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Social policy and social spending in Zimbabwe: 1980 to 2015

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Working Paper 2018-8

Social Policy and Social Spending in Zimbabwe: 1980 to 2015

Rekopantswe Mate

prepared for the UNRISD project on
Politics of Domestic Resource Mobilization for Social Development

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This paper is part of a series of outputs from the research project on the Politics of Domestic Resource Mobilization for Social Development.

The project seeks to contribute to global debates on the political and institutional contexts that enable poor countries to mobilize domestic resources for social development. It examines the processes and mechanisms that connect the politics of resource mobilization and demands for social provision; changes in state-citizen and donor-recipient relations associated with resource mobilization and allocation; and governance reforms that can lead to improved and sustainable revenue yields and services. For further information on the project visit www.unrisd.org/pdrm.

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Acronyms

AFC	Agriculture Finance Corporation
BEAM	Basic Education Assistance Module
BWI	Bretton Woods Institutions
CHH	Child-headed households
CSFP	Child Supplementary Feeding Programmes
CSO	Central Statistical Office (now ZimStat)
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
EFA	Education for All
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Policies
FTLRP	Fast track land reform programme
GFATM	Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria
GLS	Grain Loan Scheme
GMB	Grain Marketing Board
GNU	Government of National Unity
HSCT	Harmonized Social Cash Transfers
HTF	Health Transition Fund
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MoHCW	Ministry of Health and Child Welfare
MOHET	Ministry of Higher Education and Technology
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NAC	National AIDS Council
OI	Opportunistic Infections
ORO	Operation Restore Order
ORT	Oral Rehydration Therapy
OVC	Orphans Vulnerable Children
PA	Public assistance
PDL	Poverty Datum Lines
PEPFAR	US President's Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief
PHC	Primary Health Care
PISP	Presidential Input Support Programme
RBZ	Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe
SDF	Social Dimensions Fund
TCPL	Total Consumption Poverty Lines
UCLES	University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USD	United States Dollar
VHWs	Village Health Workers
ViDCO	Village Development Committees
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front
ZIMDEF	Zimbabwe Manpower Development Fund
ZIMPREST	Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation
ZIMSEC	Zimbabwe Schools Examinations Council
ZimStat	Zimbabwe Statistics Agency (formerly Central Statistical Office)
ZINTEC	Zimbabwe Integrated Teacher Education Course
ZWD	Zimbabwean dollar
WHO	World Health Organization

Summary

This paper is part of the UNRISD project on “The Politics of Domestic Resource Mobilization for Social Development” in developing countries. It presents a case study of Zimbabwe, examining historical changes to social policy in the first three decades of the country’s independence. The paper argues that social policy allows for the redistribution of resources, and when done fairly and transparently, social policy deepens democracy. However, Zimbabwe’s experience shows that mustering national resources through prudent financial management and economic policies are important for sustainable social spending. Without resources and economic strategies, Zimbabwe’s political leaders became increasingly defensive and repressive and shunned popular calls for policy change, leading the country into a developmental quagmire.

Author

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Introduction

Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980 after an armed struggle against a right wing, white minority government led by Ian Smith. Until 2015, the country had been ruled by the same party, the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), under the leadership of Robert Mugabe. The post-independence government inherited a structurally and racially bifurcated economy (Herbst 1989; Brett 2005), characterized by a relatively modern white settler enclave adjoined to an underdeveloped labour reserve hinterland dominated by Africans. Africans were a source of largely unskilled labour used in the settler enclave (Dansereau 2000). The economy depended on a relatively well-developed mining industry with untapped mineral deposits (Dansereau 2000; Saunders 2008), as well as agriculture, with tobacco a leading export crop (Moyo 1995). Both these sectors later suffered from changes in world commodity prices and cyclical droughts, respectively.

The first post-independence government, with its socialist leanings, envisioned social transformation through democratising access to social services (Zvobgo 1987; Agere 1987) and state control of resources, because of deep-seated distrust of private capital and western foreign investors,¹ and to comply with liberation war promises (Raftopoulous 2004). Additionally, social change would come through social policy, which included agrarian reforms which sought to end poverty, destitution and vulnerability through land redistribution,² food subsidies, and inclusive education and health care. The achievement of social transformation was predicated on these policies.

This paper demonstrates that these aspirations for social transformation fell victim to a combination of factors, such as the government's failure to foresee and manage natural disasters (recurring droughts) which wreaked havoc on agricultural productivity (Bratton 1987; Sachikonye 1992; 2003); cyclical shifts in the world economy (Dansereau 2000; Saunders 2008); global geo-political shifts ending Cold War bipolarity (Scarnecchia 2011); and the ascendancy of neoliberalism that assigns a greater role to the market. Intertwined effects of these shifts challenged the government's stated commitment to democratization of social services and social transformation. The government eventually lost its footing, becoming defensive and despotic (Howard-Hassman 2010; Raftopoulous 2000), eschewing popular calls for transparency and democracy and alienating donors and foreign investors (Dansereau 2000).

Structure and objectives of the paper

This study is part of the UNRISD research project on "Politics of Domestic Resource Mobilization for Social Development" in developing countries.³ Through a review of literature, this paper analyses Zimbabwean social policy and its funding from independence (1980) to 2015. The discussion is divided by decade into three sections, which neatly demarcate economic and political shifts in the country. The paper contributes to the view that social spending shapes the tenor of state-society relations (White 2003; Pitcher 2007), ideally deepening democracy through the institutionalization of a social contract between the state and social groups. The paper shows that in Zimbabwe, the crisis of social policy and its funding disenfranchised many and deepened distrust, tensions and conflict between ruling elites and the people. Four questions guide the discussion, namely:

¹ Brett 2005; Herbst 1989; Dansereau 2000.

² Davies and Saunders 1987; Bratton 1987; Sachikonye 1992.

³ UNRISD 2012, 2013.

1. What is the historical background of social policies in Zimbabwe and how has social spending evolved over time?
2. What are the key institutions providing social services and what reforms have been implemented since independence?
3. What are the outcomes in terms of service delivery, coverage rates and adequacy, as well as quality of benefits and services?
4. How is the provision of services/social protection programmes financed?

The paper ends with reflections on lessons for social policy spending and planning.

The 1980s: “Restoration of Hope”

The first decade of independence was described by Raftopoulos (2004:2) as the era of “restoration and hope”, characterized by the ruling party pledging reconciliation with sympathizers of the colonial government against whom they fought in the 1970s war of liberation, as well as expectations for change to the ruling party’s supporters through promises to expand social services and implement land reforms. However, given independence during the Cold War, the new government’s adoption of “socialism” fuelled mutual distrust in relations with private businesses and investors, the majority of whom were white.⁴ Distrust was also stoked by ZANU-PF’s contradictory strategies of consolidating power by creating a one-party state which implemented gender reforms while alienating women through the post-independence harassment of women seen walking alone (without male company) in cities (Essof 2012; Nhongo-Simbanegavi 2000);⁵ alienating ethnic minorities through the five-year long (1982 to 1987) brutal reaction to an insurgency and rival nationalist groups dominated by ethnic minorities (Scarnecchia 2011). During this period, affected provinces were sealed off but the government still talked about democratising access to social services (Agere 1987; Zvobgo 1987). As will be shown below, lingering incoherence in the understanding of social transformation continued to haunt debates about social policy and social spending in Zimbabwe during the period under review. Typical of socialist states, policies were made by the ruling party, largely excluding those outside it or with dissenting views but still claiming to have nationalist interests.

1980s social policies

In the 1980s, the government implemented social policy objectives through broad strategies of agrarian reforms, labour market regulations, education and health care interventions, as well as drought/food security responses as elaborated below. These policies were outlined in a document entitled *Growth with equity* (GoZ 1981).⁶

Resettlement and land reform. Post-independence land reforms primarily sought to resettle families that were internally displaced during the liberation war. Falling short of the initial ambitious target of 162,000 households, (Sachikonye 2003), only 35,000 households had received resettlement plot permits by 1985 (Bratton 1987). Resettlement

⁴ Dansereau 2000:229; Herbst 1989; Brett 2005. Experiences from other former African colonies that had become independent such as neighbouring Mozambique, alerted private business to the fact that socialist governments could nationalize the economy overnight.

⁵ A myriad of gender reforms in the 1980s were manipulated to whip up women’s support for the ruling party (Essof 2012) but also expediently reversed in the 1990s (Ranchod-Nilsson 2006) to get support from male traditionalists. Likewise, race relations were manipulated to suit political considerations of the ruling party. Ethnic relations were manipulated through Operation Gukurahundi (1982-7), (Scarnecchia 2011). Details of these contradictions are not discussed here because of limitations of scope.

⁶ As the title of the document suggests, the government anticipated economic growth on several fronts including through equitable access to social services (GoZ 1981). The document outlines sectoral approaches and strategies for economic growth and equitable distribution of returns.

permit holders also accessed subsidized agro-credit, but were not allowed to seek urban wage work, a requirement of measures to ensure rural development (Kinsey 2002; Goebel 2007). These prohibitions threatened the interests of the farm lobby, representing large-scale commercial farmers of European descent, which relied on migrant labour from communal/rural areas (Sachikonye 2003:229-31).⁷ Consequently, the farm lobby was against the resettlement programme, arguing instead that it was better to improve communal areas and remove migration prohibitions. With time, land reform proved to be a powerful means by which the ruling party consolidated support in rural areas (Bratton 1987; Chaumba et al. 2003). This fact, combined with funding challenges since the 1980s, points to the conclusion that the government's role in social protection was incidental. Precisely, the government was not able to implement policies to sustainably support the most vulnerable in times of need during the 1990s and afterwards.

Recurring droughts in 1980/81 and 1984/85 decreased performance of the agro-based economy (Bratton 1987), undermined benefits of land reforms, and destabilized the national budget because of the need for food aid sourced from donors. Food-for-work activities (which entailed community projects) were used to channel food aid. The Department of Social Welfare (DSW) was expected to means-test the recipients. In many cases, this was left to local community structures (Kaseke et al. 1998).⁸ In time, food-for-work programmes created dependency, thus entrenching political patronage (Kaseke et al. 1998).⁹

Producer prices and urban food subsidies. The government subsidized supply and demand sides of production chains through agriculture marketing boards. The government bought grains and edible oil crops from rural farmers at above world market prices. Urban millers and food processors had to sell end-products at low prices to keep urban food prices low with the government subsidising the price difference. By 1982, food subsidies alone (excluding agro-inputs) were worth Zimbabwean dollar (ZWD) 200 million, equivalent to USD 33 million at 1980 exchange rates (Bratton 1987:183). The government faced an impossible and unsustainable balancing act: reducing food subsidies to control government spending, while simultaneously maintaining low food prices in urban areas and high producer prices for rural farmers. Bratton (1987) observes that despite the farm lobby's elitism, its calls for higher producer prices benefited rural small-scale farmers, a core constituency of ZANU-PF. In the 1980s these small farmers benefited from cheap agro-credit and agro-inputs (as well land reforms), enabling their increased contribution to the national maize stock from 8 percent to 45 percent by 1985 (Bratton 1987:182). Furthermore, they benefited from the expansion of agro-marketing infrastructure (Sachikonye 1992). Thus rural farmers' deeper integration into the economy and their realization of improved incomes became a means to leverage their support, though this would prove slippery given the impossible balance referred to above. The government conceded to increases in producer prices as subsidies were slowly removed in response to pressure from the Bretton Wood Institutions' (BWIs) in the 1982-3 economic stabilization programme (Davies and Saunders 1987). Consequently, the food subsidy bill decreased its budget to ZWD 69 million in 1985 (Bratton 1987) and was removed completely by 1987. The

⁷ It is important to note that due to colonial policies, land use planning was such that commercial farming areas were designated for use by farmers of European descent only. Africans were allowed to live on the farms as workers and only when permitted by farm owners. Thus people migrated from neighbouring rural areas to farms in search of wage work. Resettlement policy prohibited such migration.

⁸ Village Development Committees (ViDCOs) identified would-be recipients in each village.

⁹ Villagers attributed the delivery of food aid to the benevolence of national leaders and the ruling party. In turn, politicians used food aid to manipulate support. By the 2000s, known opposition party supporters were allegedly denied food aid and agro-inputs (Chinyoka 2017).

government had appeased donors but marginalized urban wage workers and rural farmers (both white, large-scale and black, small-scale farmers), consequences of an impossible juggling act. This would lead to louder calls for land reforms by blacks and stronger resistance by white farmers in the 1990s.

Expanding employment through “Africanising”¹⁰ the civil service. In the 1980s, for Zimbabweans not affected by the resettlement policy prohibiting non-agricultural work, employment in the civil service and manufacturing sector were attractive options. Wages in civil service increased by 66 percent between 1981 and 1984 (Davies and Saunders 1987). Furthermore, the government passed pro-labour legislation, including on minimum wage,¹¹ to ensure security of employment and improve standards of living for wage workers as part of its “national liberation” ethos.¹² The nationalist posturing extended to collective bargaining, termed tripartite negotiations (among employer associations, labour unions and the government). Minimum wages in 1980 ranged from ZWD 30/month (about USD 18) for domestic and agricultural workers to ZWD 70/month (about USD 42) for unskilled workers in manufacturing. Workers in mining earned ZWD 43.00/month (about USD 25). Minimum wages were seen by the private sector as an economically unviable imposition forcing the private sector to fund the government’s populist policies (Dansereau 2000). The private sector would have preferred a *laissez-faire*, market-driven approach in wage setting (Sachikonye 1987; Dansereau 2000). Thus, yearly minimum wage adjustments became a source of contestation.¹³

Social assistance and other poverty alleviation programmes. Expansion of social protection coverage was sought but the reality of environmental and economic challenges (droughts and spending caps in 1982-3) made it impossible to roll out comprehensive social assistance programmes. Droughts in 1980/81 and 1984/85 (Bratton 1987) warranted emergency relief interventions. Donors provided food aid, which was in some cases channelled through food-for-work programmes and child supplementary feeding to address considerable child malnutrition (Davies and Saunders 1987). In both interventions, community participation was encouraged (Kaseke et al. 1998). Persons with disabilities received support to acquire devices such as crutches, wheelchairs and monthly grants on assessment of their disabilities. Grants were extended for institutional care as well.¹⁴

Education for all. The government described education as a means “to achieving equity”, and as an end in itself, a “human right” and “a basic need” (GoZ 1981:11). The new government democratized education by passing the Education Act of 1981. The ethos was “education for all” (EFA), thereby committing to undo the education system’s erstwhile racially defined duality and inequality in orientation and quality.¹⁵ Primary education became free and compulsory for all children of school age. Promotion from one class to the next up to the fourth year of secondary school or Ordinary Level (O-

¹⁰ Africanizing the civil service meant increasing the number of Africans employed by the government. In the mid-1990s, following the fallout from ESAP (discussed below) the idea of “indigenization” of the economy meant allowing African entrepreneurs a bigger role in the economy. Calls for indigenization fed on the commonsensical assumption that “indigenous” persons would have stronger commitments to the economy (would not externalize capital or run from economic challenges by virtue of being indigenous). As indigenization arguments became institutionalized, the reality has proved more complex. Due to limitations of space these issues are not discussed here. It suffices to say, members of organizations were cronies of politicians and out to enrich themselves.

¹¹ Specifically, the Labour Relations Act of 1985, which enunciated workers’ rights.

¹² Sachikonye 1987; Raftopoulos 2000.

¹³ These contestations are further evidence of unresolved racial/class interests that dogged the post-independence social policy environment (see Dansereau 2000; Herbst 1989; Brett 2005).

¹⁴ Jairos Jiri Association had centres in several cities. ZIMCARE Trust was established in 1981 and has 14 schools across Zimbabwe. It specializes in care for intellectually challenged persons.

¹⁵ Zvobgo 1987; Peresuh 1998; Peresuh and Ndawi 1998; Kadhani and Riddell 1981.

Level)¹⁶ became automatic (CSO 1998a). Thereafter, entry into A-Level and tertiary institutions was based on merit (CSO 1998a). EFA policies spurred an unprecedented growth in enrolments, teacher training programmes and the number of primary and secondary schools as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Development of the education system in Zimbabwe 1980 and 1990

	1980	1990	Percentage growth
Number of primary schools	3,160	4,530*	43
Enrolment in primary schools	1,236,000	2,085,000	69
Number of secondary schools	200	1,520	760
Enrolment in secondary schools	74,300	670,600	902
Number of trained teachers	3,700	25,000	676

*Most primary schools were built between 1980 and 1984 and secondary schools between 1986 and 1987.
Source: Adapted from government statistics published in CSO 1993:17-25.

Nevertheless, these expansions hide the persistence of a gender bias as female enrolments in secondary school remained below 50 percent (CSO 1993).

As schools and classes increased, so did demand for trained teachers. The government launched a three-year in-service teacher-training programme called the Zimbabwe Integrated Teacher Education Course (ZINTEC) in 1981. It increased the number of qualified teachers, although untrained teachers were still employed (21 percent of staff) (CSO 1998a:23). Schools' facilities, location, accessibility of public transport and amenities for teachers and their children determined schools' ability to attract and retain qualified teachers, a particular problem to this day for schools in poor and remote communities (Ilon 1992:307; MacKenzie 1988).

In the 1980s, enrolment in Zimbabwe's only university increased from 2,240 in 1980 to 9,288 in 1989, a 414 percent increase (CSO 1993:31). This constituted less than 1 percent of 20–29 year olds in the population (CSO 1989:23).¹⁷ Thus, despite expansion, university education remained elitist and exclusionary. More technical colleges were built in smaller towns, increasing their combined enrolment from 3,663 in 1979 to 18,213 in 1985 (MacKenzie 1988:344). In agricultural colleges, enrolment increased from 300 in 1980 to 966 in 1989 (CSO 1993:32). Still, these expansions could not meet demand (MacKenzie 1988:344).

Health for all. After independence, a focus on primary health care (PHC) was pursued. PHC was described as a means to "... fight a war on disease and malnutrition ... poverty and ignorance" (GoZ 1981:12). This approach sought to transform the health care system from a centralized, curative, costly, urban-biased and racially divided system to an integrated, decentralized one focused on preventive and promotive health approaches.¹⁸ Several reasons justified this choice. Firstly, the majority of Zimbabweans (about 65 percent) lived in rural areas where morbidity was predominantly due to preventable diseases and conditions related to malnutrition, poor sanitation and limited access to health care facilities (GoZ 1986). Secondly, PHC approaches were cost-

¹⁶ Zimbabwe has seven years of primary and four years of secondary education, with a school-leaving exam called Ordinary Level. Successful candidates proceed to a two-year pre-university course.

¹⁷ The population was 7.5 million in 1982, 20-29 year olds numbered 1.3 million (CSO 1989).

¹⁸ Agere 1987; Ministry of Health 1980; GoZ 1986.

effective due to their reliance on cheaper-to-train auxiliary staff (paramedics and village health workers [VHWs]).¹⁹ Thirdly, PHC required community and household participation in the prevention of communicable diseases, including those caused by poor sanitation. The VHWs were involved in water and sanitation aspects of promotive health, encouraging communities to sink boreholes, protect wells, build pit latrines and promote Oral Rehydration Therapy (ORT) for managing diarrhoea in children (Lees 1984). VHWs also distributed malaria prophylaxis and basic wound and cuts treatments (Root 2001). PHC also entailed the integration of traditional medical practices and traditional birth attendants into maternal and child health.

Funding social policy

Resource mobilization for social policy was challenged on many fronts. As Zimbabwe in 1980 was “underborrowed” (Dansereau 2000:236), the budget was funded with local resources with mining and agriculture as major sources of revenue, however, the fall in world market prices of minerals in the 1980s shrunk the revenue base (Dansereau 2000:236). Subsequently, droughts in 1981 and 1984 challenged revenue collection from agriculture (Bratton 1987). By 1982, spending outstripped revenue generation; the government had borrowed USD 30 million from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1981 with another loan in 1983 (Dansereau 2000). The IMF applied stringent loan conditions and called for more support for exports and spending caps in social programmes (Davies and Saunders 1987; Bratton 1987). Evidence from later decades shows the budget deficit continued to grow.

Between 1980 and 1990, investment in mining declined, employment and production fell by 22 percent and 18 percent respectively while the ZWD was devalued by 48 percent by 1984 (Dansereau 2000:238-40). Under these economic conditions, minimum wage legislation did not endear the government to industrialists/employers who preferred *laissez-faire* wage setting. Furthermore, the quest for state control of the economy saw the government creating new parastatals, many of which would rely on government funding, thus increasing the budget deficit. Grants to parastatals consumed 5.1 percent of national budgets by 1985, while support for the national airline, national railways and the iron smelting company ran to 14 percent of the budget and half of the budget deficit (Herbst 1989:73-5). Rather than helping in revenue generation, most parastatals were loss-making, deepening local industrialists’ distrust of government economic policies (Dansereau 2000; Brett 2005). Nonetheless, compared to the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa, Zimbabwe enjoyed donor goodwill, especially in social sectors. Still, there was no disaggregation of national and donor resources in the budget.

Funding education

Education was highly favoured in the first budget of 1980, receiving 17.3 percent of the national budget, which increased to 19.6 percent in 1982/83 and decreased to 15.4 percent in 1985/86 due to escalating military costs in Mozambique²⁰ and the economic stabilization programme (Davies and Saunders 1987). Per capita spending on students and teachers’ salaries declined, due in part to the stabilization programmes (Abraham 2003, Davies and Saunders 1987) and inflation. Generally, more money was allocated to primary and secondary than tertiary education due to EFA policies as shown in Table 2.

¹⁹ The VHW programme was established in 1982. VHWs were trained at rural health centres (Agere 1987; GoZ 1986).

²⁰ As part of anti-apartheid sanctions, the government shunned use of better-developed ports in South Africa, preferring use of alternative routes to the sea through independent Mozambique. However, there was an insurgency there from 1975 to 1992, apparently sponsored by the apartheid South African government. The Zimbabwean government resorted to militarily defending this insecure road and rail link to the sea. As the war dragged on, more resources were needed, straining the budget (Bratton 1987; Herbst 1989).

Table 2: Budget allocations to the education sector between 1980 and 1990 (ZWD and USD), and inflation

Year	Primary and secondary schools (ZWD)	Higher education (technical colleges)	Universities	Exchange rates ^a	Inflation ^b
1980	120,437,000 (USD 191,161,841.00)	(Vocational training) 422, 000 (USD 669,841.00) (Teacher training) 2, 320, 000 (USD 3,682,539.70)	8,000 (USD12,698.00)	1USD = ZWD 0,63 (1980)	8.9%
1985/6	574,299,000 (USD 35,018,232)	36,584,000 (USD 22,307,317.00)	39,718,000 (USD 24, 218,292.70)	1 USD = ZWD 1,64 (1985)	10.4% (in 1984)
1989/90	1,042,543,000 (USD 394, 902 651.50)	78,686, 000 (USD 29,805, 303.00)	82,208,000 (USD 31,139,394.00)	1 USD =ZWD 2,64 (1990)	15%- 17% ^a

There was only one university. Statistics of technical colleges recorded separately from teachers' and nurses' colleges (CSO 1998a), perhaps because they fall under different line ministries.

Sources: ^a Rukuni and Eicher (1992: page x and page 149 respectively)

^b Davies and Saunders (1987:5).

Free primary education was undermined by indirect costs such as “school levies” and building funds (explained below), as well as expenditures for uniforms which are compulsory in Zimbabwe (Karimanzira 1992). In the 1980s, children could have been suspended from school for lack of uniforms.²¹

Government policy stated that school infrastructure (buildings and amenities) was provided by local communities (parent-teacher associations [PTAs]/school development associations [SDAs] at each school). By 1985, 85 percent of Zimbabwean schools' infrastructure was privately funded by communities (PTAs/SDAs and local authorities) and donors (Ilon 1992). Parents contributed through the school levy or building fund (paid to and managed by the school for on-site needs) as well as labour and materials (by moulding bricks and providing mortar aggregates). Donors provided building materials, books and expatriate teachers (MacKenzie 1988). The government paid wages, trained teachers, and provided, supervised, monitored and evaluated the curriculum. The government also gave grants to local authorities and mission schools for some of their expenses. Communities had limited input in curriculum development save for vernacular language policy and decisions as to whether or not education-with-production²² could be reintroduced (Ilon 1992).

In tertiary education, revolving funds which paid tuition through partial grants and loans dating from colonial times were extended to all students who qualified to attend the country's university and other tertiary institutions (Bennell and Ncube 1994b). Previously, these revolving funds had constituted a strategy to fence off some trades and professions along racial lines. Initially, officials were confident that the economy would absorb students with tertiary qualifications, enabling fund recipients to repay their loans, thereby ensuring the sustainability of the revolving funds. However, growing unemployment (Nherera 2010) and poor tracking of the employment of 1980s and 1990s student loan recipients undermined the realization of this objective.

For skills development and vocational training, the government created the Zimbabwe Manpower Development Fund (ZIMDEF) in 1984. The fund was generated from a 1 percent surcharge on corporate wage bills (Nyazema 2010:257). Companies/entities that

²¹ Uniforms are functional as they erase evidence of socio-economic differences. They are part of schools' identities.

²² Academic subjects were combined with practical subjects in different trades.

recruited and trained school-leavers benefited from the fund. The government and employers shared trainee expenses 3:1 in the first year, 1:1 in the second year and 1:3 in the final year. However, challenges of accountability and transparency between the government and employers abounded (MacKenzie 1988). Some employers perceived the initiative as a governmental foot-in-the-door technique luring employers to resolve contradictions of mass education (Nyazema 2010; MacKenzie 1988). Additionally, there were unresolved disagreements between government and industrialists (especially the mining sector) over training and certification of skills (Dansereau 2000:233-4). Hitherto, the mining sector ran its own training and certification programmes which the government sought to control.

Funding health care

The health budget's share of government spending hovered between 4.5 percent and 5.1 percent between 1980 and 1986 (Davies and Saunders 1987:15). There were shifts in spending during the 1980s (Davies and Saunders 1987:15-17). Whereas in 1980/81, 26.8 percent of the ministry's budget went to salaries, by 1985-86 salaries accounted for 44.7 percent. By contrast, allocations to preventive services did not grow that much despite a health care strategy based on PHC. The increase in salary costs points to several factors such as a growing workforce, stronger worker demands for better pay or adjustments to match inflation, all of which side-lined resource allocations to PHC. "Grants" declined from 53.8 percent to 33.3 percent, while "supplies and services" increased slightly from 10.2 percent to 11.1 percent.

In the 1980s, persons who earned less than ZWD 150/month (about USD 90) were entitled to free health care upon producing a payslip, an identity card, a letter from their employer or assessments from the DSW, indicating that the bearer(s) were on "public assistance." People who qualified included domestic workers, unskilled and semi-skilled workers in industry, farm workers and lower levels of the civil service. Beneficiaries also included persons with disabilities, retirees and the unemployed. 90 percent of Zimbabweans qualified for free health care, covering free consultations, free access to drugs, sundries, as well as upper tier referrals (Bassett et al. 1997:1845). However, free healthcare existed in name only because the process of getting an exemption was cumbersome (Bassett et al. 1997:1948-9). Besides, practically there were drug shortages, lack of supplies as well as pilfering of drugs and supplies by staff whose wages had declined and trying to deal with low staff morale.

The role of international aid

Donors gave multi-sectoral policy advice, as well as human and material support. In 1981 at a donor conference held to mobilize resources for the newly independent country, over USD 1 billion was pledged (Scarnecchia 2011:99). However, because of the Cold War and other geo-political calculi, pledges were paid piecemeal. For example, the US pledged USD 225 million but Congress approved USD 40 million in 1984 because of displeasure at one-party policies (Scarnecchia 2011:99). BWIs became concerned with the budget deficit and gave loans on condition of a temporary economic stabilization programme.²³ Thereafter, bilateral donors took a more active role in health provisioning, water and sanitation, child immunization and agriculture (Davies and Saunders 1987; Moyo 1995:38).

More than a dozen European countries, Kuwait, Japan, the United States and Canada supported agriculture research, land redistribution, institutional reforms and food aid

²³ Davies and Saunders 1987; Bratton 1987; Abraham 2003; Dansereau 2000.

(Moyo 1995:34). Most aid to agriculture was tied; that is, materials used (agro-inputs, machinery, expertise, etc.) had to be sourced from the donor country.²⁴

Furthermore, United Nations agencies, children's charities such as Save the Children, and faith-based organizations such as World Vision, among others, contributed to the construction of schools, clinics and pit latrines; gave books, materials and technical expertise in child immunization; and provided food aid and food for the child supplementary feeding,²⁵ thus contributing to both health and education outcomes. Government and donors contributed materials, expertise and capacity development.²⁶ By 1983, 18 percent of the Ministry of Health budget was funded from aid from the World Health Organization (WHO), EU and major bilateral donors (Davies and Saunders 1987:18). World Vision also ran a "child sponsorship" programme in which overseas well-wishers could sponsor children through school in Zimbabwe (Bornstein 2001).²⁷ Similarly, mission hospitals benefited from affiliated overseas denominational church and mission societies who donated aid in cash and expertise.²⁸ These contributions are difficult to quantify because of lack of data.

Donor countries like the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Australia, the United States of America, the (then) Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (USSR) and others offered scholarships to overseas universities. No data on beneficiaries or amount of money spent is available. Cuba accepted 1,200 Zimbabwean student teachers for training in various subjects in 1986 (Mackenzie 1988:348). Typically, tertiary education aid was tied to the donor country.²⁹

1980s social policy outcomes

1980s social policies produced noticeable positive changes but also exposed contradictions whose management has since proved challenging (Dashwood 1996; Raftopoulos 2000), as shown below. Literature on social spending is silent on the unevenness of policy implementation, some of which could be traced back to post-independence political violence, for example the military operation in Matabeleland and Midlands provinces between 1982 and 1987, popularly referred to as Operation Gukurahundi (Scarnecchia 2011; Howard-Hassman 2010).³⁰

Outcomes of education

Improvement in literacy rates versus shrinking employment. Adult literacy rates improved from 69.5 percent for males and 55.5 percent for females in 1982 (CSO 1993:13) to 86.06 percent and 75.12 percent respectively in 1992 (CSO 1998a:14). Although education had been billed as a means out of peasant ways of life (Zvobgo 1987), the economic reality offered no clear pathways. By the end of the 1980s, school-leaver unemployment was a cause for concern (Bennell and Ncube 1994a; Herbst

²⁴ "Tied aid" describes a situation where a recipient country has to source goods and services from the aid giving country (Easterly and Pfutze 2009:32). Tied aid benefits the donor (Kneteman 2009) by creating employment at home and market outlets overseas while allowing the donor to demonstrate generosity and compassion to a poor country.

²⁵ Davies and Saunders 1987; Mackenzie 1988; Ilon 1992; Bornstein 2001.

²⁶ Lees 1984; Agere 1987; Root 2001; MoHCW 1999.

²⁷ In one province, over 1000 children benefited in 1987, but it is not clear for how long.

²⁸ For example, respective Christian denominations (Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Anglicans etc.) have overseas charities that help with materials and technical expertise from volunteers.

²⁹ Scholarships are used in the donor country. Zimbabwean scholarship recipients go to the donor country for further studies and return on completion of studies.

³⁰ This was a military operation in which a North Korean trained battalion was dispatched to fight dissidents who engaged in banditry and destabilization (a proxy war by Apartheid South Africa per some accounts). This operation turned into rape, murder and torture of unarmed civilians and ethnic minorities in these provinces for five years (1982-1987). Affected areas were sealed off (Scarnecchia 2011). Schools and social services were disrupted but impacts have never been comprehensively assessed.

1989). Herbst (1989:70) states that 29 percent of 95,000 school-leavers in 1985 were employed, compared to 10 percent of 216,005 school-leavers in 1989.

Academic versus vocational subjects in secondary school. During the war of liberation, refugee camp schools offered a combination of academic subjects and manual work referred to as “education with production” in line with self-reliance and pro-socialist aspirations of the government (Pape 1998). After independence, Zimbabweans preferred an elitist, academic education with exams marked and moderated by University of Cambridge Local Exams Syndicate (UCLES) in the United Kingdom (Abraham 2003:72). Ironically, “education with production” was reminiscent of the racially segregated colonial education system, which inferiorized Africans by channelling them into manual and low-pay employment (Nherera 2010; Abraham 2003:75). The reality of shrinking employment in the late 1980s forced “education with production” back into policy debates without resolution (Nherera 2010). Meanwhile, mutual distrust between government and industrialists fuelled a tug-of-war over skills training and certification in some sectors (Dansereau 2000).

Increased enrolments versus low pass rates at O-Level. As shown on Table 1, secondary school enrolment increased from 74,300 to 670,600 (or 9 times) between 1980 and 1990 (CSO 1993:17-25) but pass rates in secondary school remained low, between 16 and 17 percent until 1987 (CSO 1993:29) much to the disapproval of politicians (Abraham 2003:76). Pass rates increased to between 20 and 21 percent in 1988 and 1989 (CSO 1998:33). Passing students scrambled for A-Level vacancies (a two-year pre-university course), or competed for limited places in vocational colleges (teachers, nursing, agricultural and technical colleges).³¹ In this respect, there were few economic returns to the considerable investments that the government put into education (Peresuh 1998). Some authors argue that the curriculum was too academic, it did not prepare students for self-employment, thus ignoring the reality of the shrinkage of wage employment.³² Furthermore, most parents could not afford fees for their children to re-sit exams or were dissuaded by their ward’s academic performance (Grant 2003).

Despite the teacher-training programme ZINTEC, teacher competency did not improve pass rates. Remote rural schools remained unable to attract and retain qualified teachers (Ilon 1992; Peresuh 1998). Furthermore, unsatisfactory working conditions, including low wages and intermittent wage and employment freezes such as the 1980s stabilization programme (Davies and Saunders 1987), likely contributed to low pass rates.

Gender biases in the education system. Despite EFA, the 1980s were characterized by higher drop-out or lower completion rates for girls than for boys in primary and secondary school, as shown in Table 3 below. Less than half of students who completed their school years were girls, except in 1987, when 52 percent of those completing primary school were girls.³³ Still, girls’ secondary school completion remained 41 percent. Cultural factors play a key role, specifically the fact that Zimbabwe is largely patrilineal, with identity and resources conferred and inherited through the male line (that is, from father to son or through brothers). Deep-seated cultural rationalization of household resources and kinship-based social protection assumes that sons are a better investment for the future care of elders and preservation of wealth within patrilineal

³¹ Bennell and Ncube 1994 (a and b); Grant 2003; Nherera 2010.

³² Mackenzie 1988; Nherera 2010; Nziramasanga Commission 1999; Grant 2003.

³³ Perhaps this has to do with large Grade 1 intakes in 1980 and 1981.

families. Because daughters marry outside the kin group, investing in them is perceived as a divestment.³⁴ For the extremely poor, withdrawal of sons is a last resort, a sign of despair and likely the reason for an increase in boys' primary school drop-out rates in 1987 (after the 1984-5 drought). These cultural beliefs and practices coexist with "modern" beliefs about and aspirations for gender equality.

Table 3: Primary and secondary school completion rates for boys and girls in the 1980s

Year	Education completed*	Boys	Girls	Total
1982	Grade 5 to 7 (primary school)	1,182,909	1,120,719	2,303,628 (49% girls)
	Form 3 to 4 (secondary school)	119,440	81,545	200,985 (41% girls)
1987	Grade 5 to 7	1,074,630	1,142,650	2,217,286 (52% girls)
	Form 3 to 4	378,098	257,640	635,735 (41% girls)

*Success rates in school-leaving exams not included. There are no gender-disaggregated records tracking specific cohorts through the school system.

Source: CSO 1998a: 14.

These biases in secondary school completion had a knock-on effect on higher education. Consequently, male teachers dominated in secondary schools. In agricultural colleges, male students dominated enrolments. Less than one third of students were female in 1989. This was, however, a significant improvement from no female students in 1980 (CSO 1993:32). Female student enrolment fluctuated and peaked at one third at the University of Zimbabwe in the 1980s (CSO 1993:39).

Skills training. The impact of ZIMDEF was (and still is) controversial. The fund could not supply critical skills in engineering, computer sciences and bio-medical fields because of a lack of local capacity to train and retain the skills and/or inability to attract them from abroad (Nherera 2010). There was no coherent strategy for manpower development vis-à-vis mass education, which the creation of the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology (MOHET) in the 1990s tried to resolve.³⁵ The ministry was set up to guide technological innovation and skills development responding to national developmental needs.

Health outcomes

Primary health care radically improved health outcomes as summarized in Table 4 below, but contradictions were evident.

³⁴ The payment of bridewealth symbolizes the transfer of a woman's productive capacity to her husband's family. Many families adjust bridewealth if the bride is educated.

³⁵ Dansereau 2000; Nyazema 2010; Mackenzie 1988.

Table 4: Summary of improvements in health indicators in the 1980s

Indicator	Situation in 1980	Situation by 1988
Immunization coverage	25% in 1982 ^c	80% ^a
Infant Mortality Rate (IMR)	130/1000 births ^d	71 per 1,000 ^a
Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR)	127 per 100,000 ^d	unavailable information
Number of trained state registered nurses	200	400 ^b
Number of state certified nurses	100	400 ^b
Access to safe water	One third of rural households had safe water ^f	84% of all Zimbabwean households in 1988 ^c

Sources: ^a ZimStat and ICF International (2012); ^b CSO (1993:37); ^c Youde (2010:697); ^d Lees (1984); ^e Mukungwa (2015); ^f Davies and Saunders (1987).

Firstly, the village health workers training programme had not met its target by 1984, nor did VHWs benefit from minimum wage legislation (Agere 1987:372). Secondly, although PHC was at the core of transformation, it was one of the first to be affected by budget cuts during the 1982-3 budget stabilization (Davies and Saunders 1987). Thirdly, decentralization of the health care system did not meet its targets as 34 (out of 59) districts were still without a district hospital (thus, missing a link in the health care chain) until the end of the 1990s. In some cases, mission hospitals assumed the district hospital role (MoHCW 1999:30). Thus the referral system did not function well and eventually broke down. Nonetheless, the commitment to decentralization remained steadfast.

Implications of 1980s policies

Despite the reconciliation rhetoric, the post-independence government did not trust foreign owners of capital or Zimbabwean white economic/business elites, prompting it to buy mines and logistics companies to enter strategic sectors of the economy.³⁶ However, the acquisitions were peripheral, loss-making ventures which political appointee executives could not turn around (Herbst 1989). These entities' dependence on government funding enlarged the budget deficit. Thus, the 1980s global recession and droughts left the government unable to muster resource mobilization. Dansereau (2000:241) succinctly observes that, "Government thus ended the decade [1980s] with *growing pressure from both labour and capital, as well as growing financial problems*, compelling them to search for new measures to maintain autonomy" [Added emphasis]. The financial problems referred to above point to resource mobilization challenges which encroached on social policy. Additionally, the 1980s exposed other contradictions such as discourses of democratising social protection and social services coexisting with urban and curative biases in health care. The resource allocation differences to higher tier institutions compared to nascent auxiliary programmes attest to this (Davies and Saunders 1987). In education, a growing number of young people graduated into unemployment (Nherera 2010; Herbst 1989). Similarly, the need to keep food prices low in urban areas encroached on rural farmers' interests with regard to pricing of produce on one hand, while land redistribution fomented tensions between small-scale and commercial farmers on the other. These tensions and balancing acts left the government open to criticism as evinced by the political economy of the 1990s.

³⁶ Herbst 1989; Dansereau 2000; Brett 2005.

Meanwhile, the benefits of social change were not evenly distributed as ethnic minorities were excluded while donors turned a blind eye because of Cold War expediencies (Scarnecchia 2011).³⁷

These contradictions point to deep-seated class, race, gender and ethnic tensions, which were not well-expressed and planned for in the euphoria of independence in the 1980s. These challenges presaged Zimbabwe's present crisis. As resource austerity deepened, these contradictions and interests became more confrontational in later decades. The government's inability or unwillingness to acknowledge and/or manage them is attributable to governance challenges in the 1990s and 2000s (Dorman 2002; Raftopoulos 2000).

The 1990s: Deregulation and Disenfranchisement

Due to a growing budget deficit, the government yielded to pressure from BWI (Bond 1998) by adopting Economic Structural Adjustment Policies (ESAP) in 1991-5. ESAP sought to reorient the economy towards growth (Mhone 1995; Brett 2005). Donors had projected economic growth of 5 percent annually driven by exports from revamped mining, manufacturing and new foreign direct investments; and inflation was expected to fall from 20 percent in 1991 to 10 percent by 1994 (Mhone 1995; Bond 1998). The unforeseen 1991/2 and 1994/5 droughts likely undermined economic performance (Brett 2005), while mining investments materialized after 1995 (Saunders 2008). The economy grew an average of 1.2 percent and inflation soared to 29 percent between 1991 and 1994 (Bond 1998).

The government abandoned "social welfarist/developmentalist" policies, on the basis that ESAP would succeed in creating employment, thereby eradicating poverty (Dashwood 1996). Furthermore, economic growth would have ensured support from the disaffected private sector (Raftopoulos 2000:271). The deleterious effects of ESAP left the government weakened in bargaining with competing interests (Dansereau 2000). Tensions grew over the slow pace of land distribution and poor working conditions (Moyo et al. 2000; Raftopoulos 2000; Dashwood 1996). Policymaking became *ad hoc* and contradictory (Jenkins 1997), perhaps pointing to unresolvable disagreements within the government and disavowal of consultative and participatory processes because of failure to manage competing interests. Some further important policy shifts occurred, with negative development implications:

- State control of national assets of the 1980s (Herbst 1989; Brett 2005) changed to "indigenization" in the 1990s (Muzondidya 2007);³⁸ that is ownership of national assets by "indigenous people" defined as descendants of "original inhabitants" (sic) of Zimbabwe. This was an extension of the fall-out from ESAP in which donors and outsiders could no longer be trusted with national development. In practice, party officials and their clients brazenly amassed wealth in the form of factories, mines, farms and others, contrary to the Leadership Code of 1984, which discouraged self-enrichment (Dashwood 1996). The membership of indigenization pressure groups³⁹ was exclusive to cronies of ruling party officials who also benefited from economic nationalization.

³⁷ The effects of 5th Brigade atrocities in Matabeleland provinces from 1982-87 are a case in point (Scarnecchia 2011).

³⁸ Calls for economic indigenization started in the 1990s following the fallout from ESAP with the formation of pressure groups (see Dashwood 1996; Dorman 2002). Legislation was eventually passed in 2008 (Saunders 2008).

³⁹ Groups such as Affirmative Action Group (AAG) for men and Indigenous Business Women Organization (IBWO) for women were dominated by partisan membership and led by politically connected persons.

- Allegations of crony capitalism and growing inequality fuelled strikes and social tension between 1994 and 1998.⁴⁰ The arrest of strike leaders and ambivalence to demands fomented tensions.
- War veterans also protested declining living standards and threatened de-campaigning the ruling party and Mugabe in 2000 elections unless they were given monthly pensions. President Mugabe yielded to demands, becoming patron of the war veterans association; the government paid the war veterans' pensions even though the government had not budgeted for them (Bond 1998). This *ad hoc* compliance with war veterans' demands alienated labour unions (Raftopoulos 2000) whose demands for wage increments were ignored.
- In January 1998, the first ever food riot (over escalating prices) took place. The military quashed it, resulting in deaths and arrests. Under a barrage of official vitriol, droves of disaffected workers emigrated in search of greener pastures (Chikanda 2004; McGregor 2007). The brain drain combined with resource austerity compromised service delivery in social sectors.
- Conservative voices and interests ascended with traditional leaders decrying moral decay, citing HIV and AIDS among socio-cultural changes due to effects of ESAP in the 1990s (Ranchod-Nilsson 2006). This culminated in the passage of the Traditional Leaders Act in 1999, in which traditional leaders were seen as custodians of customs who would also play a role in land redistribution (Ranchod-Nilsson 2006:61-62).
- Gender equality within law receded, as women no longer could confer identity to foreign partners following the 14th amendment of the constitution over citizenship rights (Nkiwane 2000). Furthermore, the judiciary betrayed quests for gender equality in 1999 in the *Magaya vs Magaya* case (an inheritance dispute between a half-sister and half-brother), in which daughters' right to inherit their father's estates were denied on cultural grounds (that is, *patriline*). This ruling drew strong local and international condemnation (Ranchod-Nilsson 2006). These developments undermined several 1980s gender equality laws.⁴¹

In a context of acrimony, the government became defensive and inward looking, resorting to repression, arguing sovereignty and nationalism in search of “local” solutions. It launched a “home-grown” economic growth programme called Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST), for implementation from 1996 to 2000.⁴² Meanwhile attempts at popular consultations in developing ZIMPREST failed because of growing mutual distrust between government and an increasingly vocal civic society (Dorman 2002:83-84). The latter was seen as fronting external/donor interests against the nationalist government. Donors withheld support for ZIMPREST because of fiscal indiscipline. Without resources, ZIMPREST fizzled before implementation. By the late 1990s, the government created the National Economic Consultative Forum in a futile bid to harness and perhaps contain competing demands (Raftopoulos 2000).

⁴⁰ Moyo et al. 2000: 941; Raftopoulos 2000; Dansereau 2000.

⁴¹ For example, the Legal Age of Majority Act (LAMA) of 1982, which recognized 18 years as the age of majority for men and women regardless of race, ethnicity etc. Sons and daughters could inherit from their parents' estates and widows from deceased husbands. Other laws include those on equal pay, non-discrimination on recruitment and at work, etc.

⁴² ZIMPREST sought macroeconomic stability; economic growth through private and public savings; economic empowerment and poverty alleviation through employment creation and entrepreneurial activities as well as providing safety nets for the disadvantaged (CSO 1998b).

1990s changes to social policy

In the 1990s, socialism as well as developmentalist and welfarist policies of the 1980s (Dashwood 1996) had disappeared. Efficiency, productivity and profit concerns were in ascendancy. These criteria pervaded objectives of land reform in particular (Moyo et al. 2000), along with other social policies (Muzondidya 2007; Dashwood 1996). However, this posturing alienated the majority of the population reeling under poverty. The main changes to social policy in the 1990s concerned land reform, food aid, safety nets and reforms to the financing of the education system, as briefly described in this section.

Agrarian reforms impasse. The Land Act of 1992 was passed, with a shift towards efficiency and productivity, more in tandem with the BWIs' arguments and away from social welfare. Thus land would be given to persons with resources and experience (Dashwood 1996). Still, not much land was distributed in the 1990s as arguments arose about modalities of land distribution among the farm lobby (who insisted on a market-driven approach), against both the government, which lacked funds, and peasants, who were occupying farms to expedite land redistribution for poverty alleviation. The government meanwhile argued law and order and private property rights, forcibly removing peasants from occupied farms (Chimhowu and Woodhouse 2010). Relentless pressure saw the government attempting compulsory acquisition and distribution without compensation of 1,471 commercial farms in 1997 (Moyo et al. 2000). The bid failed following court injunctions and other counter-pressure. In this acrimonious context, donors joined the fray with two conferences held in Harare and London in 1999 to discuss land reform modalities.⁴³ However, commitments from these donor conferences to implement piecemeal, donor funded or aided and market driven land reforms with a view to experiment with and learn lessons from emerging land tenure patterns were overtaken by the *ad hoc* "Fast Track Land Reform Programme" (FTLRP) in 2000 (Worby 2001:488).

Cost recovery on food aid. Whereas in previous droughts food aid and food-for-work programmes were used, in 1995 cost recovery ethos saw the introduction of the Grain Loan Scheme (GLS). This scheme gave food (imported food aid) on loan to rural households in favourable agro-ecological regions from neighbouring Grain Marketing Board (GMB) depots. Recipients were expected to return similar quantities of grain from future harvests (Kaseke et al. 1998). The GLS fell victim to logistical challenges (Sachikonye 1992). It is also not clear whether the GMB was able to collect on all grain loaned to farmers.⁴⁴

To the infirmed, persons with disabilities, and the elderly, the government gave 10kg/person/month of food (Kaseke et al. 1998:18), which was however inadequate. NGOs intermittently distributed food parcels to vulnerable households throughout the 1990s. Child Supplementary Feeding Programmes (CSFP) continued, too, with donor support and community participation (Kaseke et al. 1998:22).

Introduction of safety nets. Donors sought to mitigate effects of supposedly transitory poverty due to ESAP through a Social Dimensions Fund (SDF), a multi-donor "safety net" (Mhone 1995). The SDF intended to pay school fees, to cover healthcare expenses and to retrain laid-off workers to establish small enterprises in the informal sector (Kanji and Jazdowska 1993). Nevertheless, the SDF's impact on poverty was insignificant because it failed to protect livelihoods of those vulnerable to poverty (Kanji and Jazdowska 1993). This was largely due to delayed implementation

⁴³ Worby 2001:488; Moyo et al. 2000; Moyo 2000:24-5.

⁴⁴ Rural farmers were adept at dodging the GMB e.g. side-marketing to maximize returns (Takavarasha 1992:165).

(Dashwood 1996), high administrative costs, considerable red tape (Kaseke et al. 1998), and poor funding because some donor pledges were not honoured (Bond 1998); the severity of poverty (due to intertwined effects of droughts, HIV and AIDS, deindustrialization, and inflation) meant that the safety nets fell short of needs. For example, although the threshold for fee exemptions in health care was nominally raised to income below ZWD 400/per month, the number of deserving persons remained high (Bassett et al. 1997).

Cost recovery in education. With ESAP, the Education Act was amended in 1991, replacing free primary education with fee-based schooling (Mlambo 2013). As a result, funding responsibilities rested entirely on parents and communities already reeling from the effects of ESAP in other domains. This impacted enrolments, as discussed below (outcomes and funding sections).

Funding 1990s social policy

During the 1990s, the government's ability to mobilize resources on its own, even in the face of considerable mineral deposits and relatively good infrastructure, were thwarted by political intransigence vis-à-vis economic rationality.⁴⁵ In spite of favourable economic growth projections at the start of ESAP (Mhone 1995), investments in mining were rather slow with notable inflows only after 1995. Eight mining projects, worth slightly over USD 500 million in gold and platinum, were approved (Saunders 2008:69). The political crises of the late 1990s (wanton fiscal indiscipline seen in the war veterans' pensions and the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo [DRC], deteriorating donor relations, arbitrary policy-making, militarization and lack of rule of law [Towriss 2013; Howard-Hassman 2010]) squandered investor confidence (Dansereau 2000:70; Williamson 2010). Mining production declined further by 1999 (Dansereau 2000:250). Aid withdrawals (Laakso 2002) and targeted sanctions against political leaders and their business partners (Grebe 2010) compounded problems by removing likely sources of funding or punishing investors who aided leaders under sanctions (Saunders 2008:71). Consequently, there were negligible fiscal resources for social spending and the budget deficit festered.

Deteriorating donor relations. Although donors funded the SDF, food aid and the HIV and AIDS response, donor relations deteriorated to unprecedented levels by the end of the decade. In 1997, the IMF agreed to release a USD 175 million loan after the government implemented corrective measures to address the budget deficit (Brett 2005:94). However, by the end of 1997 the government's *ad hoc* and defiant activities, for example joining the war in the DRC and providing war veterans with unbudgeted pensions, further alienated donors (Bond 1998). It is not clear whether or not this IMF loan was released in full or if it became part of aid withdrawals when relations soured in 1998 (Laakso 2002). The stillbirth of ZIMPREST left the country without a coherent strategy to revamp the economy while souring donor relations (Sachikonye 2003; Laakso 2002) meant that there were neither resources nor comprehensive responses to deepening poverty. Investor confidence plummeted further, save for South African investors (about whom more in the 2000s section). Donors did, however, remain committed to remedy humanitarian emergencies such as hunger and HIV and AIDS (Laakso 2002).

Declining real spending on education. Real spending in education declined during the period. Per capita spending in primary education was between USD 1.50 and 2.00, and

⁴⁵ Brett 2005; Saunders 2008; Dansereau 2000.

USD 1.30 and 0.90 in secondary schools in 1990/1 and 1993/4 respectively (Peresuh 1998:133; Nyazema 2010:257). This compromised quality of education⁴⁶ and enrolments declined as the foregoing has shown (see Table 5). Per capita spending in USD terms declined further as economic and political crises deepened in the late 1990s when donors withdrew (Laakso 2002).

Declining real spending on health care. The budget of the MoHCW consistently hovered around 6 percent of the national budget with insignificant changes in some years due to inflation adjustments (MoHCW 1999). As a proportion of GDP, health constituted between 2–3 percent in 1990/91 and 3–4 percent in 1993/94 (MoHCW 2010). Per capita public spending in health declined from ZWD 55 (about USD 5) in 1990/91 to ZWD 36 (less than USD 3) in 1995/96 (Mlambo 2013). Such low investment impinged on the quality of services, staff morale and ultimately on health indicators as shown on Table 6 below.

With ESAP, the threshold for free healthcare nominally increased to ZWD 400/month (USD 79.20) in 1991 from ZWD150 (USD 94.50) in 1980.⁴⁷ Maternity fees rose from ZWD 140 (USD 27.72) to ZWD 500 in 1991 (USD 99) making these essential services inaccessible and challenging health indicators (Kanji and Jazdowska 1993). Contrary to the logic of cost recovery, health care facilities were not effective at revenue collection because of people had no means to pay. Without resources to fund their activities, quality of services declined in healthcare services. Officials have struggled with improving quality of services since the 1990s.

1990s policy outcomes

ESAP's imposed austerity (1991-5) not only reduced the government's ability to leverage domestic resources (mining and agriculture), it led to decreased access to services, simultaneously increasing inequality and tensions between and among groups, as explained below.

Increased severity of poverty

Poverty increased markedly due to intertwined effects of deindustrialization; removal of subsidies in health, education, agriculture and food; and droughts in 1990/91 and 1994/95 leaving two million people in need of food aid (Sachikonye 1992:89) and in debt (Kinsey 2002) following the 1980s cheap agro-credit discussed above (see Bratton 1987:193-5) which they could no longer pay back. HIV and AIDS with prevalence rates between 25 and 30 percent in the 15-49-year age group, and death rates estimated at 100,000 annually, (UNAIDS 2005) presented a huge health crisis, compromising household reproduction as dependence ratios increased.

In 1995, the government commissioned a donor-funded Poverty Assessment Study Survey (PASS I) led by the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare. "Poverty" was defined qualitatively as failure to maintain socio-culturally defined well-being. Quantitatively, the study relied on Poverty Datum Lines (PDL) and Total Consumption Poverty Lines (TCPL), according to which a household of six needed

⁴⁶ Funding challenges hastened the localization of school exams in 1994 through the formation of the Zimbabwe Schools Examinations Council (ZIMSEC). Until 1994, exams were sent to the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES) in the UK for marking and moderation. Exam localization alleviated foreign currency shortages. However, ZIMSEC did not institutionalize a transparent and efficient school examination system. The public lost confidence in local exams (Abraham 2003), leading to elite flight to private and trust schools that were still affiliated with UK exam boards. This essentially led to the stratification of education by class: ZIMSEC for the masses and UCLES for the wealthy. Increasingly, these differences defined socio-economic differences.

⁴⁷ Exchange rates from Rukuni and Eicher (1992:x).

ZWD 468,99 (about USD 45) and ZWD 268,54 (about USD 27)⁴⁸ monthly in urban and rural areas respectively (CSO 1998b). According to this study, over 63 percent of households were “poor”, with poverty worse in rural areas due to cyclical droughts, limited access to resources (land and tillage) and limited employment opportunities (CSO 1998b:88). Female-headed households fared worse because of male-biased access to land and wage work.⁴⁹

Decline of agro-infrastructure and viability of agrarian reforms

The Agriculture Finance Corporation (AFC), then responsible for agro-finance, reeled under debt due to unpaid loans (Chimedza 1992:145) while neoliberal rationalization shrunk produce marketing infrastructure, such as the closure of grain collecting depots (Sachikonye 1992:93). Rationalization encroached on the strategic grain reserve too. In early 1990, the BWIs advised that keeping one million metric tonnes in grain silos was unnecessarily costly. The government relented by selling the maize. This proved ill-advised, given two impending droughts. Consequently, maize had to be imported from South Africa as donor-funded food aid amid logistical challenges (Sachikonye 1992). Deteriorating relations with donor in the 1990s (especially due to the fallout from ESAP), made recovery from effects of neoliberal policies in agriculture difficult.

Education outcomes

Decline of enrolments. Due to cost recovery policies, a considerable number of parents withdrew their children from schools due to inability to pay fees and the inadequacy of safety nets. This resulted in enrolments declining, as Table 5 below shows. The 1990-1 drought likely accentuated patrilineal rationalizations that strategic resources are better allocated to sons, as explained for Table 3. This increased the proportion of girls who dropped out (Table 5). Secondary school enrolments had peaked in 1991 at 710,700, dipped thereafter and only rose past 1991 levels in 1995 (CSO 1998a:28). Enrolment declines after 1991 challenged the notion of EFA and education as a human right (CSO 1993, 1998a). UNICEF intervened by sponsoring girls’ secondary school fees to ameliorate gendered attrition, although the number of beneficiaries is not discernible (Peresuh and Ndawi 1998). Furthermore, it is not possible to tell whether or not pupils that had dropped-out were able to return to school later.

Table 5: Number of boys and girls dropping out of primary school between 1989 and 1996

Year	Male	Female	Total drop-outs
1989-90	103,100	116,600	219,700 (53% girls)
1990-1	8,000	13,700	22,000 (62% girls)
1995-6	49,530	49,327	94,857 (52% girls)

Source: CSO 1998a:23.

Health care outcomes

Deterioration of working conditions and services. Resource austerity, reflected in declining real funding and remuneration, created poor working conditions and low morale among health workers. Referrals of patients to expensive private clinics increased. Patients perceived such referrals cynically as means by which professionals took advantage of their despair to enrich themselves (Bassett et al. 1997). Tensions

⁴⁸ Exchange rates used is USD 1 = ZWD 10.50 in 1996 (Bassett et al. 1997).

⁴⁹ Rippenburg 1997 ; Cousins et al. 1992:15-16 ; Jacobs 1983.

between patients and health care providers in public institutions increased with allegations of corruption, favouritism (Bassett et al. 1997) and occasionally reports of grievous malpractice.⁵⁰ Despite official statements, health was neither seen as a right nor were patients seen as consumers with choices and rights (Nyazema 2010).

Deterioration of health indicators. Factors in the foregoing made it difficult to manage preventable diseases and deliver maternal and child health services as Table 6 shows.

Table 6: Changes in health indicators, 1994 and 1999

Indicator	1994	1999
Immunization coverage	80%	75 %
Infant Mortality Rate	53/1000	65/1000
Maternal mortality ^a	283 per 100,000	695 per 100,000
Access to safe water	77% of households had safe water but 34% were without toilet facilities ^b	No figures. Water supplies in urban areas became erratic because of poor funding and implementation of water sector reforms (Youde 2010:696-7). The first cholera outbreak in 1998/99 in Harare indicates depth of crisis. ⁵¹

Source: ^aZimStat and ICF International (2012). ^bCSO (1994).

The rapid spread and impact of HIV and AIDS. HIV and AIDS took a toll in the 1990s as healthcare funding, access and quality declined. Prevalence rates were above 25 percent in the early 1990s (UNAIDS 2005).⁵² Worsening impoverishment soon strained the kinship system and considerable numbers of orphaned children went without adult care, leading to the emergence of child-headed households (CHH). The number of OVCs was estimated between 500,000 and 1,000,000 in the 1990s (TARSC and ZIMTA 2012). Child rights NGOs and UNICEF largely dealt with the needs of OVCs, including providing capacity development for emergent community care (Foster 2007).

Implications of 1990s policies

The 1990s marked irreversible denudation of gains from the 1980s because of resource austerity due to neoliberal reforms, cyclical droughts, and the effects of the HIV and AIDS pandemic. These circumstances were accentuated by missed opportunities in resource mobilization due to the inability to leverage mining investments of the time (Saunders 2008), as well as “reactive policies” (Jenkins 1997:601)⁵³ which alienated donors and diminished investor confidence.⁵⁴ Furthermore, distrust of civil society by the government on suspicion that it was a front for donors to influence and even unseat the government meant that there were few means to influence policy making (Dorman

⁵⁰ For instance, IPS Correspondents. 1999. “Zimbabwe- Health: Doctor sentenced for culpable homicide.” Accessed 8 September 2017, <http://www.ipsnews.net/1999/03/health-zimbabwe-doctor-sentenced-for-culpable-homicide/>.

⁵¹ Water sector reforms were implemented in 1998 through legislative changes and the establishment of a water agency, the Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA). ZINWA was supposed to be self-financing. However, its establishment when donors were withdrawing and lack of technical expertise meant that it was not able to achieve its mandate. Youde (2010) notes instead of improving and expanding water infrastructure, there was declining access to safe water and deterioration of existing installations. This explains in part the lack of statistics. The first cholera outbreak in Harare, in 1998/9, points to the depth of the water and sanitation crisis.

⁵² Methods of estimating/modeling prevalence rates changed in the late 1990s as the science of HIV and AIDS improved. In fact, one estimate put the prevalence rate at 33.7 percent by 2001 (UNAIDS 2002).

⁵³ Jenkins (1997:601) argues that the government reacted to rather than proactively planning for crises such as droughts, economic pressures and donor pressures.

⁵⁴ Reacting to war veterans’ demands for pensions, the war in DRC, workers’ strike and donor pressure (Bond 1998; Brett 2005; Laakso 2002; Jenkins 1997).

2002). Relations between and among social groups were equally fraught with suspicion and fragmented because of deliberate divide-and-rule tactics of the government as seen in war veterans versus workers over remuneration and fringe benefits (Bond 1998; Raftopoulos 2000); small scale farmers versus large scale farmers over land reform (Chimhowu and Woodhouse 2010); and the poor versus elites over declining quality of life (Dashwood 1996; Dorman 2002). Without policy alternatives and resources to fund them, the 1990s ended with Zimbabwe in a policy quagmire with mounting unresolved class, racial, gender and ethnic tensions⁵⁵ and policy impasses.

The 2000s: Hyperinflation, Parallel Markets, Militarization and Deepening Vulnerability

The 2000s ushered in multi-dimensional crises which further encroached on social spending and social policy planning and implementation. At the core of these crises was again a failure to mobilize local resources (Saunders 2008). Recriminations over the ESAP fallout and ZIMPREST's stillbirth cast a long shadow in policy making (Dashwood 1996; Mhone 1995). Economically, foreign currency controls failed. Consequently, the government could neither import fuel nor pay for electricity imports, for which it owed USD 100 million (Rotberg 2010). Parallel markets defiantly prospered, leading to hyperinflation. Inflation reached above two hundred million percentage points in July 2008 (Hanke and Kwok 2009). Bank notes changed several times, as the local currency was redenominated multiple times.⁵⁶ Hyperinflation made strategic planning impossible as prices of goods and services changed daily (Bland 2011). Access to social services receded, relentlessly worsening poverty with negative impacts on social development indicators as shown in Table 7 below. The 2008-9 cholera outbreak which claimed thousands of lives accounts for deplorable declines in access to social services (Howard-Hassman 2010; Youde 2010).

In politics, the first viable opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change, (MDC) was formed in 1999. It surprisingly won the constitutional referendum of February 2000. The draft constitution included clauses on compulsory land redistribution without compensation to land owners. This was one of several contentious issues that galvanized the “no” vote in the referendum. The ZANU-PF led government reacted to results of the referendum by defiantly launching the “fast track land reform programme” FTLRP to forcibly take farms, resulting in wanton violence against farm owners, loss of property and negative effects on agricultural productivity (Buckle 2003; Moyo et al. 2000). The FTLRP spawned food insecurity which worsened with the 2001/2 drought and effects of the 2005 world food price hikes (Moyo et al. 2000). It left over 300,000 farm workers homeless and unemployed (Moyo et al. 2000). Ex-farm workers were denied access to land because of the legacy of colonial citizenship technicalities, which labelled them as “aliens”.⁵⁷ Amendments to citizenship laws in 2001 nullified dual citizenship and imposed hurdles to registration as Zimbabwean citizens, forcing many ex-farm workers to return to Zambia, Malawi and/or Mozambique, where their forebears originated (Muzondidya 2007). These changes to citizenship laws sought to minimize the pool of likely opposition supporters among disenfranchised ex-farm workers. Tension and polarization worsened, as did repression,

⁵⁵ Herbst 1989; Dorman 2002; Raftopoulos 2000.

⁵⁶ The multiple redenomination and demonetization of older bank notes happened in 2006, September 2007, July 2008 and February 2009. The RBZ printed money and slashed zeros of erstwhile bank notes in a vain bid to solve money supply problems and inflation. These policies fueled hyperinflation (Hanke and Kwok 2009).

⁵⁷ Idiosyncrasies of Rhodesian citizenship cannot be discussed here for limitations of space. Ironically, they were adopted and used by the Zimbabwean government.

intimidation and violence against suspected supporters of the opposition (Nyazema 2010; Howard-Hassman 2010), resulting in the affected persons' flight from rural areas.

International and regional migration increased as did cross-border and ambulant trade, with migrants verbally abused and ridiculed by some government officials (McGregor 2007).⁵⁸ Households with relatives abroad survived on remittances in cash and kind (Bracking and Sachikonye 2006). The employed and unemployed alike resorted to the informal economy, including quasi-criminality (Jones 2010), to augment uncertain livelihoods. The informal sector was increasingly seen by ruling elites as lawless enabling or a cover for the opposition party to undertake subversive activities, rather than a response to livelihoods denudation. In reaction, ruling elites unleashed militarized law enforcement and crackdowns (Rupiya 2005),⁵⁹ such as the notorious "Operation *Murambatsvina*" or Operation Restore Order (ORO), against informal sector activities and workers,⁶⁰ losses from which pushed victims into deeper poverty.

In response to hyperinflation, a multi-currency policy was adopted in February 2009 with the US Dollar, South African Rand and Botswana Pula as official tender. Prices and wages were in USD and the economy was *de facto* dollarized (with regional currencies to facilitate transactions in smaller denominations). Dollarization coincided with the creation of an acrimonious Government of National Unity (GNU)⁶¹ between ZANU-PF and the opposition MDC, ending an 11-month stalemate over 2008 election results during which the country had no government (Rotberg 2010). During this period, the country had no leadership and coherent economic policies to ensure economic recovery. The economy deteriorated to unprecedented levels forcing people to survive by their wits (Jones 2010:286).⁶² Dollarization offered price stability for businesses, the employed and those with access to remittances in USD. However, most people lost their savings because banks did not convert deposits to USD or other official currencies. Pensions and insurance benefits similarly took a hit.⁶³

The GNU ended in August 2013.⁶⁴ Since then, ZANU-PF has been at the helm, albeit with a festering leadership wrangle over the succession of Mugabe which left the ruling party divided by factionalism.⁶⁵ The opposition continued to be in disarray, fragmenting into many parties with tentative attempts at forming coalitions.⁶⁶ Relations with donors continue to be lukewarm (characterized by mutual distrust) while the "targeted sanctions" (Grebe 2010) have yet to be removed. During the period under review, Zimbabwe remained stuck in a policy quagmire and poverty persisted.

⁵⁸ Such as a government minister referring to Zimbabwean migrants in care work in the UK as the BBC (British Bottom Cleaners).

⁵⁹ The crackdowns had colourful codenames, such as "Operation *Chikorokoza Chapera*" (Operation No More Artisanal Mining), which targeted artisanal miners accused of wanton degradation of the environment, promiscuity, mineral smuggling, price escalation and economic sabotage (see also Towriss 2013).

⁶⁰ Bratton and Masunungure 2006; Fontein 2009; Musoni 2010.

⁶¹ Acrimonious because Mugabe was pressured to form the GNU only to undermine it by monopolizing control of security apparatus; not consulting on judiciary appointments; ignoring court rulings that were not in his personal or party's interests; continuing to harass members of the opposition; and failing to ensure transparency in the mining sector, especially alluvial diamonds from Marange (Rotberg 2010: 10-11).

⁶² Referring to emergent survival strategies in the grey economy denoted by the refrain of *kukiya-kiya*, Jones (2010:286) says *kukiya-kiya* was about "getting by". He likens *kukiya-kiya* "... to the notion of *debrouillier* as used in Francophone Africa. It suggests cleverness, dodging and exploitation of whatever resources at hand, all with an eye to self-sustenance".

⁶³ The impact of dollarization on individual savings including pensions and insurance policies is yet to be fully assessed.

⁶⁴ MDC came second in the general elections of 2013.

⁶⁵ The succession wrangle culminated in one of Mugabe's former vice Presidents, Emmerson Mnangagwa taking over as President in a bloodless military coup in November 2017.

⁶⁶ In April 2015 ex-Vice President Joyce Mujuru created the Zimbabwe People First Party. Tendai Biti was expelled from MDC in 2014 leading to the creation of the People's Democratic Party in September 2015. Media stories indicate protracted attempts at coalition formation by opposition parties.

2000s changes in social policy

The foregoing description of socio-economic and political conditions points to heightened vulnerability to poverty in urban and rural areas because of unemployment, internal displacement, poor agricultural performance, cyclical droughts, incapacitation of social services due to the brain-drain and lack of resources⁶⁷ as well as effects of HIV and AIDS, hyperinflation, and exclusionary effects of dollarization. Children, the chronically ill, the aged and persons with disabilities are among the vulnerable groups that policy makers and donors have been concerned with (Chinyoka 2017; Chikova 2013). However, changes to social spending were not only challenged by unavailability of resources which impinged on the reach and sustainability of changes (Chinyoka 2017, Chikova 2013), donors were concerned with averting descent into worse humanitarian crises (Laakso 2002). In the face of worsening poverty, these changes were palliative. Furthermore, ideological commitments of the ruling party ZANU-PF still preferred poverty alleviation interventions that were kinship based/familialist which in the case of Zimbabwe's patrilineal kinship meant male and age biased access to land⁶⁸ (Bratton 1987; Chaumba et al. 2003), whereas neighbouring countries prefer cash transfers (Chinyoka 2017). Consequently, the government could not effectively respond to poverty among youth/children and women who were marginalized by male biased and gerontocratic policies/practices. Also, as shown in the foregoing, ZANU-PF leadership is not able to plan for and sustainably deal with cyclical droughts that further challenge agrarian reforms. Thus, ZANU-PF's preferences and policy choices did (and do) not sustainably ensure social protection by dealing with age and gender aspects of vulnerability (child and women's poverty). Notwithstanding ZANU-PF's ideological posturing, the emergence of the GNU in 2009 presented new opportunities for different avenues for social spending. These opportunities were made possible by donors (and aid trends), as well as the fact that MDC was responsible for social ministries and thus keen to try different routes to social protection such as through cash transfers (Chinyoka 2017), as discussed below.

The resort to cash transfers for vulnerable populations

Donor withdrawals occurred *en bloc* between 1998-2000 (Laakso 2002), while those donors that remained scaled down their support, focused on humanitarian and emergency responses and experimented with cash transfer schemes (Chinyoka 2017). Each scheme described below faced sustainability challenges as economic and political crises described in the foregoing deepened. These crises were made worse by the cabinet reshuffle following MDC's loss in the 2013 elections. ZANU-PF did not support the cash transfers. It seems its poor relations with donors also meant there were no resources for cash transfers.⁶⁹

Harmonized Social Cash Transfers (HSCTs). This cash transfer targeted households in abject poverty. Households received between USD 10 and 25 per month, with Zimbabwe's food poverty line being USD 30 per person per month (Chinyoka 2017, ZimStat 2013a). Still, the HSCT covered only 10 percent of recipients per district. In 2013, when ZANU-PF was back at the helm, the HSCT waned; a cabinet reshuffle removed ministers who supported cash transfers while social workers were retrenched

⁶⁷ Chikanda 2004; McGregor 2007; Sachikonye 2003.

⁶⁸ In rural areas, access to land is based on traditional customs of kinship (hence family based). In many instances, land is given to men when they get married, they can (at their discretion or depending on availability of land) give a portion to their wives for own account production. Access to rural land is multifaceted; it includes access to residential land, arable land as well as pasture for livestock. It also inserts the family into a local authority through which the family accesses aid in the event of an emergency.

⁶⁹ When the GNU was formed in 2009 (to 2013), MDC ministers held social sector portfolios and were more willing to support cash transfers.

(Chinyoka 2017). While the HSCT was in effect, questions of impact at the household level were raised (Chinyoka 2017), given limited funds and the fact that household size was not considered.

Public assistance (PA). The PA gave USD 20-25/month/household to the poor, aged and other vulnerable groups, an amount which is below the poverty line (Chinyoka 2017). As with the foregoing, the question of impact is pertinent.

Agrarian and food security interventions

Drought relief and school feeding programmes (SFPs). Due to food insecurity that characterized the 2000s following the FTLRP, drought relief and school feeding programmes (SFPs) returned between 2002 and 2008 (Chinyoka 2017). Subsequently, the government adopted SFPs as a permanent feature in schools in 2014, touting it as “homegrown” (Chinyoka 2017), to alleviate child hunger, especially among younger children. Although the official line is that the government is feeding children, the reality is that food comes from donors (the maize meal). In some communities, parents contribute too by paying for the protein (legumes) and edible oils, as well as providing cooks. Schools provide venues, record keeping, storage of the food and oversight to ensure accountability.⁷⁰

Presidential Input Support Programme (PISP) for agriculture. Launched in 2009 in the wake of droughts and food insecurity (Chinyoka 2017), the PISP entailed giving seeds and other inputs to small-scale farmers. It was household focused and sought to revitalize agricultural productivity. Allegations abound that this scheme was used to influence elections results, specifically that inputs were given to identifiable supporters of the incumbent president and his party.⁷¹ However, because of funding challenges, its reach and impact are open to speculation.⁷² It is important to note that input schemes have been part of post-independence government strategies under different names, but the same rationale of boosting agricultural productivity including ZANU-PF’s power consolidation antics are subsumed in these strategies. The latter is sometimes more salient than the former, thus social protection is incidental to political objectives.

Changes in education

The Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM). The BEAM, introduced in 2001, is variously described as a “fee waiver” (Chinyoka 2017) and/or tuition for OVCs in primary and secondary school (TARSC and ZIMTA 2012). It was created on the back of the collapse of the social dimensions fund (SDF) of the structural adjustment era (1991-1995). It is jointly funded by the government and donors through UNICEF and run with community participation. The National AIDS Council (NAC) contributes to BEAM, using funds from the AIDS levy.⁷³ PTAs/SDAs identify needy children in their communities (TARSC and ZIMTA 2012). As a fee waiver, it entails donors giving block grants to schools (such as building materials) on condition that OVCs are not expelled for not paying fees. As tuition for OVCs, it gives schools money for identified beneficiaries (TARSC and ZIMTA 2012; Chinyoka 2017). However, BEAM’s impact and reach have been compromised by delays in disbursements of funds, limited awareness at community level and vacillating donor support (Chinyoka 2017). In 2008,

⁷⁰ This is based on observations in rural schools in Matabeleland South.

⁷¹ The naming of the scheme highlights the office or person of the President suggesting a desire to deepen patronage. Otherwise, seed and input packs have been part of ZANU-PF practices since independence.

⁷² The scheme was changed in 2016. Its sequel, “command agriculture”, is not discussed as it was implemented in 2016, but its rationale is not different from its predecessors. That is, the ruling party gives inputs in a bid to influence votes while also pursuing agricultural revival.

⁷³ It is difficult to discern whether the government’s contribution is the same as or complements the AIDS levy funds.

for example, donors withdrew because of a protracted political stalemate following disputed election results (Chinyoka 2017). This reduced confidence in BEAM in ways similar to fee waivers of its prequel. Following the end of the GNU, some donors have lost interest as mutual distrust between donors and ZANU-PF festers. The problem here is as stated in the foregoing: schools mobilize resources from parents through fees, thus expulsion from school continues to dog non-paying students as long as BEAM and similar interventions lack stable support.⁷⁴

Changes to health care

Assisted Medical Treatment Orders (AMTOs). AMTOs were a continuation of fee waivers from the 1980s and 1990s (Bassett et al. 1997; Kanji and Jazdowska 1993) extended to low income earners. In the 2000s, minimum incomes were less clear given the extent of poverty and hyperinflation. Chikova (2013) states that 25,000 people benefited from AMTOs in 2011. However, given the incapacitation of health care services, it is not clear whether figures cited by Chikova refer to all applicants granted AMTOs *per se* regardless of actual services rendered. Considering that many health care professionals' emigrated (Chikanda 2004) and a vacancy rate of 81 percent for doctors prevailed at some point (Nyazema 2010), the efficacy of AMTOs is open to speculation. It is also not clear which conditions benefited: cholera, typhoid, maternal and child health related conditions, HIV and AIDS or others. Conditions mentioned above were treated with donor support. Ordinarily, HIV and AIDS treatment is free on account of international commitments and protocols such as from UNAIDS and through the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria (GFATM). HIV drugs and technical expertise are funded through UN agencies to Opportunistic Infections (OI) clinics as well as the National AIDS Council (NAC). OI facilities have spread throughout the country (UNAIDS 2015).

These changes to social policy and social spending point to a slight change of heart on the part of ZANU-PF. However, given the extent of vulnerability, these cash transfers were limited in their reach and quality and their erratic disbursements minimized their effectiveness (Chinyoka 2017). In addition, as soon as ZANU-PF won the 2013 elections it not only shuffled the cabinet, thus removing ministers committed to social transfers, its poor relationship with donors led to their loss of interest (Chinyoka 2017). The erratic nature of these changes has made it difficult to assess their effectiveness.

Funding 2000s social spending

Given the government's inability to mobilize resources at home on account of poor investment policies (Saunders 2008; Dansereau 2000), negative effects of the FTLRP, crony capitalism, virulent nationalism (Howard-Hassman 2010), and hyperinflation (Bland 2011), social spending in the 2000s diminished because the government was bankrupt. As stated, major donors had withdrawn in protest against ZANU-PF's inflexibility in 1998-2000 (Laakso 2002), though they were still committed to humanitarian and emergency responses.⁷⁵ This meant that often responses targeted the worst cases of poverty to alleviate crises. The government hosted the humanitarian and emergency response activities and provided personnel through its social ministries.⁷⁶ In many instances, it claimed to have brought help to its citizens.

⁷⁴ By 2017, BEAM was USD 72 million in arrears from 2014-15 funding cycles. An estimated 340,000 children were expected to drop out due to lack of funding (*The Financial Gazette*, 9-15 February 2017). There are no official statistics to support this claim pending their compilation.

⁷⁵ Donors withdrew from supporting the government but contributed in alleviating humanitarian emergencies such as HIV and AIDS, cholera and hunger.

⁷⁶ For instance, DSW staff giving food aid in collaboration with donor agencies. In some cases, distribution takes place in schools whose staff work with local authorities to document recipients and food packages received, etc. In this

Funding food security

With the post-FTLRP famine worsened by the 2005 global food price hikes (Moyo et al. 2000), donors gave food aid as part of the humanitarian and emergency response between 2002-8 (Chinyoka 2017). In reality, the continuation of school feeding programmes suggests a continuation of donor support.⁷⁷

Funding education

BEAM. Donors contributed to BEAM through UNICEF (Chikova 2013; Chinyoka 2017). However, availability of funds changed with economic and political fortunes of the country, such as the changed tenor of donor relations. OVCs' access to education has been compromised by declining confidence in BEAM as resources wane (TARSC and ZIMTA 2012).

Parents contributing to teachers' remuneration in-kind. With the government unable to pay its employees on time and the pervasive hyperinflation, urban parents took to providing teachers with groceries. These informal arrangements allowed some schools to retain teachers. However, after the 2013 elections, the arrangements were banned. Teachers, like other civil servants, had to make-do with unpredictable paydays because of a crippling liquidity crunch. Wages remained below USD 300, despite a PDL of USD 500 (ZimStat 2013a). Protracted wage negotiations have not yielded much and are not likely to be resolved soon given concerns with the large wage bill and the budget deficits.

Funding health care

Donor support. As noted above, hyperinflation undermined operations (Bland 2011). The audited budget of 2009 shows that only 10 percent of the health ministry's allocated (earmarked) budget was disbursed. Per capita spending was around USD 7, well below WHO general recommendations of USD 34 (MoHCW/GoZ 2011), limiting the scope and quality of health care. By the end of the first decade of the 2000s, donor support for the health sector had increased through the Health Transition Fund (HTF) to retain critical staff, develop technical capacity and assist in strategic planning to comply with global health targets (MoHCW 1999; MoHCW/GoZ 2011). The HTF was valued at USD 435 million for 2011 to 2016.

Funding the HIV response. The AIDS levy, a 3 percent levy on all taxable individual and corporate income, was introduced in 1999. This levy accounts for 15 percent, while donors fund 85 percent of the HIV response (UNAIDS 2015). Although an important innovation, the levy was likely affected by shrinkage of the tax base as deindustrialization continues. However, Zimbabwe was excluded from the US President's Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), established in 2003 by the George W Bush Administration, despite being in the HIV epicentre.⁷⁸ Additionally, a tenuous relationship with the GFATM over accountability restricted access in previous years (Nyazema 2010), compromising funding for HIV and AIDS.

Responding to the 2008-9 cholera outbreak. Humanitarian agencies such as Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) took a lead role in establishing treatment and corpse disposal

respect, the venue, participating schools, institutions and local staff count as the Zimbabwean government's contribution.

⁷⁷ The situation after 2015 harvests is not included.

⁷⁸ The White House President George W. Bush. 2001, 2002, 2006. "President signs Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act", 21 December 2001; "Zimbabwe proclamation" 4 March 2002; "Notice: Continuation of the national Emergency blocking property of persons undermining democratic processes or institutions in Zimbabwe", 28 February 2006. Accessed 9 Sept 2017. <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/>.

centres at two epicentres of the outbreak (Harare and Beitbridge). The treatment centres also responded to other health concerns, for example HIV.

Outcomes of 2000s social policy

Famine and declining agro-productivity. The FTLRP of 2000 spawned food shortages because of internal displacement, low productivity combined with effects of the 2001/2 drought, and hyperinflation (Sachikonye 2003). The availability of agro-inputs was uneven and fertilizer utilization was below 1990s levels (Moyo et al. 2000:953). In the absence of donor support, diminished local resources, and given hyperinflation, agriculture finance declined to USD 3 million in 2007 from USD 104 million in 2004 (Moyo 2011:958). This compromised agriculture recovery. The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) resorted to buying USD from parallel markets to import inputs (Moyo 2011), fuelling hyperinflation in the process. Thus prior to dollarization, Zimbabwe was stuck in a downward spiral of poverty and hyperinflation.

Relentless poverty. Officially, 77 percent of Zimbabwean households were poor in 2013 (ZimStat 2013a:x), earning less than USD 351/month, compared to the Total Consumption Poverty Line (TCPL) of USD 500/month for a household of five persons as of December 2014 (ZimStat 2015). The implied income gaps clearly point to increased reliance on the informal sector.⁷⁹ Meanwhile, harassment of informal sector workers continues because of fears that informal sector activities subvert government activities and policy (Kamete 2013). This has justified militarized crackdowns⁸⁰ and left many people vulnerable to income and livelihood losses. An estimated 700,000 people were affected by ORO through displacement, homelessness and job and income losses. Many died in crackdowns against informal mining (Towriss 2013). The international community strongly criticized these actions,⁸¹ not only because they violated human rights, but also because they stoked poverty and precariousness.⁸²

The growing budget deficit. The government employs an estimated 550,000 workers, but rumours abound that there are thousands of ghost workers.⁸³ Lately, revelations that the government's wage bill consumes above 80 percent of its budget also undermines resource allocation for social development.⁸⁴ BWIs once again recommend spending cuts, with implications for job cuts through retrenchments.⁸⁵ Disagreements abound within government on strategy, and whether to retrench, find and stop payment to ghost workers, remove bonuses, or freeze recruitment,⁸⁶ all of which impinge on quality of life among wage earners.

Poor resource mobilization. Donor attempts at intervening in diamonds sales through the Kimberley Process did not yield desired results (Saunders 2008), as suggested by the

⁷⁹ Relentless deindustrialization has made the Zimbabwean economy largely informal (Kamete 2013; Jones 2010; Chikova 2013).

⁸⁰ Musoni 2010; Rupiya 2005; Towriss 2013.

⁸¹ For example: Musoni 2010; Fontein 2009; Bratton and Masunungure 2006; Kamete 2013.

⁸² Nyazema 2010; Musoni 2010; Howard-Hassman 2010

⁸³ Kuwaza, Kudzai. 2015. "Wage bill: Ghost workers haunt state." *Zimbabwe Independent*, 7 August. Accessed 8 September 2017. <https://www.theindependent.co.zw/2015/08/07/wage-bill-ghost-workers-haunt-state/>. Findings of staff audits have yet to be publicized.

⁸⁴ Mhlanga, Fidelity. 2016. "Civil service wage bill to gobble 91% of revenues." *Zimbabwe Independent*. 9 December. Accessed 8 September 2017. <https://www.theindependent.co.zw/2016/12/09/civil-service-wage-bill-gobble-91-revenues/>.

⁸⁵ 2016. "Civil service boss rejects retrenchments." *The Zimbabwean*, 15 Mar. Accessed 8 Sept 2017. <http://www.thezimbabwean.co/2016/03/civil-service-boss-rejects-retrenchments/>.

⁸⁶ It is customary (a legacy from the colonial era) to give non-performance related bonuses equivalent to a month's remuneration, hence it is called the 13th cheque. Some politicians wish to cut expenses by abolishing the 13th cheque, but low-paid workers find this unacceptable.

billions worth of “leaks” reported in the media in 2016. Mining resources are increasingly shrouded in secrecy (Towriss 2013:101).

Changing donor relations. Although donors continue to support humanitarian and emergency responses, funding to social sectors has largely fallen victim to mutual distrust (Chinyoka 2017; Saunders 2008). With militarization, Chinese military aid became prominent (while UK military aid waned) in the early 2000s (Williamson 2010; Youde 2007).⁸⁷ Furthermore, donors attempted to arbitrate the disputed 2008 election results (Williamson 2010). The Chinese, together with the Russians, vetoed UN Security Council resolutions to punish ZANU-PF leaders’ excesses, a lost opportunity to force leaders to tackle the economic crisis and to energize social spending.

Education outcomes

Escalating relative costs of tuition post-dollarization. Secondary school fees range from USD 40 to over USD 150/trimester in urban areas. Boarding schools cost more, at least USD 300, and much more in elite trust schools. Exam fees are USD 15/subject for O-Level and USD 30/subject for A-Level. Primary schools are not exempt from fees either because of the technicality that parents provide infrastructure (school fees range between USD 16 and USD 60/trimester). These fees impinge on poor children’s access to education (TARSC and ZIMTA 2012). The current drop-out rate is not discernible pending updates of official statistics.

Staff retention challenges in state-funded universities. Due to poor working conditions and remunerations, staff retention at state-funded universities continues to be difficult, as many academics have emigrated (Mlambo 2013). Most newly established universities therefore lack technical capacity, resources and facilities to function as genuine universities (Mlambo 2013).

Manpower development challenges. Unemployment challenges of the 1990s were attributed to shortages of skills in engineering, biomedical, computing and other fields. In spite of the creation of MOHET, which responded by increasing the number of universities, these challenges persist (Mlambo 2013; Nherera 2010). Thus, if as shown social spending requires resource mobilization, the paucity of critical skills precludes desired social changes.

Health care outcomes

Post-dollarization changes in health care delivery. Despite claims of commitment to PHC, a large part of the health budget goes to upper tier institutions, the four central (also teaching) hospitals (Harare, Mpilo, Chitungwiza and Parirenyatwa), as has been the case since independence (Davies and Saunders 1987). In the 2000s, budget statements were promissory, with funds allocated depending on availability. For example, in 2009, USD 15 million was allocated to the ministry, but only 10 percent was actually disbursed (MoHCW/GoZ 2011). This affects the sector’s ability to fulfil its mandate.

Deterioration of health indicators. Conditions described above characterized by denuded access and declining quality of services resulted in the deterioration of poverty-sensitive health indicators such as maternal mortality and others, as shown in Table 7. The table shows that it is still struggling to recover from the deleterious effects of

⁸⁷ USD 240 million’s worth of 12 fighter jets, 100 military vehicles and another consignment from North Korea.

poverty and incapacitation of social sectors in the 1990s and 2000s. Most rates are worse than they were in the 1980s and 1990s.

HIV and AIDS response. In 2015, the HIV prevalence had declined to 14.7 percent in the 15 to 49 years age group, with 1.4 million people living with HIV and AIDS, 77,000 of whom were children, and an estimated 29,000 deaths attributed to AIDS.⁸⁸ Currently, more than 50 percent of HIV positive persons have access to treatment and 82 percent of pregnant women have access to screening and treatment to prevent transmission of HIV to babies.⁸⁹

Table 7: Selected health indicators comparing 1994, 2010 and 2015

Indicator	Situation in 1994	Situation in 2010	Situation in 2015
Immunization coverage	80% ^a	65% ^a	87% ^d
Under 5 child mortality rate	77 per 1000 ^a	84 per 1000 ^a	89 per 1000 ^c
Maternal mortality rate	283 per 100,000 ^a	612 per 100,000 ^a	470 per 100,000 ^c
Access to safe water	77% of all households had access ^b	About 30% of urban households in 2008 ^b	74% of households had access in 2012 ^a
Sanitation	No data	No data	About 30% of rural households <i>do not</i> have improved sanitation. And almost 40% of them practiced open defecation in 2012. ^a

Source: ^a ZimStat and ICF International. 2012. *Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey*, Zimstat/ICF International.

^b Youde (2010:697) says an estimated 70% had no access to safe water following water privatization, water cuts and lack of material and technical resources on the part of the water agency to timely restore access. Wealthier households drilled boreholes. The cholera outbreak of 2008-9 is attributable to these conditions. These challenges persisted in 2015 despite published statistics such as ZimStat and ICF (2012) which point to improvements. No rehabilitation of waterworks or pipe networks had taken place by 2015 to alleviate challenges emanating from water privatization in the late 1990s.

^c World Bank. 2015. *World Development Indicators* Washington DC:World Bank, www.worldbank.org.

^d WHO and UNICEF. 2016. "WHO and UNICEF estimates of national immunization coverage: 2015 revision". https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/country_profiles/Zimbabwe/Immunization_zwe.pdf.

Discussion: Social Spending Refracted through Hope, Militarization and Hyperinflation?

As the decade-by-decade shifts in social spending presented in this paper have shown, Zimbabwe's social spending policies showed promise at independence in 1980 (GoZ 1981; Raftopoulos 2004). Large strides were made in health and education on the back of universal immunization, PHC and universal primary education (Kadhani and Riddell 1981; Agere 1987). However, the benefits of these policies were not evenly distributed because of the armed insurgency in 1982-7, which left some provinces inaccessible (Scarnecchia 2011), contradictions of policies as well shifts in global policy making and economy. Nascent gains of the 1980s therefore remained fragile and could not withstand neoliberal resource austerity and political despotism in the 1990s.

The pace and depth of social transformation fizzled within the first decade. Within two years of independence the government moved from being "underborrowed" (Dansereau

⁸⁸ UNAIDS 2015.

⁸⁹ UNAIDS 2015.

2000:236) to having a budget deficit (Davies and Saunders 1987). By 1982, the BWIs were recommending stabilization programmes and slower expansion of social spending, including wage and employment freezes (Bratton 1987; Davies and Saunders 1987) and more focus on exports to mobilize resources to keep pace with social spending. The government's involvement in the Mozambican insurgency to defend rail and road links to the Indian Ocean – a protest against use of apartheid South African ports – proved costly, part of the reason that BWIs called for economic stabilization (Davies and Saunders 1987; Bratton 1987). Furthermore, the budget deficit was fuelled by the government's incremental economic nationalization which saw it buying peripheral and loss-making ventures in strategic sectors of the economy, only to have them run by political appointees who were unable to turn a profit and help the government generate income (Herbst 1989; Brett 2005). All this undermined social spending.

With ESAP in 1991-1995, the government was convinced that the economy would be revamped and social spending put on track.⁹⁰ When this did not happen, the government lost its footing, becoming suspicious of donors (Dorman 2002). Unemployment increased unabated.⁹¹ The social transformation programme became a pipe dream while ordinary Zimbabweans continued to demand change (Dorman 2002). Rather than seeking viable solutions, the ruling party and government sought repression and punishment of groups that dissented thus deepening disenfranchisement of the poor and weak who were either silenced or risked victimization for speaking up.

Officially the government claimed to be determined to pursue social transformation but also seemed beholden to economic policies that undermined resource mobilization. This tension points to inherent institutional and ideological contradictions within the ruling party which it failed to resolve or arrogance on the part of ruling elites. By the end of the 1980s the budget deficit was compounded by ideological challenges such as the decline of socialism with the end of the Cold War and the ascendancy of neoliberalism (Dashwood 1996) as well as the fall in commodity prices (Dansereau 2000). The ruling party was left without a compass to help it navigate complex realities of changing geopolitics, calls for more democracy and resource austerity to realize liberation promises including transformation through social spending. Furthermore, ZANU-PF was not able to transform its mode of operation from a top-down militaristic organization to one amenable to meaningful bottom-up consultations (see Dorman 2000). Where the militaristic mode of operation produced some positive results when there were resources in the 1980s, it did not work well when resources were scarce. Despotism and *ad hoc* policies by party elites (Jenkins 1987; Bond 1998) became the norm because of failure to incorporate/manage competing needs and interests. The government defended policies that went against economic rationality arguing sovereignty⁹² as seen in the war veterans' pensions, the DRC war and others, which diverted resources from social spending to ventures which appealed to political elites' ideological leanings (Bond 1998). This alienated many local and international stakeholders (Laakso 2002). Furthermore, the government responded to economic difficulties through militarization at the expense of ordinary citizens.⁹³ The military strategies led to human rights violations as noted above. Thus rather than changing its militaristic organizational ethos, the government entrenched it, foreclosing participatory democracy.

⁹⁰ Bond 1998; Dansereau 2000; Dashwood 1996.

⁹¹ Herbst 1989; Dansereau 2000; Nherera 2010.

⁹² Jenkins 1987; Bond 1998; Youde 2007.

⁹³ Musoni 2010; Fontein 2009; Rupiya 2005; Howard-Hassman 2010; Towriss 2013.

By the 2000s, social spending was further undermined by the government's uncontrollable budget deficit, international isolation, hyperinflation and militarization (Bland 2011). Meanwhile the government missed opportunities to revamp strategic sectors of the economy such as mining (Saunders 2008; Dansereau 2000) resorting to militarization instead (Towriss 2013). Social sectors were incapacitated as indicators on Table 7 show. Tensions and confrontations increased but without sustainable solutions to poverty and social relations.⁹⁴ The government proceeded in crisis mode, responding to demands in different sectors and interest groups in a haphazard manner, sometimes deepening conflict among interest groups by ignoring some groups, resorting to violence while responding favourably to others. Clearly, the government was unable to resolve challenges and policy contradictions from the 1980s (such as unemployment; the budget deficit; worsening poverty; modalities of social transformation, especially when it came to agrarian reforms; and class, race, ethnic, age and gender relations therein) as sources cited in previous sections show. Furthermore, the lack of clarity in the focus of social policies (land reform, indigenization, education reform, employment creation) undermined their sustainability, lessening the ruling party's legitimacy.

In terms of institutions that provided services, line ministries led the way through respective institutions (clinics, hospitals, schools, agricultural extension services and the DSW) working with local communities either choosing recipients for services on offer or providing free labour such as cooking in school feeding programmes. In the 2000s, traditional leaders' roles increased. Donor agencies and personnel worked with local service providers, offering technical advice or monitoring service provision. In agrarian reforms for example, technical experts came to Zimbabwe to provide advice, training and research (Moyo 1995). Where aid entailed further training, Zimbabweans went abroad, with overseas universities and faculty providing capacity development across all social sectors under review (MacKenzie 1988).

As the foregoing has maintained, social policy was funded with both local resources and aid. However, since the onset of the budget deficit in the 1980s, the national budget was spent more on recurring expenses in different sectors. Given inflation and hyperinflation as well as soaring costs they entail, the reach of the national budget shrunk in the 1990s and 2000s. Donor assistance was relied on to alleviate humanitarian needs from the 1980s. In times of crises, such as food insecurity (which happen regularly on account of cyclical droughts), disease outbreaks (including HIV and AIDS, cholera and malaria) and poverty, donors increased material and technical assistance. However, where the Zimbabwe government could have leveraged social spending through aid, these opportunities were lost due to poor donor relations since the 1990s (Laakso 2002). Although it has not been possible to quantify donor support for social spending over the years, it is clear that donor assistance increases with good donor relations. For example, the brief life of the GNU (2009-2013) shows that donor support rises and falls with the government's ideological leanings or donors' sympathy with the government (Chinyoka 2017).

Lessons Learned from the Zimbabwean Experience

Zimbabwe's experiences of social spending show that:

- a) Mobilising resources is important for social spending to be sustainable. Without resources, not only did social services shrink, but quality declined. Disaffection and disenfranchisement deepened from the 1990s onwards.

⁹⁴ Raftopoulos 2000; Chimhowu and Woodhouse 2010; Ranchod-Nilsson 2006.

b) While agrarian reforms are important, it is also essential to plan for cyclical droughts at the rate of two per decade to mitigate threats to agro-based livelihoods, food security and economic performance. Every decade, when droughts strike, the government scrambles for food aid, school feeding programmes, and agriculture recovery programmes with free inputs. Given an ever present budget deficit, these input programmes sometimes fail due to their limited reach. Often food aid and input support programmes come with accusations that the ruling party manipulates these interventions to consolidate its support or to influence 5-yearly elections.⁹⁵

c) Expansion of primary and secondary education have not been matched by growth of the economy and growth in employment opportunities. Unemployment has grown since independence,⁹⁶ thus rendering it impossible for individuals, households and the economy to benefit from education investments. This situation is due to several factors, including lack of an employment strategy despite the establishment of ZIMDEF and MOHET, poor donor relations (Laakso 2002), contradictory investment policies even when there are reports of considerable mineral resources (Saunders 2008, Towriss 2013), as well as incoherent agrarian policies (land reform without resources and institutional capacity to support agricultural productivity), such as in the early 2000s.

d) Revamping strategic sectors of the economy including mining requires technical skills in mining, geology and related fields such as risk management. Documented experiences to-date show that those in-charge have not been able to attract and retain professionals (Towriss 2013; Saunders 2008) and therefore to diligently exploit these resources for the good of all.

e) When poverty is as high as 77 percent (Zimstat 2013a), fee waivers like BEAM in education, AMTOs for health care, and cash transfers to increase household income (Chinyoka 2017; Chikova 2013) are difficult to sustain, especially when the economy is not growing. Since independence, ninety percent of the population has qualified for waivers (Basett et al. 1987) but without resources to cover all their needs. It has been noted that even when cash transfers were introduced in the 2000s, the disbursements were below the poverty datum line, erratic and the number of recipients was small. Beneficiaries had no recourse to make demands on the government to pay regularly or increase the amounts. Officials seem to present these benefits as a favour rather than a right. Clearly, these interventions are nominal with a limited impact on poverty alleviation. Consequently, it is important to pursue poverty reduction as a long term strategy through meaningful economic reforms, as well as improving donor relations to attract resources and capacity development to realize poverty reduction.

f) Social policies should be made and implemented through a transparent and consultative process. Militarization since the late 1990s has made bottom-up consultative decision-making impossible. The prevailing militaristic, top-down and despotic decision-making structures have negative impacts on livelihoods and incomes (Towriss 2013; Rupiya 2005).

This paper has tried to trace Zimbabwe's social spending efforts since independence. It has shown that challenges to social spending due to a range of reasons including resource austerity and challenged policy making and implementation changed state-society relations as seen in militarization and disenfranchisement from the late 1990s

⁹⁵ Kaseke et al. 1998, Chinyoka 2017; Chikova 2013.

⁹⁶ Herbst 1989; Dansereau 2000; Benell and Ncube 1994a; Nherera 2010.

through the 2000s. In conclusion, lingering contradictions, incoherencies about social transformations in terms of gender, age, race, class and ethnic relations have haunted Zimbabwe's social policies. In the absence of coherent policy guidelines, lack of resources, and sustainable means of resource mobilization, poverty has grown apace.

Post-script

Incoherencies within ZANU-PF are seen in its inability to respond to internal calls for change. Unresolved differences which haunted the party's contradictory policy-making since independence⁹⁷ grew into tensions and conflicts within the ruling party and with its allies such as the war veterans' association, including on the succession of Robert Mugabe. Disputes over succession eventually culminated in a bloodless military takeover in November 2017.⁹⁸ Matters had become untenable after Mugabe fell out of favour with two deputies, Joyce Mujuru and then Emmerson Mnangagwa, who were arbitrarily fired from their positions as Vice Presidents and forced out of the party. This paved the way for Grace Mugabe's ascendancy within the party, becoming the most likely candidate to succeed her husband. She had taken to verbally abusing and publicly humiliating her and her husband's rivals and dissenters.⁹⁹ These irksome developments became the metaphorical straw that broke the camel's back in the party's top echelons on the eve of the coup.

Since the coup, Emmerson Mnangagwa has been president, with the blessing of the military and war veterans. The policy direction of the country remains unclear with calls for compensating dispossessed white farmers, improving investor confidence to revamp the economy, and creating more employment, yet with no visible responses on the ground. There are festering issues of pervasive corruption leading to establishment of special courts.¹⁰⁰ Some suspects have been investigated; few have faced justice. Healthcare professionals and teachers have recently (in 2018) demanded cost of living adjustments, with some sectors going on strike and the government pleading lack of resources.¹⁰¹ Some nurses were fired for participating in the strike. However, the military has been awarded increments without much effort.¹⁰² Furthermore, over 200 new vehicles were purchased for traditional leaders in early 2018. This was widely seen as a ploy to recruit them to influence voters in rural areas in the July 2018 general election.¹⁰³

The leader of MDC, Mr Morgan Tsvangirai, died in February 2018, leaving senior leaders in MDC jostling to succeed him, with some aspirants suing each other.¹⁰⁴ Nonetheless, the MDC seemed to enjoy considerable support.

⁹⁷ For example Jenkins 1987, Bond 1998, Laakso 2002.

⁹⁸ Burke, Jason. 2017. "Zimbabwe's strange crisis is a very modern kind of coup" *The Guardian*, 21 Nov 2017. Accessed 30 May 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/nov/21/zimbabwes-strange-crisis-is-a-very-modern-kind-of-coup>.

⁹⁹ Grace Mugabe – Top 5 crazy moments (blasting the ZANU-PF members) on YouTube. Accessed 30 May 2018. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M94w_jSilm0.

¹⁰⁰ Chingarande, Desmond. 2018. "Anti-corruption courts officially open." *Newsday*, 30 March 2018. Accessed 30 May 2018. <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2018/03/anti-corruption-courts-officially-open/>.

¹⁰¹ Njikizana, Jekesai. 2018. "Mass strikes in Zimbabwe trouble President Mnangagwa" *The Zimbabwean*, 2 May 2018. Accessed 30 May 2018. <http://www.thezimbabwean.co/2018/05/mass-strikes-in-zimbabwe-trouble-president-mnangagwa/>.

¹⁰² 2018. "Mnangagwa accused of favouring military over teachers." *BulawayoNews24*, 15 July 2018. Accessed 15 July 2018. <https://bulawayo24.com/index-id-news-sc-national-byo-140565.html>

¹⁰³ 2018. "Chiefs receive cars." *Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation*, 13 January 2018. Accessed 30 May 2018. <http://www.zbc.co.zw/chiefs-receive-cars/>.

¹⁰⁴ Child, David. 2018. "Zimbabwe: what next for MDC after Morgan Tsvangirai?" *Aljazeera*, 16 February. Accessed 30 May 2018. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/02/zimbabwe-mdc-morgan-tsvangirai-180216135902399.html>.

The conduct of the July 2018 elections did little to quell pre-election anxiety about free and fair elections. Although campaigning and voting were peaceful, the administration of elections courted controversy and condemnation from some quarters. There were allegations of rigging after election results were delayed. Following peaceful demonstrations in Harare against the electoral agency, an army unit was dispatched, killing six people, which prompted a commission of inquiry to investigate the shootings, just one example of deepening militarization in the country.¹⁰⁵ In addition, before election results were announced in full, the military went on a rampage, destroying market stalls in several market places in Harare—much like Operation Restore Order (ORO) in 2005—the impact of which on livelihoods of informal sector workers has yet to be assessed.¹⁰⁶ The announcement of ZANU-PF as the winner sparked great controversy, as many questions arose around discrepancies between the number of votes cast compared to the actual number of registered voters, the inexplicably high number of presidential votes compared to parliamentary votes, and rumours that food hand-outs were used to entice rural voters. As documented elsewhere, ZANU-PF had, over the years, used similar tactics to achieve electoral outcomes in its favour (Kriger 2005, 2008; Dorman 2005).¹⁰⁷ The MDC subsequently petitioned the Constitutional Court to challenge the election results, which the court denied, arguing that the opposition did not present concrete evidence to support its allegations.¹⁰⁸

Consequently, following a riveting election period, Zimbabwe is back under ZANU-PF leadership. The outlook induces anxiety, fuelled by a cholera and typhoid outbreak in Harare, a liquidity crisis combined with rising food prices, continuing allegations of corruption by leading government officials, and deteriorating relations with the US government. At this rate, indications are that social transformation is still a pipe dream. Time will tell if the new ZANU-PF government will find its footing and stand in solidarity with the poor by putting in place effective social policies, allocating meaningful resources to social spending and improving the quality of life of ordinary Zimbabweans.

¹⁰⁵ Dube, Gibbs. 2018. "Mnangagwa sets up 7-Member Committee to Look into Post-Election Killing of 6 Zimbabweans." *Voice of America*, 29 August. Accessed 17 September 2018. <https://www.voazimbabwe.com/a/emmerson-mnangagwa-sets-up-commission-of-inquiry-into-post-election-violence/4549217.html>.

¹⁰⁶ Kadirire, Helen. 2018. "Vendors' stalls demolished at night." *The Daily News*, 7 August. Accessed 17 September 2018. <https://www.dailynews.co.zw/articles/2018/08/07/vendors-stalls-demolished-at-night>.

¹⁰⁷ Research on the conduct of elections since independence in 1980, indicate that ZANU-PF has a penchant for intimidation, violence against opposition parties and their activists including verbal denigration, monopolising state controlled print and electronic media, manipulation of electoral institutions and failure or inability to put in place inclusive electoral institutions (Kriger 2005, 2008, Dorman 2005:155-158). When international and regional bodies have recommended reforms, the Zimbabwe government seems to go through motions of reform when on the ground ZANU-PF consolidates its stranglehold on the electoral process (Kriger 2008:361-5).

¹⁰⁸ 2018. "Constitutional Court judgment on Nelson Chamisa petition." *The Herald*, 25 August. Accessed 16 September 2018. <https://www.herald.co.zw/constitutional-court-judgment-on-nelson-chamisa-petition/>.

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