents the Bishop and has the permission to celebrate the Eucharist from the bishop. While such celebrations could be theological judged as valid for use during the COVID 19 pandemic lockdown, they are to some degree an imperfect means that can never substitute the real presence of the faithful (Davies 1983). The validity of the celebration cannot substitute the faithful's access to participating in the Eucharistic celebration and receiving the species in person.

The third common practice used during the COVID-19 lockdown was the adoption of virtual celebrations using live broadcasting, video conferencing and pre-recorded videos. This was by far the most common method of used in celebrating the

Eucharist during the COVID 19 pandemic. Under this option, two most common practices were observed; some churches allowed their congregants to bring their bread and wine before the computer or television so that as the priest or minister of religion consecrates virtually, their bread and wine is consecrated as well just as in physical Eucharistic celebration presence. In this way, they faithful are understood to have participated in the reception of the Eucharist. The second option that most churches adopted involved the Bishop, priest, or minister of religion asking the faithful to be spiritually present during the celebration and receive spiritual holy communion.

Theologically, a virtual Eucharistic celebration can be assumed to satisfy the qualification of the *community* since families could gather during the live celebrations in their homes. Live streaming Eucharistic celebrations can be likened to the liturgical practices of the first early Christian communities. Virtual celebration allows the faithful to celebrate in small communities gathered around a computer or a television. The community actively participates virtually despite the physical distance. Second, virtual Eucharist qualifies for *collegiality* as the celebrant is an ordained priest/presbyter celebrating on behalf of the bishop. What raises theological questions is whether there is real *communion* of one body, one cup during the virtual celebration.

First, as the faithful gather on the table of the lord, they partake of the one body, one cup of Christ (O'Loughlin, 2005). The bread is broken and shared as a sign of communion. Communion comes from sharing together on the table of the Lord which is lost when each family brings their own bread and wine (Labenek 2014). The unity of the body of Christ is reflected in the sharing of the same bread that is broken symbolising partaking in the unity of the body of Christ (The Bishop's Council, 2001). Communities have different elements they call bread and wine, and this has implications on the nature of the Eucharistic species that will be brought to the table of the Lord for consecration. During a virtual Eucharistic celebration, the faithful will not be eating from the same table of the Lord. The unity that comes from sharing in the one body of Christ may be lost when each family presents its own bread and wine which will not be shared by others (Labenek 2014). It then becomes an essentially private act as the bread is not truly broken because it was never truly united, and so the sacrifice of the cross is not set forth in their midst (Tilby 2020). As

the Didache teaches, the Eucharist is the grains scattered in the field which are turned into a single loaf of bread (Jefford 2015).

Secondly, there is the question of physicality. There is a physical character inherent in sacraments (Robinson-Neal 2008). Virtual gatherings through zoom or teleconferencing may not qualify as a real gathering of the people of God. As people gather in their homes to receive bread and wine consecrated virtually, they do so in the absence of physical reception of the Eucharist from the consecrating minister. Sacraments are qualified by form and matter. The form being the words of consecration while the matter being the Eucharistic species of bread and wine. Physicality refers to matter which in the virtual Eucharist cannot be shared between the priest and the faithful. In physicality, the “breaking the bread, smelling the wine, and tasting each is both a physiological and typological experience of God’s gracious provision; just as the bread and the wine brings nourishment and refreshment, so also Christ Jesus enters our lives to nourish and refresh us” (Neal 2006). In this context, Barnard et al. (2014:139) argued in support of physicality in sacraments by noting that “to participate in liturgical ritual is to participate bodily”. Virtual Eucharist has limited active liturgical participation.

Third, the virtual Eucharist has an element of exclusivity. Virtual Eucharist is a preserve of the middle and upper class with access to modern technology and the resources to sustain their functioning (Brittain 2020). In the African continent, most of the faithful reside in rural areas where communication technology is scarce while those privileged enough to possess the gadgets face the challenge of limited and unstable network access. Freedom and access to the virtual Eucharist celebration belongs to those individuals who own such gadgets (Reid 1999). What it means is that live streaming benefits the societal elites while depriving the poor faithful access to the sacrament. Virtual Eucharist creates a structural problem that discriminates the people based on their status. This is different from people who fail to access Eucharistic celebration because of distance or physical challenges since with assistance, they are free to participate. Eucharistic celebrations should be open to anyone willing to participate which may not be possible when using teleconferencing and live streaming.

Fourth, the priest/presbyter as the representative of the bishop should be able to exercise some form of custodianship of the sacrament (Peter 2020). Sacraments are sacred signs that confer grace (Davison, 2013). Virtual Eucharist does not provide opportunity for the priest to control what happens after the consecration. Nobody knows what the congregants will do with the consecrated bread and wine after The Eucharist. In normal circumstances, the body and blood of Christ are consumed during the Eucharistic celebration. Virtual Eucharist provides opportunities for the abuse of the sacraments. The priest/presbyter as the custodian of the sacrament has no control on what is in front of the computer and what else is going on inside the same computer that is being used for Eucharistic celebration. For example, the priest cannot monitor the ingredients used in the homemade bread and wine. While liberal theologians (Dalzel 2013) may dismiss this as immaterial, there is need for some uniformity in what can be considered acceptable standards for bread and wine to be used for Eucharistic celebration.

Fifth, there is a question of whether live streaming is real-time 'live' event. While this is a scientific question, there seem to be an element of the *past* in every live streaming. According to Peter (2020), the words of consecration beamed from the central church must move through a medium to reach the congregant. That fraction of a second, has an element of being historical. Hence, every live streaming is an historical event no better than recorded celebration. According to a decree by the *Catholic Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments* of 25 March 2020 (Roman Curia 2020), the episcopal conferences were advised that the use of live telematic broadcasts and not recorded can be of help. However, the letter did not specify whether such live telematic broadcasts have the same sacramental effect as the Eucharist with the community. It is the contention of this study that there is need for further investigations on whether live broadcasting Eucharistic celebrations should not be evaluated in the context of recorded celebrations.

Sixth, virtual sacraments militate against the communal nature of the body of Christ. While it can be argued that the lock downs were a product of a pandemic where churches had no options, virtual celebrations have the potential to promote individualism. While the church has encouraged the use of digital media in social communications, human communication through interpersonal and group

communication is crucial to human existence (Dyikuk 2017). The same concern is raised by Nilles (2012) where he asserts that advocating for a sacred space on the internet threaten basic human communication and interaction. By its nature, social media communication is often a private affair, the sense of real face to face communication appears endangered in the Virtual Eucharist. Such practices can fuel heterodoxy ideologies such as subjectivity and relativism (Garza 2010).

5.0 Conclusion

This research has noted that the theology of the Common Priesthood of the faithful cannot be used to address the challenges posed by virtual Eucharist as ordination is essential to the breaking of bread. Appointment as minister of sacraments has biblical and historical foundation. In the book of Acts of the Apostle, the apostles had to replace Judas as the 12th apostle through a ritual of 'ordination' (Acts 1:21-26). The research has demonstrated the grey areas under which the virtual Eucharist cannot be considered a proper Eucharistic ritual even though it has some important spiritual significance. The research acknowledges that several Churches have been using virtual celebrations prior to COVID-19 pandemic lockdown as efficacious and gracious. It is the observation of this study that other churches have remained sceptical and traditional in their approach to the virtual celebration of the sacrament of the Eucharist. This scepticism does not signify a denial of the significance of virtual celebration as they all adopted it during the COVID 19 pandemic Lockdown.

Official communications from most churches on the theology of the virtual communion suggest that a virtual Eucharistic celebration can never replace the physical participation in the real community (Robinson-Neal, 2008). Under the circumstance like the COVID 19 pandemic lockdown, a virtual Eucharist provides the best alternative for the spiritual nourishment of the faithful and helps to raise their spiritual commitment to Christ in communion with the Church (Labuschagne 2014). By stating this fact of faith, the Churches are not overlooking the fact that God's grace is unlimited, and no ritual has a monopoly of its impartation. However, when it comes to the grace of the sacrament of Eucharist, virtual celebration of Eucharist falls short of the theological qualifications of the Eucharist ritual as handed down to us from the Apostles. However, the study acknowledges that the Virtual Eucharist in the 21st digital world remains the best alternative to address the communion desire of

those who cannot access physical participation in the Eucharist due to circumstance beyond their means like the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown.

Drawing from the experience of the first century Christians who had to forgo the Eucharistic due to persecutions (Ekeke 2012), the faithful are invited to take future lockdown as a fasting period for the Eucharist while waiting for the return to normalcy (Peters, 2020). During the first centuries, the Desert Fathers spend several years or their entire lives in caves or deserts in the absence of Eucharist to attain union with God (Ekeke 2012). Today, the Churches continue to celebrate the courageous lives of these saints whose love for God went beyond ritual celebrations. While this historical fact does not seek to encourage solitary lives, it helps to buttress the reality that holiness is not only a product of a ritual but love and commitment to God through Jesus Christ. Faced with the situation like the COVID 19 pandemic lockdown, the virtual Eucharist despite its limitations remains one important way to remain in communion with God and the Church but not the only way.

The COVID 19 pandemic has interrogated our long-held perceptions of the liturgical space and time. It has raised an awareness of the potential challenges that future disasters can pose to our Christian beliefs as a body of Christ. The world has woken up to the reality that the celebration of sacraments in general and the Eucharist in particular as the source and summit of Christian nourishment can be threatened by a pandemic. It demonstrated that faith in Jesus Christ is not limited to a single ritual alone. It brought to the surface the various theological perceptions that the Church has been taking for granted. Pandemics whether natural or man-made are a reality and the faithful are invited to steward over the environmental around us. COVID-19 pandemic has confirmed that Christian communion can be disrupted by natural hazards. It demonstrated to the world that as individual, all persons are potential betrayers of one another's well-being. However, the pandemic has helped the faithful to understand that human beings are all under the care of a loving God whose power is beyond a single pandemic.

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Types of Marriages and their Counselling in Bikita

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Abstract

The types of marriage in Shona society before missionary influence as examined in this paper were: serial polygamy, polyandry, sororal polygamy, fraternal polygamy, and monogamy. The early missionaries, with all good intentions, brought a marriage template to the Shona people of Bikita that consisted of just two marriage categories: monogamy and polygamy. The latter was condemned as non-Christian and one of the early moral endeavours of the Church was to rid society of polygamy. Marriage in every society has existed as an inevitable institution for the purpose of the continuation of clans. In this paper the author examines the types of marriages that were common in Bikita district. Perhaps, unlike in other cultures, marriage in this district is more complex than is generally believed. While marriage has been serialised as being monogamous, polygamous, and other sub marital arrangements, it has hardly been questioned as to what led to such marriage arrangements. Polygamy in this paper is not taken as mere concupiscence of the flesh, but as a cultural and religious obligation for the Shona people of Bikita. The research design used in this paper is qualitative and inclusive of many views on marriage, its definition, process, and purpose in the community. To get the views of respondents, the interview method was used in addition to observation by the author. It was found that both the process as well as the marriage itself in Bikita was quite complex and took several shades. Marriage counselling therefore requires sensitivity to these differences.

Keywords: Monogamy, Polygamy, Fraternal Polygamy, Paternal Polygamy, Religious Polygamy

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1.0 Introduction

This paper examines the concept of marriage among the Shona people of Bikita district. It focuses on monogamous and polygamous unions and how they can influence marriage counselling. Bikita District is in the Province of Masvingo. It lies 100 km east of Masvingo along the Mutare –Masvingo Road. It is bounded by Zaka in the South, Manicaland in the East, and Gutu in North. The people of this district are mostly Shona under the paramountcy of Chief Mukanganwi of the Duma Clan. His sub chiefs are Charamba (now, 2022, headed by Rtd. Brigadier E.Rugeje), Mazungunye, Marozva, and Ziki. The History of the phenomenology of marriage in human development has not been as straight forward as it is claimed to be. The Church which, in many ways, was the custodian of the norms of marriage came up with two types of marriages; Monogamy and Polygamy. It was not until the 15th century that the same church and civil authorities had to contend with the reality of more than just two types of marriages.

1.1 Research questions

What type of marriages exist in Bikita District?

Why were these practiced among the Shona of Bikita District?

What counselling methods can be used with these types of marriage?

2.0 Review of related literature

The question of the existence of polygamy should be taken in terms of its dominance in a particular culture. Polygamy was placed under the binary ‘monogamy and polygamy’ framework as eliciting moral views that opposed each other. Later, the other types were considered as forms of marriage, although not accepted by the mainstream Christian Church. To understand the types of marriages discussed in this research, a review of literature on each type has been found necessary. These are presented and discussed in the following sections.

2.1 Monogamy

This is a form of marriage accepted as one man marrying one woman at a time and the two stay together. In the description of preparations for marriage, Gelfand (1979) speaks of marriage between a boy and a girl which clearly shows that among the Shona people the concept of “monogamism” was the expected relationship between

husband and wife. This in Zimbabwe is generally considered a recognised marriage between a man and a woman.

The term monogamy in modern parlance refers to a registered marriage. This means a man and a woman make this kind of marriage as sanctioned by the law. This type of marriage in Zimbabwe was governed by chapter 37 of the Marriage Act of Zimbabwe. In terms of this act a wife or husband cannot contract another marriage. The missionaries who evangelized Africa recognized two types of marriages; the civil marriage which falls under civil marriage and the traditional marriage which was arranged by traditional leaders in villages. Civil marriage was predicated on the concept of one man one wife. The traditional marriage system did acknowledge this idea of one man one wife but a man who married more than one wife was not considered at tangent with the laws of the country. The church which was western in outlook preferred the idea of one man one wife.

When the missionaries came to Zimbabwe, their message regarding marriage was clear each convert to the Christian religion was obliged to take one wife (Bourdillon 1998:196). At times the missionaries 'unmarried' people. If a man had two or more wives and he wanted to be a Christian, he was obliged to send the other wives away and remain with one. This created orphans and the missionaries started orphanages which gradually were filled up thereby creating social problems. In Zimbabwe every mission had an orphanage with children whose mothers had been sent away to allow the father to be a Christian. In African culture, when girls got married, they needed counselling from their aunts (*vanatete*), and boys needed advice from their uncles (*vanasekuru*). This became difficult to carry out within the mission orphanages. This was not out of ignorance of the importance of marriage, but out of zeal to convert. The importance of African marriage is outlined by a lay missionary. Aldwinckle, as early as 1965 says

“We have felt throughout all the years how important marriage is in the life of the African, and that unless we succeed to Christianize Marriages, will be in vain,” (*African Ecclesiastical Review* July; 1962 in *Guti*, 1965:20).

Here is an outline of what the priority in conversion was, and at times at the expense of African culture. The people of Bikita experienced this new demand and those who

tried to adhere to it did so for material gains; the children had access to education, when they became teachers, they had a nice house at the mission. Any convert who deviated from this teaching lost all the benefits that went with it. It was believed that many Shona would not accept this especially when there was no hope for divorce in case of not having children (Bourdillon 1998:196). The motive for a polygamous marriage was, therefore, to have more children, and more children meant more hands to work in the fields.

The new doctrine was not always accepted by the new states in Africa. Most states championed the rights of women but indirectly accepted the idea of Polygamy (Mwambene 2017:2). Polygamy has been observed among leaders in African States: in Kenya Akuku had 100 wives, a Kenyan President had two wives, King Mswati of Swaziland had 14 wives, Jacob Zuma had at least 3 wives. And some leaders like Omar Al Hassan of Sudan were known to champion polygamy (Mwambene 2017:6). Kuhn (2011) observes that polygamy had legal status in countries like Chad, Gabon, Niger, Sudan, Tanzania and Zambia. In some of these countries' religious affiliation for example to Islam has sanctioned the existence of this marriage type. Religious Polygamous leaders like Samuel Mutendi, Joram Johnane Marange of the Apostolic Faith in Zimbabwe had 16 wives (Mwambene 2017 :8). These found more followers because they allowed this type of marriage more related to their African cultural traditions than did monogamy. Catholic Bethlehem missionaries (SMB) who evangelised most of Bikita district found it very difficult to fight against the odds and ends of indigenous religious groups that allowed polygamy.

2.2 Polyandry

Polyandry, found in many Asian communities is whereby a woman is married to more than one man was found in Bikita, but this was not respected by the local people because it was not considered a marriage but what they called "*mapoto*" where no lobola was paid. It was cohabitation. The woman could leave any time. The main objective of this marriage was to maintain land and property within the family. Polyandry is common among the Todas and Khasas in India. One could say polyandry is not really a type of marriage in Bikita.

Loosely speaking, each time people think of polygamy, especially those in the west, they imagined licentious African whose sexual appetite could not be satisfied by one woman. This has been an oversimplification of this type of marriage. “Strictly speaking Polygamy means more than once, thus, if a man married, and his wife dies and he marries again, this is called polygamy in the strict meaning of the term” (Lamburn,1975:89). Lamburn (1975) is of the opinion that the concept of polygamy at times has been overstated by missionaries. The missionaries moralised polygamy and connected it to faith adherence, therefore if a man had more than one wife, he had to send the other ones away in order for him to be baptised. Polygamy was taken as an impediment to becoming a baptised Christian because it was considered one of worst evils in Africa. Writing about polygamy and its evil Fr Mareconnes S.J said,

“An obstacle even more difficult to surmount
nigh lead the missionary to despair, if he had not
a boundless confidence in the all-powerful grace of him who send him
Polygamy is practised universally and it appears difficult to eradicate”.

(Mareconnes, *Zambezi Mission Record* 1890:31)

Such evil would be removed by creating a one man one wife situation and this meant a man had to get rid of one of his wives. Fr Mareconnes goes on to say “In his multitude of wives the Kiffir sees the source of riches, it is defined as a “condition or practice of having more than one wife at one time.” In Zoology, it is “a mating pattern in which a male mates and lives with more than one female mate.” (www.thefreedictionary.com/Polygyny). It seems the word is similar to polygamy which means a person has more than one mate at a time. In some countries it is either a woman or a man who practiced this type of marriage. In some cultures, it was the man who was allowed to have as many wives as he could afford to support them. Under this type of marriage was also sororal polygamy, meaning marriage to a sister of the wife. The eldest sister got married to a very rich man and she would like to share the riches and the comfortable life with her sisters. The elder sister tried to get the girl married to her husband. It was not merely the sexual avid of the man but the influence of the wife, and so society did not frown about it or rehearse the moral implications in this marriage. The Christians with the idea of one man one wife condemned this type of marriage.

2.3 Religious Polygamy

This is a marriage that was polygamous, but the women did not come from the same family. Sometimes this was based on religious affiliations. A man stated that he dreamt marrying a woman in the religious congregation and the woman takes it as a directive from the spirit or divine intervention and had no choice but to accept the marriage. This type of marriage was common in Bikita among the people of the apostolic faith. The wife was generally younger than the man but she believed the lord or spirits of the ancestors had given her to the man through a dream.

When the missionaries came, they established education centres especially teacher training institutions. They trained their own personnel to teach in their primary schools. These teachers were Christians and it was understood they would adhere to the teaching of *one man one wife for life*. Any teacher who married a second wife was removed from teaching. A teacher was a respected person in the village and his name was 'teacher'. It was, therefore clear that polygamy was for non-Christians. Bourdillion, (1976) mistakenly states that polygamous marriages have not been common under the heavy hand of the Church and he is writing for the satisfaction of Missionaries. He was looking at the Christian population in which conversion had taken place and not at the wider community. He looks at polygamy from a moral standpoint rather than from a social responsibility the individual had towards the dead and the living.

In 1969 the Rhodesian Government took over mission schools and did not have regulations against polygamy so the teachers found themselves marrying more than one wife. This became a type of marriage based on their wealth and image as a teacher. It was noticeable that some polygamous marriages were those of former Christian teachers. It is for this reason that it is said polygamy is not a simple behaviour but a system based on multiple reasons some of which are religious, social and political. It is straight forward polygamy and not sororal or non-sororal. At times it became sororal when a teacher married his sister in law he had sent to school it was, and is still widely accepted in Bikita.

Sororal polygamy was at times based on the sudden death of the wife and the in laws found it obligatory to give the man a younger woman to replace the wife. This

was *chimutsamapfihwa*. It was sororal polygamy of one kind and not one based on concupiscence of the flesh.

2.4 Sororal Polygamy

This type of polygamy could be called replacement of a dead wife as already indicated in this reflection. Among the Shona people, once a marriage is transacted, there is a permanent relationship between the family of the husband and that of his wife. It was believed that not even death could break the chains of this relationship. When a wife died her family felt obliged to find a replacement with no payment of lobola or other marriage transactions. Usually, it is the sister of the dead woman that replaces her elder sister. This in a way is sororal polygamy or serial polygamy, one feels more at home calling it sororal polygamy since it involves the sister of a dead woman belonging to the family. Since this involves a man, it was called fraternal polyandry because the man had his wife or wives already. In the Latin language *frateli* means brother hence brotherly marriage.

2.5 Non fraternal Polyandry Marriage

This is a type of marriage in which a woman marries many husbands which are not in any way related. This type of marriage is found mostly in the India, parts of Africa and the Himalayas. In India a woman can marry more than one husband. This type of marriage is not found in Bikita because of cultural reasons where lobola comes from the man and the prerogative of asking for marriage lies with the man and not the woman. These are types of marriages that existed among the Shona people in Bikita.

This the type of a polygamous marriage is entered into by taking a wife any time from society. Generally, the wife is younger than the husband. It is usually common among members of indigenous religions. Today it is still there, but young women now tend to reject it so the number of marriages in this area seem to be generally on the decrease.

Another factor that has affected the number of polygamous marriages in Bikita is health. Bikita has three hospitals and 18 health centres, and these have created an awareness of Aids as coming from multiple marriages and people have paid heed to the message and therefore the number of polygamous marriages has decreased. In the past it was an honour to be married in a polygamous family especially when a

person was well to do, but today it is considered risky behaviour. This has changed its social status to one of doubt and some women avoid taking the risk.

2.6 Education and Polygamy

Polygamy has found disfavour among the young, educated Zimbabweans who feel that sharing a husband is socially unacceptable, and as a result the number of polygamous marriages has decreased. This also comes from the fact that these young people have embraced the Christian religion which rejects polygamy. It is cursorily noticed that legal polygamy now seems to be the practice of the less educated. There is a form of polygamy making the rounds in recent times that seems hidden from mainstream society. It is given names such as “small house.” Traditionally, polygamy was a way of expanding one’s land use because each one added meant extra land for the family. Today the money economy may see this type of marriage as an added liability and not an added asset. Below is the methodology used in this paper.

3.0 Methodology

Methodology in research is related to the philosophical underpinnings of the study. Methodology is an approach used by the researcher to find a solution to problems concerned with the research (Kotthari 2003). This is called a paradigm, and in this study the paradigm was the qualitative approach which has been chosen because of its inclusive nature. At least all the people interviewed, and their views are considered. Creswell (2003) does not believe that a methodology is a solution to the problem in the research, but an analysis of the methods used in research. A methodology assists in the analysis of data gathered using various techniques. In other words, it is not a method of doing research but a way of analysing what was obtained using a method. The methodology controls the methods to be used. In this study data was collected through interviews (methods) this was then analysed using a qualitative paradigm (methodology).

In order to get the practice of various types of marriages in Bikita, some families were interviewed. The interview was meant to find out the merits and demerits of polygamy in traditional society. To find out what really lead to polygamy in Shona society. Is it a sexual desire or a responsibility? The answers to the questions needed a

questionnaire method and the analysis there entailed the methodology. One of the techniques used was the interview.

One of the people interviewed was chief Chabata who had experienced polygamy on personal level. And the views he gave on how one gets involved shows also his appreciation of the underlying factors in polygamy. To him polygamy was the result of one's riches and wives were given in exchange for material gains. The richer one was, the greater chances one had to be polygamous. Chief Chabata indicated that it was not without its advantages. All the riches of the polygamous family belonged to the husband. If a young man from another wife got married, the husband had the right to take animals paid in lobola even from the other wife's daughters. None of the wives from the polygamous marriage questioned the rationale of this.

4.0 Findings and discussion on various types of marriages in Bikita.

The husband was in most cases the one who went to the in-laws to say, "in my house the fire has been extinguished I need it to be relit." (Interview with Mr Chabata, Chief in Village 27, June 2020). The in-laws then provided a replacement. As already indicated marriage among the Shona people in the past was a permanent relationship and this was true when one of the partners passed on. If a husband passed on, one of the relatives was culturally expected to marry the woman left behind (*kugara nhaka*). The man would beget children with the inherited woman.

4.1 Monogamy and Polygamy.

Of the ten families that were interviewed the phenomenology of monogamy and polygamy is discussed as follows.

In Bikita, a woman has not power over the land, so this type of marriage was found non-existent (0%). Respondents spoke of another type of marriage in society called serial monogamy. It is more of a friendship than a permanent commitment to one another. This was not found among the Shona people of Bikita. For them anyone who practiced this type of marriage was not married because it was considered cheating. In Bikita monogamous marriage was the most common. It was observed in this study that today this type of marriage accounts for 50% of marriages considered under monogamy (Figure 1).

Table 1. Types of Monogamy

Monogamy	
Straight monogamy	5 (50%)
Serial monogamy	3 (30%)
Non-Serial monogamy	2 (20%)
	10 (100%)

Table 2. Types of polygamy as found in 10 families

Polygamy

Straight Polygamy	2 (20%)
Polyandry	0 (0%)
Sororal Polygamy	3 (30%)
Non-sororal	0 (0%)
Fraternal Polygamy	3 (30%)
Non-fraternal Polyandry	2 (20%)
	10 (100%)

The generally expected marriage in Bikita is monogamy shown in Table 1. As can be seen in Table 2, polygamy is a generic term that includes various types of marriages involving more than two people. It is difficult to think of polygamy as a system that merely involves multi-partners. Polygamy in Shona tradition was based on the responsibility of the man towards the woman and the entire clan.

4.2 Implications on Counselling and Counselling Methods

4.2.1 Milan model of marriage counselling

The Milan Model of marriage Counselling does not cater for polygamous marriages. It is based on the presumption that a family consists of a husband and wife, and not husbands and wives. The model at times is or was used outside its parameters of

cultural values. It says that there is no one culture, no one worldview or reality, and no one 'correct' model of psychology. This presumes the user (counsellor) is aware of this concept of *epoche* but often the counsellor may use the method indiscriminately. It is a model that needs to be used relative to the culture and types of marriage among the people. Becvar & Becvar who are prominent supporters of the model say that it should be born in mind that the underlying propositions of the culture in which one has been socialised have a fundamental influence on one's view of reality, on one's thought processes, perceptions, and intellectual functioning. In other words, to write a truly meaningful critical evaluation of the Milan approach to family therapy, it is not possible to stand outside the theory and merely observe (Becvar & Becvar 1998: 63).

Polygamous marriage is a culture and as such it needs its own method related to its "cultureness". The challenge in Bikita is that regardless of the origins of the type of a polygamous marriage, it is difficult to apply the conventional methods of marriage counselling.

Probably one of the family and marriage system on which marriage counselling is predicated is the Bowenian family therapy (1982).

Bowen sees the family system and for that matter family marriage as "an approach to counselling which looks at the problem a client is having as a symptom of dysfunction in the entire family" (Bowen 1982)

In a polygamous family there are as many individuals as there are wives and children and the counsellor finds it very difficult to deal with each case separately. In Bikita how does one counsel a religious leader who has seventeen wives?

The method presumes that in marriage the family members have been interacting with each other. This is not so in a polygamous family where at times families don't even stay together.

Marriage counselling as brought to the Shona people by missionaries included divorce counselling. This aspect involved the separation of husband and wife. Traditionally this was done through consultation with aunts and uncles who had negotiated the marriage procedures. One to one counselling was not put into consideration. After divorce, one of the couples could get married into a serial polygamous system and no counselling was needed.

The process of marriage counselling is an attempt to assist couples to deal with those aspects of their lives that might have been lost in a marital conflict. Polygamy may need a separate approach. It appears that when methods of marriage

counselling were designed and considered, they were meant for people who were involved in monogamous marriages or one on one relationships. Generally, models of marriage counselling are designed predicated on monogamous marriages.

In Bikita, in some cases this western based approach has not always worked because the polygamous marriage involves more than one wife. It was rare to see the husband with problems with one wife and not with the other. If the wives had problems with the husband, the problems were different and needed different methods of counselling. Each wife was found to be a culture on her own because the aunts had counselled her differently. Traditionally the wives were counselled by their aunts who used different approaches. The professional counsellor used models that were not relevant to the culture. If these women referred their Marital problems to the aunts, then it became difficult for these aunts to give the same counselling to all the women involved. If there were five women, it meant five different family backgrounds and the professional counsellor found it difficult to carry out marriage counselling in such a situation.

This problem was experienced in dealing with sororal type of marriages, where a man married a young sister of his wife, and the marriage was polygamous. The younger wife in some cases indicated sexual dysfunction from the husband and she needed some counselling, but the elder wife did not see any problem and the professional counsellor found it difficult to carry on some counselling and the only method that seemed to work was the traditional one where the young wife had to go back to traditional counselling.

In some cases, a young man married his father's wife, and she became problematic then there was counselling needed which the professional could not do.

One cannot over emphasize problems of marriage counselling coming from polygamous marriages in Bikita. Out of the 10 married people interviewed 50% were monogamous. This suggested that the professional counsellor could carry out some counselling but needed cultural competency and exercise bracketing their own methods and cultural views.

5.0 Conclusion

For one to condescendingly call people polygamous is incorrect because this marriage phenomenon is more complex than the Christians and Sociologists generally see. One needs to look at the rationale for such type of marriages to come up with a marriage counselling template to people with a different culture. With all the good intentions of missionaries and colonial administrators the idea of bringing a marriage template to different cultures has been at times tragic. Defining polygamy as a mere collection of many wives could be a gross misunderstanding of the people's cultures. Polygamy is not out of mere licentiousness. It is a cultural, ethical, and traditional religious value system that people at times feel obligated to fulfil. Among the Shona people of Bikita, if a man does not take his dead brother's wife to himself, then he is considered negligent of his duties of progeny to the deceased and clan spirits. A chief is expected to have more wives because this shows his powers and ability to enlarge his jurisdiction. Even leaders of some churches are expected to have two or more wives to expand their domains or even popularity.

Probably there has been some definitional difficulties between morality and cultural values, therefore polygamy has been taken to be grossly immoral and taken off tangent of the social and cultural requirement. Today polygamy is more of a liability than an asset owing to changing socio economic patterns.

6.0 Recommendations

After this reflection a few observations come to light. It is hoped that some methods and methodology of counselling people in polygamy of whatever type could be designed.

1. There is need to look at how to counsel people in polygamous marriages. The counsellor needs to be aware that each wife in a polygamous marriage is culture and should be counselled on an individual basis. The woman comes with her own culture and the Bowenian concept of high and low differentiation needs to be taken seriously (Bowen 1982). This woman may still have strong ties with her family of origin.
2. There is need redefine polygamy in relation to how it is taken by the local people. Polygamy, especially fraternal, paternal and sororal polygamy are not merely licentious actions but responsibilities a person accepts over a woman.

When a man takes over his father or brother's wife for a wife, it means full responsibility on their behalf and that of the community. It is essential that the counsellor exercise some "epoche" and looks at the local culture. The practice of sending away of other wives to become Christian, did not always work, because men still proceeded to bear children with those women because lobola had been paid. The professional counsellor needs to put this into consideration.

3. Marriage counselling must recognise that polygamy is not a mere desire to fulfil the concupiscence of the flesh, but a responsibility towards the dead relative and the clan without ignoring contemporary economic situations. Moralising the issues raised during counselling could only make the woman guilty thereby complicating the counselling process.
4. Marriage counselling must include the distinctive historical roots, which require unique skills, and special training. Here one should know what type of polygamy one is dealing with to understand the client's issues.

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Bereavement and Counselling in Bikita District: Cultures Battling for Survival.

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Abstract

Death is an essential end, and it comes when it resolves. This unfortunately does not remove sorrow over the loss of someone. This then calls for consolation from the others who do not experience the same loss at that time. The bereaved persons need support. In the western world, a professional counsellor goes to funerals with the sole purpose of helping the person impacted by loss to cope with it. The counsellor tries to give hope to the bereaved person. It is not rare to find the professional counsellor sitting down with the bereaved giving some counselling. In an African setting, bereavement is carried out by villagers and a counsellor may be irrelevant and even his presence is often ignored. People feel that bereavement is carried out by nearly everyone in the village in one way or another. The main finding is that the villagers have an upper hand in the process of bereavement because they have a long-lasting support system rather than that of the professional counsellor who does his job and goes away. Consequently, the physical support given by villagers is more than the psychological support given by the professional counsellor. At funerals people are observed to spend nights and days with the bereaved and bring food to the family something a counsellor could not do. The study recommends that people's traditional ways of bereavement must be given the same prominence as that of professional counsellors.

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Keywords: culture, bereavement, counselling of married people, traditional ways and professional counselling

1.0 Introduction

The process of mourning the dead is common in the world and this is the same experience in Bikita. This is sometimes called bereavement. In the United States, where culture appears to change rapidly, and as minority groups continue to grow, these groups' beliefs and customs must be taken into account when examining death, grief, and bereavement (Paul Clement et al July 2003:18-26).

In this reflection bereavement will be discussed mainly in terms of how it is done in Bikita where, like in America, people have their own culture which should be uniquely acknowledged. The phenomenon is common to the world at large. How do these people manifest their bereavement during loss?

2.0 Literature Review

Bereavement is a period of mourning after the loss especially of a dear one (Thesaurus Dictionary), it is a deprivation or loss by force (English Dictionary). In other words, it is a state of sorrow over an unanticipated loss of a loved one, a job, property etc. The concept of sorrow after a calamity has been there even in biblical times. Ruth 1:20 says "Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me." We see the same loss in Job. This sorrow and bereavement where all hope is lost and the people who experience this need comfort. In other words, period of bereavement is a period of experiential paralysis and loss but above all a period of psychological and faith confusion (*Psychology Today*, 1985). Grief is a response to personal loss and it needs others to deal with it. It needs to be accepted by the victim as a journey into new life. The renowned psychologist Sigmund Freud (1917) quoted by Tredeau (2020) in *Mourning and Melancholia: Freud's Thoughts on Loss* says that grief is natural but an individual has to part with the past and accept the present. In the case where grief is caused by death the victim has to look at how to live a new life in the absence of the dear one. This goes together with Freud's developmental stages in which one has to live a stage and accepts a new one without regression. There is need to adjust to the new situation. The Shona people seem to have phrases that denote their concern for the bereaved. This actually means we are together in this sorrow and this is called *kubata mavoko* which means

to “touch the hands of the bereaved”. Another phrase is *kuchema vakafa*. During the high and active period of Covid- 19 the Shona found it difficult *kubata maoko* and the fist became very irrelevant so one had to really shake the hands to show one’s grief and solidarity with the neighbour’s loss. Gloria et al (2007:1) state that grief and bereavement is culturally expressed. It is difficult to give a formula on how it should be done.

Cultural groups in the world are not homogeneous and individual variations must always be considered in situations of death, grief and bereavement (Gloria et al 2007:1)

Stroebe and Schet (1999) look at grief as the process orientation that moves from sorrow to restoration of self. Neimeyer and Sandise (2016) suggest that the idea of meaning as opposed to meaninglessness of life is the main issue in grief. The victim wants to know the new meaning of life and if the victim accepts the situation, then grief provides a possible meaning of this new life (Hall 2014:33(1)7-12).

At times there is anticipatory grief which Aldrich (2012) defines as the grief that is foreseen and anticipated before it occurs. Today, with the coming of the corona virus, one sees grief coming and hopelessly waits for the day. It is a form of grief concept that challenges both the counsellor and the counselee.

Grief at times is more complicated than what has been outlined above. Shear (2016) sees four features in the form of complicated grief: (1). sense of disbelief that the lived one is dead

(2) anger and bitterness over the loss, (3) yearning for the diseased and (4) preoccupation with the past as generated by the current sorrow.

3.0 Theoretical Framework

This paper is based on some theories on bereave. Some of these theories posit that although bereavement is common to humanity there is a difference between cultures on how the concept is handled. The paper will look at the process of bereavement as a battle for cultural survival. One of the causes of bereavement is death and “death is universal, natural, persistent, inescapable, unavoidable and undeniable fact of life.” (Dancy J. and Davis WD (2006: 187-211). Baloyi L, Makobe (1992:232-43). Wiredu K. (2015).

The experience of death is sorrow and it is theorised that such unexpected sorrow is handled differently depending on the culture. The experience of death could be global but how it is handled becomes parochial. Sociologists generally look at death as being in form of dichotomy: expected death and unexpected death. Whatever type of death is experienced, death will create loss and this is followed by bereavement. Dancy and Davis (2006) posit that the process of expected and unexpected death is quite different. In as much as one may accept this, the whole idea of loss affects those who are left behind. A loss is a loss; it impacts the loved ones. Funeral rituals in Africa are ways of dealing with loss at communal level. The “we” philosophy of the African people is realized in this togetherness. It is this communalistic acknowledgement that seems to transcend the process of counselling given by the professional counsellor.

4.0 Methodology

In order to find out how the process of bereavement was taken as a continuous activity of the people and possible role of the counsellor in these activities, the researcher visited bereavement on burial ceremonies and bereavement on (*magadziro*) remembrance ceremonies. These together with personal observation helped the research to get grounded into various types of bereavement. Actually, bereavement among the Shona goes beyond the death day because it is experienced again at remembrance ceremonies (*magadziro*). The researcher visited three death (burial) ceremonies and three remembrance ceremonies. These together with the researcher’s own experiences in these ceremonies formed the findings of the study.

5.0 Findings

This part will look at the various findings the researcher dealt with.

Bereavement among the Shona people is not just psychological. People come to console the person and this is done especially at remembrance ceremonies (*manyaradzo*). This is not the time to cry but console the bereaved. In order to show this type of solidarity people bring food and cooking pots to the bereaved and they do the cooking (very much included. plate 1). The purpose of this is to show the bereaved that the community cares in all areas of loss. The person feels wanted and

this is the essence of counselling in African culture. It is not a counselling of one person by one person but is called group counselling or therapy (Marabella P. 1999, Wicks R 1992, Yalom 1985). Stress in these writers is put on group encounter in dealing with issues. People share not only the sorrows but the food and fundamentally this is the source of traditional counselling. Everybody plays their part in the bereavement counselling. It is different from the western approach where it becomes a private matter. The people spend the whole night at the *nyaradzo* function to assure the bereaved they are at one with each other. This should be called communal counselling because the whole community of men and women share the sorrows of the bereaved. Women play a very important part in the process.

It is important to notice that bereavement is common to all nations but the way it is done differs depending on the culture of the people. Among the Africans this process of consoling is two dimensional; at the funeral and the remembrance ceremony “*manyaradzo*”. At the funeral what is done is generally very artificial but is meant to alleviate the trauma and the pain from the bereaved. The bereaved is there but numb with sorrow. Even professional counselling does not work. I visited one funeral ceremony and the nurse who was a counsellor indicated that she had no role to play since all was “Chivanhu ceremony,” Traditional ceremony to which only friends and relatives were allowed to see the bereaved. Here one really questions the relevance of Professional Counselling.

The second dimension is “*manyaradzo*” which literally means ceremony of consolation. It is a celebration not of death but of acceptance of sorrow and arrival of new life for the bereaved. Freud could have accepted this as a healing process of the client.

5.1 The Grave during remembrance (*Magadziro*) Ceremony.

At the “*manyaradzo*” ceremony there is a combination of traditional and Christian ceremony. The grave of the dead is covered with white cloth which is removed before the priest comes. The priest blesses the tomb most of the time not knowing what has happened (this is more so for the white priest or pastor). The cloth is cut into pieces and the sisters-in-law make head scarves (see plate 4). This is again acceptance of a new life the dead will participate with them.

In as much as professional counselling is accepted there is a question of its relevance and ability to fit in these ceremonial activities. This is communal bereavement counselling is common throughout the world. When a person passes on people express their sorrows but this is done differently according to the culture of the people. Bereaving counselling is carried out in the west and other nations differently. There is what Clement (2013) calls cultural perspective and this presumes that each culture has its own ways of expressing sorrow and comforting the bereaved and in the west they call this bereavement counselling. Sigmund Freud published a paper in 1917, just in the wake of World War I, musing on the psychological responses to loss. In this paper, which he called *Mourning and Melancholia*, Freud posits that there are two different kinds of responses to loss, called mourning and *melancholia*. He took his theory on this phenomenon from the western system of psychology. Freud describes mourning (which he takes as synonymous to bereavement) as a process which ends up with kind of acceptance, in that the mourner can eventually feel motivated to participate in what Freud describes mourning as a process which ends with a kind of acceptance, in that the mourner can eventually feel motivated to participate in the external world, even though the loss has ultimately changed it. In the western world individual interaction is considered very important and Freud says that maybe it's easier to talk with a therapist about their anger and anxiety than it is with someone they know personally. Either way, by being able to verbalize these immense feelings, and oftentimes past memories with similar feelings, the person can give them specificity, and hold their feelings in perspective (i.e., in the "external world") and the bereaved needed to be consoled and a therapist would journey with the person giving assistance towards recovery.

One of the experiences this counsellor went through was loss of a dear one by death. All the villagers went to the house of bereaved and literally took over the responsibilities of washing, cleaning around cooking and fetching water. Each family brought

food for that occasion of loss which could be called communal bereavement. In the meantime, a counsellor was sitting outside trying to get in the hut to console the bereaved. He realised that in the western system represented by the professional

counsellor was the idea of being with the bereaved but in the African situation it is a communal and group counselling that takes over and not one on one counselling. The most important person at the bereavement time was the pastor who joined the group that was playing a counselling role. The methodology of the west had no relevance and this was the sign that some local methodology was needed and this was “group counselling”. A local funeral organisation (Nyaradzo) seemed to have found a methodology that worked. Nyaradzo Funeral organisation members stayed with the community throughout the night therefore, the organisation was accepted as a member of those who mourned.

The people who participate in the bereavement ceremonies and as a community make a follow up of what happened at least after a year of death or loss experienced. This is no more a time for mourning but one of celebration (plate 2 and 3)

5.2 Argument and Analysis

Bereavement from this reflection was taken from a point of view of sorrow experienced after the death of a member of the family and not bereavement based of loss of property which is a different phenomenon altogether. From the findings, it could be argued that although professional counselling as a form of bereavement and traditional group bereavement appeared to run parallel to one another, the western professional counselling was a mere cosmic exercises. The professional counsellor did not show external sympathy like crying as a sign of commiserating with the bereaved. It could be argued that traditional form of bereavement was found more relevant than professional bereavement as forms of counselling.

6.0 Conclusion

Some questions are raised from these findings: what is the role of the professional counsel in giving bereavement counselling after a loss? What the role of the traditional communal counsellors or consolers in the same ceremony? Are the two systems at variance or are doing the same thing differently?

From the researcher and his point of view, bereavement is common to all cultures. When one is close to an individual who passes on there is some sorrow and people come to give the abeyance to the bereaved person(s). Human nature was created

with a sense of commiseration and such characteristic is common to all cultures. A loss is a loss regardless of the culture in which it takes place.

What the researcher found out was that the methodology of showing sorrow is cultural centred. The counselling methodology as practised by the modern counsellor is a western system and finds itself at loggerheads with the traditional approach and the two appear to be fighting for survival. The modern professional counsellor feels he has an ethical obligation to help the bereaved come to terms with the reality of death and live a new life. The traditional counsellors and their people feel it is not mere coming to terms with self that matters but the reliving of one's life within the community. It is not a mere theoretical approach but a practical methodology that calls the bereaved to continue life in the community. Bereavement among the Shona people was found to be more than a theory and psychological but also a process of meeting the physical needs of the person, (Plate3) The bereaved is called upon to forget the loss and participate in a new socializing system.

The professional counsellor has a role but he still needs to learn the dynamics of African community. What was observed might not auger with modern urban set up therefore it is necessary that the traditions that govern traditional bereavement realise that in areas like growth points and urban set up people are of mixed nature and the wad of assisting the bereaved may need to change. What might be exasperating to the professional counsellor is that he is taken as outsider and is never given significant recognition. From the observations made at these ceremonies in Bikita, the professional counsellor may just sit with other and would never be given the chance to be with bereaved who actually owes all to the community.

Probably one of the weaknesses observed is that the professional counsellor especially a man does not know what to say but simply say "I want see the bereaved." People would never understand the culture of the intruder. At such ceremonies he or she may try to break the gender boundaries but this may be looked at as culturally unacceptable.

From this reflection, one recommends that;

1. Group counselling as a methodology of bereavement be used when there is loss through death among the Shona people of Bikita.
2. Professional counselling of one on one should be given minimum role until enough knowledge of its methods and methodology are understood by the people.
3. The approach used by Nyaradzo could be used. Nyaradzo stays with the bereaved until the whole process of burial is over and this is highly accepted by the people.
4. If ever there is professional counselling to be done, it should be done known local people this is more so in counselling based on gender because it removes unwarranted suspicion from the community.

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Afrocentricity, Ndebele proverbs, and Deviant youth behaviour in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

By Majahana John Lunga¹

Abstract

Some Zimbabwean elders have referred to Zimbabwean youth as “the lost generation”. This characterization of the youths arises out of the growing concern over some of the young people’s anti-social behaviour in some cities where the youths engage in drug-taking and unprotected group sex. Using the naturalistic and empowerment evaluation research design and Asante’s Afrocentric theoretical framework, in tandem, the main argument of this article is that in order for the youth to mature into adults that will contribute positively towards the advancement of society, they need to be guided and counselled right from infancy. Some Ndebele proverbs such as “Isigogo sigoqwa sisemanzi” (A skin/hide is pliable when it has just been removed from an animal; once it is allowed to dry, it stiffens) encapsulate this process of inculcating moral principles to children while they are still young and pliable. Since this article employs the evaluation research design, it cannot offer quantifiable outcomes. However, the guidance inculcated by the elders is expected to foster improvement and self-determination in the youth. The article recommends collaboration between the elders and the youth which may bring the latter back to the path of civility.

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1.0 Introduction

Traditional Ndebele culture has knowledge systems ingrained in proverbs that elders can use to impart acceptable moral values to deviant youths. For purposes of this paper, “youth” will be defined in the following ways: firstly, as the time when a person is young, especially the time when a child becomes an adult; secondly, as the quality or state of being young, and thirdly, when we refer to “the youth”, we mean “young people” considered as a group.

Some of the most difficult questions to answer are: When does youth begin and end? Who are the youth? It is extremely challenging to come up with a clear answer to these questions, bearing in mind that “different regions, cultures and communities have different conceptions of [youth],” (Ncube, 1998, p. 11).

Whatever definition is used of “youth”, it should be noted that this is a stage in human development which is a product of so many variables. Key among these variables are: religious upbringing; school educational experience and/or teachers; peers or friends; the media (radio, TV, newspapers, films; parents, family, relatives; cultural or ethnic background, including travelling and other aspects such as past experience (Strong, Yarber, Sayad and De Vaul, 2008, p. 6).

Each individual becomes the kind of person he or she is as a result of continuing and continuous interaction between a growing, changing biological organism and its physical, psychological and social environment (Conger, 1977, p. 36). One commentator calls this stage of human development a period of “storm and stress” (Coleman, 1980, p. 11).

The other term that must be defined is “sexuality”, which will, for the purposes of this article be understood in the following ways: firstly, the word refers to the feelings and activities connected with a person’s sexual desires, capacity for sexual feelings, and secondly, it refers to a person’s sexual orientation or preference.

Let it be known, right from the start, that according to the current Constitution of Zimbabwe (Amendment No. 20) Act 2013, same-sex relationships are not allowed. Section 78(3) states, quite categorically: “Persons of the same sex are prohibited from marrying each other.”

1.1 Research Design and Methodology

As mentioned in the Abstract, this article adopted a modified form of what Mouton calls the Evaluation Research design (2000, pp. 158 - 161). The aim of this research design is to foster improvement and self-determination on the target group (in this case the youth). Since the transition from youthhood to adulthood stretches over many years, it is neither possible nor desirable to include outcomes or findings in this article. Instead, the focus is on the process of implementation (the use of Ndebele proverbs by elders to inculcate acceptable moral behaviour in the youths). It should be noted that one is permitted to vary the structure of one's article. The reason is that Humanities articles can vary so much that it is very difficult to prescribe a uniform structure, as is the case with Social and Pure Sciences. According to Belcher (2009, p. 180),

humanities articles proceed differently in that discussion occurs continuously, not just at the end of the article. The author presents a piece of evidence (in this case the deviant behaviour of some youths, a phenomenon that is in the public domain) interprets that evidence, suggests how that evidence supports the argument, and repeats this process until satisfied that the argument is convincing.

This is the reason why, in this article, the author is not able to quantify the findings. The author can only speculate on the implications of the study, but a conclusion has been reached and recommendations have been made.

1.2 Research Questions and the Significance of the study

Who are the youth?

How do the youth manifest the deviant behaviour?

When do they engage in this anti-social behaviour?

What form does the deviance by the youth take, and with what consequences?

Why do the young people behave in this way?

What is the role of elders in guiding and counselling the youth?

This article grapples with a real-life problem – deviant behaviour by some young people. Engaging in activities such as gratuitous unprotected sexual intercourse and abusing drugs are not only immoral and criminal but may also end in the extermination of the young people. The article is therefore important in that it offers one more way of tackling a perennial and universal life-threatening problem in modern society.

2.0 Review of Related Literature and Theoretical Framework

Afrocentricity will inform this article. The major exponent of Afrocentricity is Molefi Kete Asante, a seventh generation African-American who was previously known as Arthur Lee Smith Jr. He argues that there is a necessity for African people to view themselves as agents, instead of as objects on the fringes of Europe. Asante is not the only advocate of Afrocentricity, as his stance has long been the rallying cry of scholars such as Achebe, Soyinka, Mudimbe, Makouta-M'Boukou, to mention only four people, that Euro-American hegemony should be supplanted with Afrocentricity, and that "Africa can no longer be treated (and should never have been treated) as a 'void' or a 'blank'" (Miller 1990, p. 4).

Asante strongly believes that the African people must always use African agency in everything that they analyse. Afrocentric behaviour demands that before Africans rush to other cultures for solutions to their problems, they must first exhaust their own fountains of knowledge. African indigenous knowledge systems must be revisited.

Afrocentricity does not imply that Africans must completely isolate and insulate themselves from other cultures. No. Instead, Africans must be selective in their interaction with other cultures; Africans must take the good from other cultures and mix it with the good in African culture. Africans must not simply copy from other cultures.

Asante illustrates the identity issue with "the story of a mother eagle that was flying low over a chicken yard holding her newly born baby in her claws as she joined a large flock of eagles. A gust of wind forced the young eagle out of the mother's claws and it fell into [a] chicken yard. All she could see when she looked into the yard were chickens. So, after a long and exhaustive search, she reluctantly left the baby eagle and flew away with the large flock of eagles.

As the baby eagle grew in the chicken yard, it began to see itself as a chicken. Surrounded as it was by the chickens, the little eagle received chicken education, wore chicken clothes, ate chicken food, and attempted to imitate the walk and mannerisms of chickens. Every day the little eagle practised its chicken education. Its curriculum was a strictly chicken curriculum, one made expressly for chickens, to assist chickens in living in the chicken yard as good chickens. When the little eagle spoke, it spoke chicken language because it did not know eagle language. It carried its head like the chickens because it had only a faint knowledge, elementary knowledge, of what an eagle style or fashion might have been. All traces of its earlier eagle training had been forgotten. In everything, the little eagle acted like a chicken until one day it started to think of itself as a chicken.

It tried to mimic the chickens. Whatever the chickens did, it did. If the chickens laughed, it laughed. If the chickens said, 'It is a good day,' the eagle said 'it is a good day outside.' In everything that mattered the eagle saw itself as a chicken. It did not recognise itself as an eagle. In fact, all eagle consciousness was lost. Although it questioned why it looked different from the rest of the chickens, it just thought it was a funny-looking chicken. Soon it never thought of itself as anything but a chicken, strange-looking and all. There were physical characteristics it did not like because they were not the characteristics appreciated by the chickens. It never saw itself in the light of its eagle history; it was simply a chicken.

One sunny day an old eagle flew over the chicken yard. It had no special mission and was not looking for anything in particular. However, as it was leisurely flying over the large chicken yard, something caught its attention. It looked down and saw what it thought was an eagle. It flew closer and looked with keener sight and saw what it was sure was an eagle. It then flew to a tree just next to the chicken yard and it called out to the bird that looked like an eagle. 'Come out here and talk with me young eagle,' the old eagle said. The eagle in the chicken yard ignored the old eagle because it knew it was not the eagle that was being called because it was a chicken. But the old eagle persisted and at last the eagle in the chicken yard recognised that he was being called. Whereupon the eagle in the yard turned and said to the old eagle, 'I am not an eagle. I am a chicken.' The old eagle, with knowledge that stretched back through generations of eagles, said, 'I know an eagle when I see one.'

You are an eagle. Open your wings and fly up here and let us talk.’ The young eagle in the chicken yard said, ‘I cannot fly because I am a chicken.’ After the old eagle had asked it several times, the young eagle stretched its wings and flapped them up the tree. It looked down at the chicken yard and said, ‘I did not know that I could do that.’ The old eagle asked the young eagle to fly and they flew effortlessly toward the setting sun,” (Asante, 2007, pp. 1 – 2).

Before we delve into the main argument of this article, it is vitally important that readers fully understand what “Afrocentricity” really entails. To begin with, a distinction must be made between “Afrocentricity” and “Afrocentrism”. Asante is at pains to point out that “Afrocentrism” was first used by opponents of Afrocentricity who in their zeal saw it as an obverse of Eurocentrism. The use of “Afrocentrism” reflects a negation of Afrocentricity as a positive and progressive paradigm, whereas “Afrocentricity is a theory of agency; that is the idea that African people must be viewed and must view themselves as agents, rather than spectators to historical revolution and change. To this end, Afrocentricity seeks to examine every aspect of the subject place of Africans in historical, literary, architectural, ethical, philosophical, economic and political life. Afrocentricity is the re-orientation of Africans to a centred position precisely because all along African people have been operating from the fringes of Eurocentric experience” (Asante, 2007: p. 17, p. 31).

It is also critically important to note that Afrocentricity does not mean that all things African are good or useful (Asante, 2007, p. 43). Far from it; what this means is that cognisance must be taken of what Africans have done, unlike the Eurocentric approach which completely ignores Africans’ contribution to human creativity, including African history itself.

There is therefore nothing wrong in inviting other agencies such as religious organisations in this noble task of nurturing the youth so that they grow to be useful citizens. Christians, for example, can start by teaching their children Christian values as gleaned from the Bible, for example the Ten Commandments, especially the Fifth Commandment: “Honour your father and mother, so that you may live long [... on earth],” (Exodus 20: 12), and “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honour your father and mother ... [so] that it may go well with you and [so] that you may enjoy long life on earth,” (Ephesians 6: 1 – 3).

Once children have been put on the right moral track by their parents, it becomes much easier for other institutions such as schools to build on that solid foundation that will have been established by the family. All that is needed is that all the various other institutions must complement each other in this noble endeavour to guide the youth on the path of growth towards productive citizenship. Indeed, this cooperative approach is aptly captured by the age-old African saying: “It takes the whole village to raise a child.”

At this stage, it would be interesting to note that the current concerns with adolescence and youth have a very long history. The writings of influential ancient Egyptians, whom Afrocentric scholars argue were black-skinned people (Asante, 2007, p. 45), many centuries before the emergence of Christianity, are some of the examples that can be quoted as evidence of earlier debates on youth. In Ancient Greece, some of the most prominent philosophers such as Socrates and Plato propounded theories on the socialisation of children from the earliest years through adolescence and young adulthood. Among Plato’s foremost observations was that the characters of young people are subject to many changes in the course of their lives.

3.1 The characterisation of youth

Perhaps the best example of early characterisation of youth is contained in the words of another perceptive observer, who says:

The young are in character prone to desire and ready to carry any desires they may have formed into action. Of bodily desires it is the sexual to which they are most disposed to give way, and in regard to sexual desire they exercise no self-restraint.

They are changeful too, and fickle in their desires, which are as transitory as they are vehement; for their wishes are keen without being permanent, like a sick man’s fits of hunger and thirst. They are passionate, irascible, and apt to be carried away by their

impulses. They are the slaves, too, of their passions, as their ambition prevents their ever

brooking a slight and renders them indignant at the mere idea of enduring an injury. ...

They are fonder both of honour and of victory than of money, the reason why they care

so little for money being that they never yet had experience of want.

They are charitable rather than the reverse, as they have never yet been witnesses

of many villainies; and they are trustful, as they have not yet been often deceived. ...

They have high aspirations; for they have never yet been humiliated by the experience

of life, but are unacquainted with the limiting force of circumstances.

If the young commit a fault, it is always on the side of excess and exaggeration for they

carry too far, whether it be their love or hatred of anything else. They regard themselves

as omniscient and are positive in their assertion; this is, in fact, the reason of their carrying

everything too far. (Conger, 1977, p. 5)

These words sound as though they might have been written by any number of today's 21st century social commentators, but they were in fact written by Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, over 2000 years ago. From the above quotation, it can be deduced that the youth have both negative and positive characteristics, and it is therefore up to society, and indeed the youths themselves, to minimise the negatives and maximise the positives. Only in this way can the youth be expected to contribute meaningfully to the world.

3.2 The role of elders in nurturing the youth

“Elders” are by definition people of greater age, experience and authority. This is aptly captured in the Igbo proverb: “An old man sitting on a low stool sees further than a young man standing on an anthill.” In traditional African society, age is revered. The elders, whom the late Chengerai Hove calls “Guardians of the Soil” (1986) have a crucial role to play in the social development of the youth. This is fittingly captured in the Ndebele proverb “*Indlela/Inyathi ibuzwa kwabaphambili*” (The inexperienced should seek advice from those who are experienced.) (Pelling, 1977, p. 15). Indeed, award-winning South African music group Ladysmith Black Mambazo have a song with the same message: the youth must seek advice from the elders. Some of the keys lyrics of the song are:

Lalela wemuntu olahlekelwe yindlela ey'ekhaya.(Listen, you who have lost the way home.)

Nansi indlela eya ekhaya. (This is the road that leads home.)

Woza singene. (Come, let us enter the road.)

Indlela ibuzwa kwabaphambili.(Ask for directions from those who have travelled before you.)

Usemncane mfana, usemncane. (You are still too young, my boy.)

Usazokhula ubeyindoda. (You are still to mature into a man.)

Mina ngake ngabamncane.(I was once young.)

Wena awukaze ubemdala.(You have never been an adult.)

Mina zonke lezizinto ngizazi zonke.(I know all about all these things.)

Ubovulindlebe uvulingqondo. (Open your ears and your mind.)

(Ladysmith Black Mambazo, 1995, Track 3)

One cannot help but remember some of the lyrics in the 1970s song, “Teach Your Children Well” (Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young, 1970, Track 6):

You, who are on the road
Must have a code that you can live by
And so, become yourself
Because the past is just a goodbye

Teach your children well
Their father's hell did slowly go by
And feed them on your dreams
The one they pick, the one you'll know by

The Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young song assumes, just like the Ladysmith Black Mambazo song, that by virtue of being older, the adults are well positioned to act as guides to the youth. Both songs view life as a journey being taken by both the young and the old. Both songs have the “road” motif, and both songs refer to elders. Clearly, it is taken for granted that the elders have “a code that [they] live by”: strong moral values that the youth must emulate. Equally important is the need for the elders to set high standards for their children, so that the youths measure their own achievements by matching them with those of their parents. The words “Teach your children well/And feed them on your dreams” are so clear and straight forward, and their message is so blunt that they need no belabouring.

Ideally, the home should be drug-free; that is to say alcohol and tobacco should not be available in the home. The dangers and evils associated with these drugs must be highlighted to the children, and hopefully, the children will stay away from them for the rest of their lives. Given the fact that the young are prone to desire, and that they are always ready to carry any desire they may have formed into action, it stands to reason that as much as possible, the home must be the last place where the young can be exposed to drugs such as alcohol and tobacco. The spate of “vuzu” parties in some of Zimbabwe's cities, especially in Bulawayo, is a stark reminder, if any was ever needed, that not all is well in some of the homes in Zimbabwe.

“Sex, drugs, and social disorder ... the birth of Bulawayo's Vuzu parties” was the headline story in the *Sunday News* some time ago, following an incident a few days earlier in which 131 vuzu party goers had been arrested in Bulawayo's city centre. According to the newspaper reports, the police arrested the rowdy youths for public nuisance. “The law enforcement agents also confiscated alcohol and sex enhancing pills from teenagers headed to vuzu parties where they engage in risky unprotected sex,” (Tshili, 2019, p. 1).

According to Bruce Ndlovu, the *Sunday Life* reporter:

Vuzu parties were born in a kombi. Like a child with many fathers, no one is sure about when exactly they were born. Those who attended those first parties, however, are clear about where Vuzu parties, a social phenomenon that has turned Bulawayo upside down, were conceived. (Ndlovu, 2019, p. 2).

Ndlovu goes on to chronicle the history of these parties, earlier called “Vuzooms” around 2011; in those days they were attended mostly by students from private schools in the city, CBC, Girls’ College, Convent, Eveline, Townsend, Milton and Plumtree. With time, these parties have morphed into a monster that has swept through the city (and perhaps beyond) and has left parents and authorities gnashing their teeth and scratching their heads (Ndlovu, 2019, p.2).

“[W]hen 131 youths were arrested, many [people] were shocked at what was uncovered. ... Alcohol, condoms, drugs and vuka vuka drugs,” (Ndlovu 2019, P.2). Another news reporter who covered the same story, Nqobile Tshili, recounts that these youths were aged between 14 and 25 years (Tshili, 2019, p. 1)

It is probably too pessimistic and certainly too far-fetched to cite Wilfred Owen’s sonnet, “Anthem for doomed youth”; that poem mocks and mourns the sad waste of young lives because of war. The first line asks, rhetorically, “What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?” The point still remains – Zimbabwe’s young people are likely to meet miserable deaths if they continue on this destructive path, if they continue with their vuzu parties mentality. They will certainly die in their youth as drug and sex addicts. In these circumstances, the female participants are the major losers, because they are the ones who fall pregnant, leading to dropping out of school, while their male counterparts continue with their lives.

Having noted that with regard to sexual behaviour, the youth exercise no restraint, it stands to reason that this is one area where they definitely need most guidance. Perhaps this is easier said than done, but institutions such as the church, the school, youth clubs, to mention only three, must be implored by the family to provide sex

guidance. The home and church, for example, may insist on abstinence, but the reality is that due to peer pressure the young people will not abstain from sex.

Threats of venereal disease (some people prefer the terms sexually transmitted diseases or sexually transmitted infections or illegitimate pregnancies serve no useful purpose. They are far too confident about contraceptives and careful avoidance of disease to think there is real danger from these sources, (Durojaiye, 1972, p. 73).

The most constructive approach is to be open with the youths, and hope that whatever guidance is given to them, they will use it.

Clearly, then, if ever there was a time for full engagement with the youth by elders, this is the time.

4.0 Conclusion

The youths need to cooperate with elders if the socialisation process is to bear any fruit. There must be mutual respect between the two parties. But it is vitally important that the youths must first accept the obvious fact that elders were once young people, so they have seen it all, even if we know that circumstances may have changed. We all know the saying: “You may take a horse to the river, but you cannot force it to drink.” All that the elders can do is to provide a conducive environment in which to raise their children, and it is up to the children to take advantage of those opportunities.

5.0 Recommendations

Parents must open up and extend love to their children, at the same time encouraging them to be honest, so that the parents help them where they need to be assisted. On their part, the children must understand the meaning of the Ndebele proverb: “*Umntwana ongakhaliyo ufela embhelekweni.*” (A child that does not cry dies on its mother’s back.). This proverb clearly demonstrates that it is a two-way process between the children and the parents: the children must open up and the parents must listen. This dual-communication approach is likely to result in a win-win situation, a situation that will leave both parties satisfied.

Society must also avail guidance and counselling services to the youth, and the youth must understand that by virtue of having been once young, parents are very well placed to guide and counsel them. Once again, the Ndebele proverb “*Indlela ibuzwa kwabaphambili.*” (Seek guidance from those who have travelled before you.) says it all.

And finally, in addition to love, guidance and counselling which society should extend to the youth, guardianship must also be readily available. Elders know that there are evil elements out there. Clearly, the child is safer inside the house, than outside, especially at night. Parents should therefore also guard their children and if the children cooperate there will be no need to invoke the proverb “*Isala kutshelwa sibona ngompho.*” (Those who are impervious to advice end up in trouble.).

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