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**The Social Sciences,
Policy Research and
Development in Zimbabwe**

A.M. Rukobo

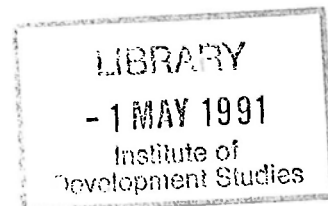
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P.O. Box 880 HARARE

RESEARCH PAPER SERIES

Number 4



**THE SOCIAL SCIENCES, POLICY RESEARCH AND
DEVELOPMENT IN ZIMBABWE**

by

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(November 1989)

ZIMBABWE INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Harare, 1990

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P.O. Box 880
Harare
Zimbabwe**

First Printing 1990

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Published in the Republic of Zimbabwe

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INTRODUCTION

Research and research-related activities have an extremely important role to play in socio-economic development. Indeed, the level of research and the intellectual activities of a society mirror its level of development and, similarly, these reflect its ability and capacity to fashion and mould its own path of development. This statement states the obvious; but the obviousness of this reality does not imply the full and ready acceptance of the usefulness of research by society. The ambiguity with which research is regarded is evidenced by the predicament faced in particular by the social sciences. It is only recently that the social sciences have begun to be seriously accorded due legitimacy, and their direct impact on development recognised by governments in the greater part of Africa. Indeed, in the majority of cases, the social sciences are at best usually regarded as either a luxury and at the worst as useless irritants which have no direct material value. Social science faculties are frequently viewed as either producing "talking shops" or as outfits of armchair theoreticians totally divorced from the real world. In a sense, this criticism is not without justification.

The "know-it-all" attitude of a few social scientists has not endeared the discipline to society either, particularly the policymakers hard pressed to solve practical, life-and-death questions confronting society. Many social scientists have projected their role as one of either unsympathetically criticizing policymakers or presenting their views in the most esoteric and highly theoretical fashion. Both these traits have tended to breed hostility towards, or insulation from, scholars by those involved with policy. The end result has been a dismissive attitude towards social scientists.

The position of the "hard" (or natural and physical) sciences is slightly different. Their role has generally been accepted, even though sometimes and in a significant number of cases only somewhat vaguely and mythically. Generally, though they have been promoted by governments, in terms of allocation of finance, equipment and supplies, they have fared only somewhat relatively to the social sciences.¹ Admittedly, this is partly because the "hard" sciences lend themselves more easily to more obvious, immediate practical utility compared to the social sciences, principally because their results are of immediate practical implications and implementation. "Hard" sciences seem to provide the magic wand for many problems concerning the daily lives and struggles of human society. They have visible utility in medicine, agriculture, industry, defence and a myriad of other fields.

The social sciences, on the other hand, may not appear to be of immediate practical utility. And where the social sciences are consistently imbued with the notion of pursuit of knowledge for knowledge's sake, they are bound to be esoteric. Likewise, the pursuit of knowledge itself, if not closely related to the concerns and problems of society, justifies the criticism levelled against the social sciences. Social sciences must therefore be relevant, responsive to and deeply rooted in society. Being relevant and responsive

¹ Though in Zimbabwe the hard sciences have generally received due recognition, especially in agricultural research, there is still room for more research and development. For example, whatever R&D takes place in industry is "in-house" and therefore not directly linked to national efforts.

do not imply supporting the *status quo*; it means seriously analyzing and shedding light on issues affecting society. This does not imply neutrality either; a social scientist interprets society objectively but from an ideological perspective which is reflective of his orientation and position in the socio-economic system. The ideological perspective is thus the crystallization of normative values on which justice and injustice are based.

The real issue, however, is not which of the two branches of sciences is more important. For, in reality, the impact of the social sciences is equally important since, by his very nature, man is a social animal. Social sciences play a complementary role to the natural and physical sciences and *vice versa*. The social sciences have to do with man's struggle for the control and management of nature and the environment as much as the natural sciences do. Within the realm of the social sciences is included not only the study of man's social, political and economic behaviour, but also his ethos, aspirations, ideas and thoughts in the context of society. In other words, the social sciences are concerned with the very core, and are an embodiment, of the existence of man. And their function is to scientifically attempt to interpret this reality. Stated in another way, the social sciences are the systematic conceptualization and articulation of man's perception of the world as it is, and as it ought to be. Their main objective is not only to explain man and society, but the relationship between man and his environment; and how man has, and can, tame the environment to his best advantage. The sum total of this statement is that social science analysis and practice deal with man's daily struggles with a myriad of forces, and his determination to be in control of his destiny as well as to triumph over nature.

Social science is also an accumulative experience of history. Historical developments and experiences are not only pertinent for the present, but the future as well. From a socio-economic point of view, social science research deals primarily with the development of society in a holistic sense. Man himself, therefore, is seen in the context of society, and as a product of that society. Perceptions and behaviour characteristics of man are deeply rooted in the socio-economic environment, and are not independent of it. As society develops to new social formations, so does man. But society also develops because of its manipulation by man. Manipulation here refers to man's ability to manage nature and the environment through innovation and technology for the benefit of human society.

It has long been acknowledged that the development of society is a complex and dialectical process. This process, however, leads to a higher and more complex form of social organisation. Higher forms of socio-economic organisation are characterized by the differentiation of society, based upon the ownership and control of wealth and power. Logically, social differentiation leads to the development of different, and sometimes conflicting and antagonistic interests. These conflicts become the basis for the development of classes and class contradictions. Conflicting and hostile interests impinge upon the role of the social sciences in society. As a result, social science analysis and practice are directly influenced by the social context in which they are based.

The development of class society and the historical emergence of powerful ruling classes of sorts - feudal, religious, or capitalist - with their financial, military and intellectual resources, implies that a powerful and influential group can impose its ideas on the entire society. This hegemony over society by a ruling class is an all-pervasive phenomenon embracing cultural, ideological, political, social and economic spheres. Naturally, this hegemonic control has a direct bearing on the social sciences themselves, because

scientific analysis assumes a class character. The class character of social analysis is reflected not only in the interpretation of society, but in the framework of analysis.

The class base of knowledge has produced schisms in the social sciences. The ideologically rooted framework of analyzing and interpreting society produces differences in the interpretation of social phenomena. Though the social sciences concern themselves with man and society, the interpretation of man's social existence and social organisation is deeply embedded in a social science researcher's perception of that existence and social formation. In turn, the perception itself springs from one's ideological orientation and disposition.

This paper deals with the role of social science policy research in socio-economic development in Zimbabwe. It argues that research should occupy a central position in the formulation and implementation of policy. More critically, the paper advances the argument that there is need to build a national capacity for research if Zimbabwe is to solve some of her problems and push forward. Similarly, the dependent status of the social sciences, exemplified by the dominance of foreign scholars in the area, is seriously decried. It is argued that the dominance of research and consultancy by expatriate scholars from the West has serious, and sometimes negative, consequences for development.

The discussion will be cast in the background of the evolution and development of the social sciences and their colonial context.

IMPERIALISM AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

The origin of the social sciences in the Third World and hence the historical evolution of development theories is rooted in colonialism. This origin has had serious implications for the orientation of the social sciences and their role in providing a framework for development policies, strategies and programmes in the Third World. Not only was social science born out of colonialism, sometimes it also played a prominent role in sustaining or buttressing colonial administrations. This point has been made by many observers and recently by Bulmer and Warwick in the following fashion:

The early history of social science research in the Third World is the history of colonial social science. In anthropology, for example, the vast majority of scholars were of Western origin, usually coming to spend a relatively brief period of fieldwork in an African, Asian or Latin American country before returning home. Sometimes they taught at local universities (staffed, in the social sciences, predominantly by Europeans or Americans). Some worked in an applied capacity for the colonial government...

Colonial social science research was characterized by many problems, but two were important. The first was that colonized society was viewed from the angle of the colonial society, and there was no sensitivity to the colonized people. The second was that the policies that evolved and were implemented, usually with the input of the social sciences, paid no due regard to the wishes and aspirations of the peoples concerned. Colonial social science research either took the colonized societies for granted or viewed them paternalistically. Research was not undertaken for the primary advantage of the colonized societies, but for that of the colonizers. Research gave the colonial society and the colonial masters a knowledge and insight into the colonized people. However, the colonized were not made wiser by this research. A more sinister motive of the research was to enable the colonial administration to control the subjugated people more effectively. Anthropological research, in particular, fell into this general characterization. Since it made it its duty to study the so-called primitive societies, it became principally involved in the study of colonial societies and was partly responsible for the policies devised by colonial administrators.

Van den Berghe makes interesting observations concerning the colonial origin of the social sciences in Africa. In general, he argues that the social sciences were characterized by a "colonial ethos". He then distinguishes between two main directions of the colonial tradition in Africanist scholarship:

First, there developed a history, not of Africa, but of European conquest and colonialism in Africa, which has generally been characterized by ignorance of indigenous African traditions and by

2 Martin Bulmer and David Warwick. "General Introduction". In Martin Bulmer and David Warwick (eds), *Social Research in Developing Countries*, p.20.

ethnocentric naivete and condescension. This tradition may be termed the "civilizing mission" school of African history.³

The second one is the view of the "noble savage" characteristic of social anthropology.⁴ But colonial anthropology had three major limitations. Firstly, it was "a historical" anthropology treating African societies as though they were static. The origin of this position can be traced to the functionalism and structuralism of British social anthropology.⁵ Secondly, there was emphasis on harmony, consensus and equilibrium in African societies. And, thirdly, a combination of the above two positions produced a view of homogeneity within the tribe.⁶ The differentiation based on wealth and power within many of the "tribes" was not taken into account. Neither were the differences being produced by socio-economic changes taking place in pre-colonial societies taken account of. In general, the static view of society led to conceptions that "traditional" institutions were good or functional, resulting in intellectual positions and notions that defended the *status quo*, in terms of the political, economic and power relations.

The attainment of independence by former colonies created a new situation. Nationalism questioned some of the basic orientations of the colonial social scientists, their research and ethics. This notwithstanding, metropolitan researchers still dominated academic and research activities. Aid packages, control of research funding organisations, publishing and other resources perpetuated the dependency of Third World universities and institutes on the metropolis. Apart from the occasional researchers and consultants who drifted in and out at will, universities depended for their academic staff, books, equipment and research materials on Western Europe and North America. Few of the academic staff from the West could be considered to have been favourably disposed to the future and destiny of the former colonies. They had their own agendas, agendas which in most cases bore no relationship to those of the country in which they worked. The Third World was simply a laboratory in which they could generate knowledge about the Third World on the one hand, and create future experts and advisors on the Third World for their governments and the Third World governments on the other. A number were still paternalistic, imbued by the "civilizing mission" of Europe.

Two important developments, among others, affected the social sciences in the post-World War II period. One was the emergence of the United States of America as the dominant power of the capitalist world on the one hand, and the rise and consolidation of the socialist world symbolized by the Soviet Union on the other. No less significant for the socialist world was the victory of the Communist Party in China. This situation resulted in the split of the world into two main ideological and military camps, and ushered in the "Cold War". The other development was the rise of national liberation movements in Asia, Africa and Latin America leading to the collapse of colonialism and dictatorship and the establishment in their place of nationalist governments and, in a few cases, of socialist or socialist-oriented ones. These two events

3 Pierre L. Van den Berghe, "Introduction", in Pierre L. Van den Berghe (ed), *Africa: Social Problems of Change and Conflict*, p.1.

4 *Ibid.* p.2.

5 *Ibid.* p.3.

6 *Ibid.*

were of profound consequences throughout the world. The developments were related: the former colonial powers all fell firmly into the orbit of the world capitalist system. Though not all liberation movements espoused socialism, a number of them sought to travel along "non-capitalist" paths of development. Though "non-capitalist" path of development might appear to be vague today, politically it was an explicit rejection of the dominance of the Third World by imperialism. The concept of non-alignment partly owes its origin to this thinking. A significant proportion of national liberation movements, especially those involved in armed struggle, received their moral, material, financial and military support from the socialist countries. The division of the world into socialist and capitalist camps directly affected the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America in various forms. Apart from a good number of these countries seriously questioning the appropriateness of the capitalist models development, some of them opted more clearly for the socialist path. In response, the leading capitalist countries sought to influence development policies and programmes through aid. In the case of those countries which became decidedly socialist in their orientation and practice, the reaction was subversive. At another level, these developments gave rise to a "development debate" among the Third World scholars, policymakers, and aid agencies themselves.

Intervention by imperialism in the newly independent countries, to ensure that they did not break out of the world capitalist system, took many forms. This was not only through development assistance, but the conceptualization, implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes. Many developing countries succumbed to this active participation in the shaping of their destiny either because they were technically ill-equipped to counter the donor arguments, or because of naivety. Imperialist control of development was at the level of state to state relations, on the one hand, and at the level of foreign NGOs supporting local NGOs and communities, on the other. NGOs were not only a hangover from the missionary and philanthropic vision of the past, but they now had definite political objectives, and in a number of cases were financed by definite political groups and trends in their own countries. Some of their aims were to create a disjuncture between the grassroots and central political authority. Obviously the intention of all these activities was to effectively control the destinies of these countries.

The debate about development, or lack of it, owes its origins to those processes that took place in the 1950s and 1960s referred to above. There was, on the one hand, the objective desire by Third World governments themselves to meet the aspirations of their people, as well as to find alternative paths of development, and plot their own development paradigms. Then there was, on the other, the capitalist countries who considered it their business to choose and determine the destinies of other nations. This position provided the context of the development debate. More importantly, while Western Europe and North America could concede the relinquishing of direct, physical and formal control of the Third World, they could not accept giving up deciding on their destinies, let alone relinquishing economic control. Development policies constituted an important element of that position. Social scientists played the significant role of putting the position in a scholarly and elegant manner.

The debate came to reflect the past perspectives of Third World societies by the former colonial powers. This started with the "modernization theory". Commenting on this, Hamza Alavi and Teodor Shanin say:

An earlier label, "backward societies", informed a colonial vision. With decolonization, the term "emergent nations" came into use, expressing a "Western" ethnocentric outlook, as if these newly independent nations had no history and no past. The term soon gave way to the expression "underdeveloped societies", naturally interpreted within the "modernization" paradigm as meaning those countries that were "still underdeveloped", but on their way, in time, to join those already "developed", once the right medicine was applied. As the past colonial societies began to take their place in international forums, and as "developmentalist" projects got under way, these ideas found expression in the more flattering and optimistic alternative term, "developing societies". This word-producing industry is not yet at a standstill. More recently, the term "less developed countries" or "LDCs" has been gaining ground in the vocabulary of developmentalism.⁷

The context of the Cold War and the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union had seen the development of Third World nationalism and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Many Third World leaders and scholars strongly felt that they could steer clear of the Cold War and find alternative paths of development. Most leaders wanted to satisfy the needs of their people, who had been seriously neglected under colonial rule. But the more fundamental desire was not only to eradicate poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy and ignorance, but perhaps more importantly to catch up with the West economically, scientifically and technologically. The major thrust was on development. Development was, therefore, viewed in terms of a race to catch up with the West.

Third World policymakers, in the face of a recalcitrant West, used the UN and other agencies to push for a "developmentalist" strategy and orientation. By the 1960s and 1970s this strategy had largely failed, leading to major shifts in theoretical orientation and strategy. One such result reflecting the crisis in development theory and strategy among scholars was the "dependency theory". The other was a revival in Marxist theories.⁸ In place of "tradition" and "modernity", characteristic of the "modernization" theories, there was now "core" and "periphery".⁹ The dependency theories were no doubt useful in throwing new light on the relationship between the former colonies and the metropolis. Similarly, they provided a useful framework for challenging the modernization theory. A major problem of the new paradigm, however, was that it was deterministic.¹⁰

The Third World countries were perhaps naive in expecting that they could escape the Cold War and the tension between the two major ideological camps. For the West, particularly the United States of America, the ideological *jihad* had become a major preoccupation to be fought with religious fervour. Any slight manifestation of dissidence from accepted US ideological positions invited intervention, particularly in Asia and Latin America, associated as they were with proximity to the socialist world for Asia, and Cuba for Latin America. The US took the challenge of ideological war much more seriously than has perhaps been admitted, leading to physical intervention, coups and support for those regimes that represented the very antithesis of democracy. The ferocity and single-mindedness with which the US pursued its mission produced its

7 Hamza Alavi and Teodor Shanin. "Introduction". In Hamza Alavi and Teodor Shanin (eds), *Introduction to the Sociology of "Developing Societies"* p

8 *Ibid.* p.3.

9 *Ibid.*

10 *Ibid.*

own results. Many watched the situation helplessly. The tactic of force and blackmail soon yielded results. Some countries capitulated under the weight of US imperialist intimidation, and began to pursue the capitalist road. A number of countries abandoned their pronouncements of a "non-capitalist path" of development, while others began to talk of mixed economies. Those countries committed to socialism were more resilient in withstanding US pressure. But these developments became a challenge for NAM.

The development debate is still an unsettled question. Similarly, social science orientations remain deeply divided between the various schools under the rubric of modernization theories and those of Marxist theories. This ideological tangle has led to the emergence of "technicist" and "economist" approaches which forswear ideology and concern themselves with "hard" facts, figures and phenomena. In reality, however, the "technicist" branch of social sciences largely accepts the capitalist order through the back door. The pretence here is that reality can be presented "clinically", divorced from its social context or ideological predilections. Perhaps more seriously, here, is the insinuation that ideologically-based social science is bankrupt of technical soundness. In fact, such a premise would wish to project Marxist social sciences as pure *ideology* and *not science*. Denigrating of the Marxist or leftist social science tradition is obviously based upon bourgeois notions but, more critically, it is a subtle attempt to wage war against progressive social thinking and interpretation of socio-economic reality.

Other problems related to the colonial origin of social sciences are also worth noting here. One is of ethics and the hegemony of the developed capitalist countries over the Third World. The economic, technological, scientific and cultural dependency of the Third World on the West, and the determination of the latter to maintain an imperialist stranglehold on the former is also amply demonstrated in the social sciences. The many forms this takes have been described above, but at a more sinister level this has to do with the direct use of social science and social scientists with the explicit purpose of devising policies for the control of developing societies for the exclusive benefit of the developed capitalist countries. Explicit use of the social sciences to control society is reprehensible, but to try to use it to control other societies is outrageous. A notorious example of this unethical and sinister use of research is clearly demonstrated by the infamous "Project Camelot" of the mid-1960s. Sponsored by the Special Operations Research Office of the Army, the project was to involve US social scientists.¹¹

Among other things, the project's objective was to "determine the feasibility of developing a general social system model which would make it possible to predict and influence politically significant aspects of social change in the developing nations of the world..."¹² The project caused a great deal of uproar among US social scientists who did not want to be associated with US foreign policies and actions in the Third World. In its wake, there was much recrimination against those scientists who had agreed to undertake the study.

But there are other examples of the adverse use of social science in the Third World. For example, there is the involvement of social scientists in counter-insurgency in

11 Michael P. Hamnett, et al, *Ethics, Politics and International Social Science Research*. p. 19.

12 I. Horowitz (ed), *Rise and Fall of Project Camelot*, Cambridge, M.I.T., cited in *Ibid*.

Thailand.¹³ There have also been accusations and confirmations of use of social scientists in South-East Asia, particularly during the Vietnam War in the "crusade" against "communist infiltration" in Asia. They have been actively involved in the attempt to defeat communist guerillas and other popularly-based movements in the Third World. As a result, Third World scholars are justified in also suspecting scholars from the West of being engaged in espionage and other dubious activities detrimental to the security of the state.

The brief remarks above are pertinent for discussing the role of policy-oriented research in Zimbabwe. Before doing so, it is important to look very briefly at the origin of the social sciences in Southern Africa.

13 Michael P. Hamnett, op cit, p.5.

SOCIAL SCIENCE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Colonialism in Africa was affected by two major considerations, inter alia, economics and religion. Africa was regarded as a vast expanse of land to be economically exploited and its people to be civilized and controlled through conversion to Christianity. Though the colonization of Africa took place during the latter part of the 19th Century, during the "Scramble for Africa", contact between parts of Africa and Europe had started much earlier. One of the most painful consequences of that contact was slavery and the slave trade. Slavery and colonialism, therefore, constitute two very significant historical developments in African history. The two historical periods directly shaped and fashioned the social sciences. Experiences from the phase of the slave trade had moulded the perceptions and ideology of Europe towards Africa. At one level Africa and the Africans were regarded with deep disdain and revulsion; at another with amazing paternalism. Racism was partly an outcome of slavery.

Here we deal, however, with the origin of the social sciences in the epoch of colonialism. Like in all historical periods, social scientists in particular, and intellectuals in general, tended to respond to the social, political, economic and cultural environment of the day. One thing that has a bearing on research was its funding. Colonial powers and colonial administrators needed research for the control of societies. Thus they created funding organisations for the financing and promotion of research on African societies. The other factor that influenced research was the process of colonization itself. The colonization process of Africa must have been an extremely exciting event for all and sundry. Scholars, of sorts, thus watched the scene with deep and keen interest. There was the paternalistic and benevolent scholar, fired by the "civilizing mission" on the one hand; and the ardent supporter of colonialism, on the other. The first group saw their role as primarily rescuing the African from what they considered the depth of ignorance and primitiveness in which he wallowed. The second group subscribed to the purely economic motive of colonization, and the need for Europe to exploit the abundant resources for the benefit of Europe. Another group, somewhere in between, eulogized the existing situation in Africa and wanted it preserved. A common thread, however, linked the three strands: the colonial epoch which they could neither ignore nor escape from.

But the relationship between the social sciences and colonialism was not simply contextual, but translated itself into a number of concrete forms. One was the systematic study of colonized societies; the other was the teaching of social science disciplines as part of induction courses for colonial administrators being posted to Africa, and the third was the establishment of institutes in Africa and Europe for the exclusive purpose of researching on African societies. Undoubtedly, such activities were legitimate for scientific reasons and on grounds of utility of knowledge. On that score alone there is no basis for questioning the rationale of scientific inquiry. It was important that social scientists expand the frontiers of their knowledge of the world, of which Africa was a part, through research. Admittedly, some of the studies were of high theoretical value and illuminated the reality of African societies. The main quarrel here relates to the orientation of those studies and the use to which they were ultimately put. The African societies being studied were not expected to question such activity since they were part

of the Empire. But, as has been observed, concerning pre-World War II research in the colonies:

The acceptability of such research reflected the hegemony of Western nations over the colonies' expressions of social and political identity. Indeed, much cross-national research was encouraged, if not officially endorsed, by the colonial governments with little regard to ethical concerns.¹⁴

The contention here, once again, is not that Europeans should not have studied African societies. Of concern is that in studying and analyzing Africa, social science did so principally from the perspective of Europe. Indeed, in certain cases, African societies themselves began to view their situation from the angle of the colonizers.

The philosophical base of colonialism already referred to above—economics and the "civilizing mission"—were vital in determining the framework of the social sciences. The sum total of this was that the social sciences came to play the role of either legitimizing or apologizing for colonialism. Colonialism was quick to recognize the vital importance of the social sciences in formulating colonial policy as well as maintaining colonial rule. Social anthropology, as mentioned above, especially came to be seen by colonial governments as an indispensable tool for effective rule. Prior to being posted to Africa, colonial administrators received basic training in the customs and cultures of Africa. There was, of course, nothing wrong in the teaching of customs and cultures as such. In fact, it was logical that administrators should have been prepared for their role in an alien environment in which they were to live and work. To have dispatched them totally unprepared would have been counter-productive. What was obviously wrong was the objective and use to which such teaching would be put: the creation of myths about the African and subjugation of the African people. There was nothing inherently wrong, either, in the study of African societies if this was principally for objective scientific reasons and utility of knowledge. Unfortunately, colonial social sciences sought to legitimize the *status quo*, which *status quo* was the colonial order. Intellectual legitimation of colonialism by social sciences locked the two into an intimate relationship. While research actively promoted colonialism, the latter developed an interest in supporting the former.

Support for research took many forms, of which one was through the establishment of institutes of research in Europe and Africa. In Africa, several institutes were set up charged with the specific responsibility of undertaking research of direct benefit to the colonial administration. The most notable of these in "British Africa" were the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute set up in 1938, the East African Institute of Social Research and the West African Institute of Social and Economic Research. These institutes served, among others, the objectives of "the organisation of studies of practical interest to government and business firms".¹⁵

All these institutes were financed from colonial research funds.¹⁶ The Rhodes-Livingstone Institute "was initially financed by a Trust constituted by the

14 Michael P. Hamnett, *Ibid.*

15 Lucy Mair, "The Social Sciences in Africa South of the Sahara: The British Contribution", in Pierre L. Van den Berghe (ed): *Africa: Social Problems of Change and Conflict*, p. 17.

16 *Ibid.*

Government of Northern Rhodesia, to which various African governments and some mining companies contributed, and it was administered by a body on which government and other interests were represented".¹⁷

Clearly, the institute was established with the specific objective of undertaking studies of practical interest to government and capital. This objective was enforced through the institute's policy-making body which comprised representatives from government and the private sector. Clear here was that state and capital should work hand in glove for the promotion of their common interests of maintaining their hold over the colony.

The influence of government and capital over the institute was reflected in the themes and orientation of the research. Themes of research included the study of social change using the functionalist or structural-functionalist mode of analysis. Hence the view of social change was limited mainly to the description and analysis of the response of African society to the impact of colonialism.¹⁸ A main problem of the functionalist framework of analysis in general, and of the studies at the institute in particular, was their inherent concern with the maintenance of order. Change was also viewed in behavioural terms. This involved change of behaviour, dress and mannerisms of the African, which change was not fundamental to the new power and economic relations which were emerging. There were other related sets of problems. The first was that change was looked at from a unilinear perspective; the colonized society responded to changes externally induced, as if colonialism itself was not affected. The second was that colonialism was hardly challenged, its moral and material base was never questioned.¹⁹ At another level, the racial policies prevalent in Southern Africa influenced other studies in the region, done outside the auspices of that institute.

Social science analysis, therefore, largely addressed a limited range of issues. But these were issues of concern to the colonial administration and colonial society. Wittingly or unwittingly, social science research either became entrenched in the ideology of colonialism or, recognizing the negative aspects of it, came to be apologetic. The net effect of the two positions, nevertheless, was that colonialism as a system which exploited and subjugated people in Southern Africa was, except in a few cases, neither questioned nor challenged.

Development, in the sense of a total socio-economic process of the harnessing of resources to enhance the social and material conditions of all people, was never the priority issue. Development was regarded as the special preserve of the white society. In consequence, where the social sciences addressed development issues, this was largely from the angle of colonial society. Colonized society itself was never seen as part of the larger society. In any case, white settler capitalism saw the colony mainly as a reservoir of cheap black labour. Where colonized society was concerned, policies

17 *Ibid.*

18 Among some of the works done at the institute reflecting this tendency include: M. Gluckman, *Administrative Organisation of the Barotse Native Authority*, 1943; J. A. Barnes, *Politics in a Changing Society*, 1954; A. L. Epstein, *Politics in an Urban Community*, 1958; A. L. Epstein and J. C. Mitchell, "Power and Prestige Among Africans in Northern Rhodesia: An Experiment", 1957.

19 See, for example, Bernard Magubane, "Pluralism and Conflicts in Africa: A New Look" (1969) and "A Critical Look at the Indices Used in the Study of Social Change in Colonial Africa" (1971) and A. M. Rukobo (1976) for a critique of these studies.

tended to be couched in seemingly innocuous terms such as "community development". "Community development" policies had their theoretical roots in social anthropology and its earlier preoccupation with the study of small communities. Those who put forward such policies were, of course, blind to the fact that African societies, like any society, were much larger than communities. Implied in the community development thesis, then, was that the African society was fragmented, and its development could only be community - and not nationally - based.

In any event, the colonized people were, at any rate, not relevant. Their relevance only lay in their value as labour. Consequently, educational policies sought to create a reserve of labour to service the factories, mines, farms, commerce and the service sector. At the risk of repetition, therefore, settler capitalism tended to view the question of development pre-eminently from the perspective of accumulation through the exploitation of natural and human resources, for the primary advantage of capitalism and the exclusive benefit of the white settler society. Social science research as a product of settler capitalism was thus influenced by the need to defend the colonial capitalist order that was now being created. Its preoccupation as a result bordered on a concern with how the colonized people could be mobilized and ruled effectively and efficiently in the service of the colonial state and capital. The ideological affinity of the social sciences with capital explained the former's general silence on, and questioning of, the emerging capitalist social relations of production. There might have been analysis of some of the glaringly dehumanizing manifestations of capitalism like slums towns, on the mines and plantations, but the system itself was not questioned.

This background is useful in understanding the origin and status of social science in general, and policy research in particular, in Zimbabwe today.

POLICY RESEARCH IN ZIMBABWE

At the outset it must be stated that the relevance of the colonial origin of the social sciences is not, and cannot be, an apology or excuse for whatever state of malaise might exist in Zimbabwe today. However, the colonial experience is important in at least two respects, *inter alia*. One, like the neo-colonial relations of dependency at political and economic levels evident in the Third World and certainly in most African countries, intellectual dependency is becoming a frightening phenomenon. This dependent status obviously emanates from the history of social sciences already outlined above. It is a critical point, however, that continued dependency in the Third World sometimes has to do with either an unwillingness on the part of some Third World governments, themselves, to seriously alter those relations, or a lack of capacity to do so. This indeed is a global characteristic plaguing the larger part of the Third World as the following observation reveals:

Although few vestiges of the colonial era remain, the continued presence of researchers from the United States and Europe has been a visible reminder of the inequalities between developed and Third World countries remaining after colonial rule.²⁰

Much more crucially, this dependency is not only reflected at the level of purely academic and theoretical research, but more seriously at the level of policy research. The dominance of foreign, largely Western, scholars²¹ in policy research is evidenced by the stubborn persistence of policymakers in making use of foreign consultants, advisors and researchers.

There is, too, a remarkable religious faith in the capacity and competence of foreign scholars evident in society. They are regarded as experts, the ones who hold the key to feasible solutions of problems and the generation of new knowledge. This psychological problem emanates from personality and individual jealousies prevalent in our society. If a bureaucrat does not have an immediate solution, he does not wish to imagine that another colleague, let alone a Zimbabwean researcher, might probably have an answer. But, of course, apart from the lack of confidence among ourselves, foreigners also provide aid, and money is power, as it were.

Indeed, the trade and enterprise of consultancy has become such a fashionable and lucrative business that a number of universities and research centres in Western Europe have, as a matter of course, established programmes specifically tailored to the needs of developing countries, especially Africa. These programmes take many forms and shapes, but they all have the major objective of influencing the direction and pace of socio-economic development. Apart from policy research, consultancy, contract research and advice given to governments for exorbitant fees, special training

20 Michael P. Hamnett, *op cit.* p.5.

21 The dominance of foreign, largely non-African, consultants in Zimbabwe does, of course, raise a number of questions *vis-a-vis* the enunciated policy of establishing, albeit in the long-term, a socialist society. These consultants are not only involved in the actual research, but in drawing up the "Terms of Reference" as well. Could a scholar, bred in Western society, schooled in bourgeois ideology and committed to capitalism have a moral, intellectual and technical basis for being favourably disposed to the establishment of socialism?

programmes are offered for periods ranging from one week to one year on aspects of policy and development by universities and research institutes in Western Europe and North America. All these research-related activities and courses are funded from loans and donor finances earmarked for the recipient country. Assuming that training costs are much higher in institutions in the West, it is not too difficult to surmise that large amounts of money are involved. The impact of such training, however, is somewhat limited than if it were undertaken in the home country because of the small numbers of people that can be sent for training abroad. Such courses also tend to be general because they have to take cognizance of the diversity of backgrounds of the participants. A long-term solution lies in the development of a capacity for training at national or sub-regional level. There can be no substitute for home-made bread and recipes. The picture painted above is often depressing and frustrating for local scholars. Consequently, they either become preoccupied with criticizing policies, or become cynical and remain silent. Zimbabwe has, since 1980, become an extremely important attraction for the itinerant expatriate consultant.

The Colonial Legacy

As already argued above, during the colonial period, research and knowledge production tended to reflect and conform to the existing white settler socio-economic order. Most of the research and intellectual activities in pre-independence Zimbabwe were undertaken by scholars at the then University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland and later the University of Rhodesia. Most of these researchers and lecturers were white; very few were black. The preponderance of white academic staff at the University clearly reflected the racist order prevailing in the country, an order which discriminated and decreed against the indigenous population.

But the white scholars were not a homogeneous group. In the 1960s and the 1970s a few progressive white scholars responded to the nationalist cause and unequivocally identified with nationalist aspirations. Among these were Terence Ranger, Giovanni Arrighi and P. B. Harris, whose articulate opposition to colonial rule earned them deportations. A few other liberal scholars remained until independence, and among this group some earned the wrath of the Smith regime and were subjected to harassment from time to time. However, the majority of the white academic staff at the University either did not sympathize with the nationalist cause or sat on the fence.

As will be discussed below in relation to the University of Zimbabwe, the intolerance of the colonial regime did not produce conditions propitious for the development of a research tradition. Numerous reasons account for this, among which were: a general lack of open debate on major issues of social, political and economic concern; and the lack of concern by the majority of scholars with issues of direct topical relevance, preferring instead to hide behind the dictum of pursuit of knowledge for knowledge's sake. The consequence was the insulation of scholars against each other, each one pursuing his own individual, sometimes esoteric and even eccentric, concern.

Another factor related to the significant absence of blacks at the University with all the implications. The presence of blacks at a time when colonialism was under serious challenge from the nationalist movement could have brought in a national perspective to topical issues and concerns. Certainly, the fact that nationalism fought not only

against oppression, but for the creation of a nation, was an issue important enough to have added life and freshness on campus. The white lecturers and researchers had inherent limitations. A large number were expatriate scholars who had no strong base in the country and, therefore, no strong propensity to be concerned about local and national topical issues. Though other whites among the academic staff were local, they suffered from the very serious limitations imposed by the colonial order; their horizon ended where white society ended. African society was something else. White Rhodesia equated nationalism to evil and the undesirable. Nation meant white settler society; a significant number still regarded themselves as British subjects. At any rate, a significant proportion supported the colonial order and where they did not, they pretended nothing was happening. It is a fact of history that the white members of the academic staff who opposed UDI were expatriates; the locals looked on nonchalantly. Nationalism was a binding and moulding force, which sought to create a nation, a people and society welded together by a common allegiance and destiny.

Historical and social conditions had excluded blacks from the University. Discriminatory policies prevalent in the country in general, and in the educational system in particular, had compelled many blacks to receive their education abroad and not at the local University. Political conditions, which were now becoming increasingly repressive, had sent many of them into exile. Initial recruitment of academic staff tended to favour expatriate whites and not blacks, because few blacks had had the opportunity to qualify and gain experience for academic posts at the college. The few who could have qualified were forced by discriminatory practices to remain abroad. Limited postgraduate and research facilities at the University led virtually all the blacks to undertake their postgraduate and research training abroad.

The University College was, at any rate, an adjunct of the University of London. This partly also explains the preponderance of expatriate staff at the college, and the absence of blacks.

The situation described above had serious implications at independence, as the gap created in social science research will probably be felt well into the next century. Away from the local University and from home, Zimbabwean intellectuals studied in universities in Western Europe, North America, Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa. After their studies some taught at universities in North America, Western Europe and Africa; others worked in various countries far and wide. Most were simply surviving under the excruciating conditions of exile awaiting with deep nostalgia, for homecoming. With regard to the implications of a research tradition, the situation could be described in the following manner:

However, since most research by exiles was largely done individually within the environment of foreign universities, not the most propitious circumstances at any rate, no visible Zimbabwean academic and research tradition could develop. Whatever research was churned out lacked a linking thread of common intellectual concerns - because there was no formal interaction among these scholars.²²

It is probably an exaggeration to say that there was "no formal interaction among these scholars". There was limited interaction, mainly in the political rather than intellectual arena. A large majority were connected, with varying degrees of commitment, to the

22 Andries M. Rukobo, "Research Environment and Research Co-ordination in Zimbabwe". Paper presented to the *Workshop on Public Administration of Research in Zimbabwe*, Victoria Falls, 1984 (unpublished mimeo). p.1.

Liberation Movements. Undoubtedly, some - but not a significant group - were non-committal. As the "internal settlement" came into being, so did some support it for genuine or opportunistic reasons. There was, however, a growing consensus on one thing: colonialism and the need to demolish it. Little room was available for sharper and sustained debates on wider national issues and the future of Zimbabwe after the demise of colonialism.

Independence came in 1980, and with it the end of the diaspora for many. Social scientists and other intellectuals made their way home. They were by background and training an eclectic group with diverse theoretical and ideological orientations. During the struggle some of them had considered themselves "socialists" politically, but only a few were of Marxist orientation. By far the larger majority were liberal scholars deeply immersed in bourgeois ideology intellectually and politically. They had only circumstantially been associated with the socialist political ideology of the movements with which they were affiliated. Deep down, however, they had never been convinced about socialism, neither had the majority of them mastered it conceptually. Their faith was liberalism. This was the consequence of the lack of sustained intellectual interaction, already referred to above, with obvious consequences at policy level *vis-a-vis* the socialist agenda. One thing, however, united them; most had tremendous enthusiasm and a strong desire to contribute to national development.

This return of young, committed, enthusiastic and some of them extremely talented social scientists made only a slight dent on research, for:

The exiled intellectuals and researchers returned home - but not to the University to continue their intellectual pursuits and battles, but to senior posts within the Public Service. For most such people, independence meant the end of their academic careers.²³

Most thought they could make an impact on policy formulation and implementation by utilizing their training. They were keen to practise the theories they had learned or taught in real life for the service of the newly born nation. Government service was therefore seen as the most tangible demonstration of patriotism.

There was nevertheless little rationalization in the assimilation of social scientists with PhDs and MAs in the Civil Service in particular, and Public Sector, in general. Sometimes highly qualified people found themselves in routine administrative functions which bore little or no relationship to their skills and qualifications. Others soon found out that they had little inclination for deskwork and bureaucracy characteristic of Government service. Many soon discovered that theories from university classrooms and textbooks do not necessarily coincide neatly with reality on the ground, or policy formulation and implementation. A few were frustrated.

The assimilation of a large number of accomplished or potential researchers into the Civil Service correspondingly deprived the University of potential recruits. There were, of course, material conditions in 1980 as to why many people opted for Government and not University employment. For one thing, the terms and conditions of service including salaries in 1980 tended to be less favourable at the University; for another, Government service seemed to provide ample opportunity for career advancement and development. Sadly, the majority of those social scientists who joined Government

23 *Ibid.* p.1.

permanently turned their backs on academic life. They either remained in Government even when they felt ill-suited, or joined the private sector in search of the now proverbial "greener pastures".

This situation forced the University to rely on expatriate manpower while embarking on a staff development programme. Staff development should greatly alleviate some of the problems currently faced by the University. In the long term, however, the solution lies in attracting, recruiting and maintaining staff through competitive salaries.

Continuities and Breaks

The colonial regime of Ian Smith had one objective: that of promoting the growth and development of capitalism for the benefit of the white society. Racist policies institutionalized that position. State intervention and infrastructure became instruments for promoting, maintaining and protecting capitalism. Policies generally performed the major function of maintaining law and order. Socio-economic development policies, where they were evolved and articulated, played the primary role of enhancing the socio-economic status of the whites, and providing infrastructure and facilities for the smooth operation of the private sector. Though the Smith regime was considered (and indeed was in cases of critical areas) interventionist in economic policy, the crucial factor was the consonance of views on policy between the regime and private capital to the extent that private capital was sometimes given a leeway in most of the planning and articulation of its own policies.

The Government of Zimbabwe, however, has a different mission. Its mandate is not simply to facilitate the operations of foreign capital. As a popularly elected government (unlike the Smith regime whose constituency were the whites and was therefore not morally obligated to be sensitive to the Africans) its policies are national. A mission of this magnitude calls for greater involvement of wider sections of society and closer planning by Government. Planning and policy formulation, then, require the mobilization of all resources, including intellectual resources.

History and colonialism made the mission difficult. The independent Government inherited State structures which had been erected to serve a minority settler society. To transform these structures so that they serve national, as opposed to minority interests, has remained problematic. Moreover, the problem of dismantling the structures has in part been made more difficult by the fact that blacks had been excluded from participation in the bureaucracy. For reasons outlined above, Zimbabwe found herself having to rely heavily on foreign policy researchers. The situation was worsened by the fact that many donor agencies have a component of a study of one kind or the other. Studies may be in the form of feasibility studies, baseline studies, situational studies, impact analysis or training needs assessment, but their commonality, of course, lies in the fact that they have a bearing on policy and the decision-making process. The value of these studies and their need is beyond question. Policymakers cannot make policies or take decisions in the dark. A major point of quarrel, however, is that the most critical policy research is invariably done by foreign nationals. Few are cases where blacks have been involved in major commissioned research of far-reaching and long-term consequences. More directly, donor agencies also provide advisors for projects. Mention will be made here of problems specific to policy formulation, and those affecting the development of the social sciences, consequent upon this preponderance of, and Zimbabwe's dependency on, foreign researchers.

Dominance of research by foreign scholars has thematic and conceptual consequences. Foreign scholars have their own academic interests and objectives. These determine the themes that they would want to study. Sometimes the themes may relate to their own national interests, and not to those of Zimbabwe. This problem is augmented by research funding organisations which also have certain preferences.

Where foreign researchers are interested in issues of topical interest to Zimbabwe, their reasons may not always be innocuous or for purely academic purposes. For example, some of the areas which have received wide attention by scholars and NGOs are those of land and labour. Quite obviously the popularity of the two areas had to do with their political importance.

Foreign scholars have joined the debate in these issues not for the sake of it. In a majority of cases, the intention has been to influence policy and its implementation. But foreign scholars have not only joined the debate, they have led it. While Zimbabwean social scientists were at independence settling down, foreign scholars had long been on the wait prepared to jump in. And they did so at independence in 1980, with amazing agility, prowess and speed with dire consequences for the indigenous social scientists. Most of them used wide networks within the civil service bureaucracy and at the political levels which had been assiduously and systematically cultivated and nurtured among Zimbabwean scholars and academics exiled abroad. Their "credibility" was considered beyond reproach as liberals or leftists sympathetic to the cause. The Zimbabwean was not so lucky. Former friends and comrades turned their backs on each other as their new status changed vis-a-vis their positions in the State machinery. Shared visions of the future lay shattered.

The point here is not that foreign researchers must not do research in Zimbabwe, neither is it that Zimbabwean researchers, or indeed Zimbabwe, have nothing to gain from the contribution by scholars from Western Europe. On the contrary, Zimbabwe and its scholars have indeed a lot to gain from intellectual contributions from outside. After all, despite the specificity of science and knowledge in its application, there is the universality of theory and science which not only make it applicable globally, but makes it a worthwhile enterprise. This universality should be promoted through interaction among scholars from diverse backgrounds. Moreover, though colonial social science inflicted a lot of damage on Africa, its contribution was not always negative; for substantial knowledge on Africa was generated.

The argument here is different. It is:

- that Zimbabwean problems and their definition and solution should lie with Zimbabweans themselves;
- that since the area of policy-oriented research is directly linked to the above there is need for far greater involvement by Zimbabweans themselves; and
- any meaningful interaction between Zimbabwean scholars and those from Europe can only take place on the basis of a strong national research capacity.

Lack of a research capacity and the pretence that the present situation is conducive to equal interaction can only be disastrous.

In order to build a national capacity for research in the social sciences, like in all sciences, there is need for far greater investment than has been the case so far. The magnitude of the investment that can be made in the social sciences is, understandably, limited because of competing claims to the same resources by other national programmes.

Because of historical reasons, and given competing national priorities the social sciences are ranked rather low in Zimbabwe, as in many African countries. Some of the reasons are, in the short term, easily appreciable. For a policymaker faced with the choice of making a decision between the construction of a bridge, a school, a clinic, or providing funds for drought relief, the disabled or the destitute, and allocating funds for social science research, the choice is logical and obvious: social science research is not of immediate practical importance. Indeed, this is an understandable and rational choice for a government faced with the task not only of rectifying the imbalances of the past, but of providing practical and immediate solutions to the problems of the people and meeting their practical needs and aspirations. More particularly, this becomes a mission of serious proportions when the need to transform the distorted policies of colonialism is taken into account.

But this is a complex problem. The issue is not one of choice. The main point is how policies are, and should be, evolved. Not only is the input of social sciences critical to informed policy and planning, it is also vital in implementation and evaluation. This is particularly true of policy research, understood here simply as:

the process of conducting research on, or analysis of, a fundamental social problem in order to provide policymakers with pragmatic, action-oriented recommendations for alleviating the problem. Stated in a different way, a policy research effort begins with a social problem, such as malnutrition, poverty, or inflation, evolves through a research process whereby alternative policy actions for alleviating the problems are developed, and communicates these alternatives to policymakers.²⁴

Without research, it is argued here, wrong options can be taken and likewise, wrong policies and decisions can be made. Argued also in this paper is that national researchers can assist in the process of decision-making through policy research. National problems and issues should be defined and analyzed by national researchers from a national perspective. It is they, in any case, who are deeply rooted in their societies and understand the day-to-day struggles, trials and tribulations of their people and society. Firmly entrenched in their own society and community, national scholars, by and large, are better placed to share the sentiments and ultimately the aspirations of their people. There is, of course, another fundamental reason why Zimbabweans must analyze their own problems and seek solutions to them. If things go wrong because of wrong, ill-conceived and *ad hoc* policies, it is the Zimbabwean citizens, including the researchers, who suffer, and not the foreign researchers.

This is not to suggest that Zimbabwean researchers may necessarily have the adequate expertise and knowledge to tackle their problems fully. It is to argue that their role must be central. This is not to suggest either that they may always and necessarily be correct or progressive in their orientation. Indeed, it has often been pointed out that African researchers have in part contributed to the current crisis in Africa today, and in time Zimbabwean researchers may not escape this criticism. In advocating for a central role for Zimbabwean researchers, this is done with the full knowledge that such a role demands responsibility for action by local researchers, and acceptance of the full consequences of their advice.

At the political level, the objective of Government has been stated as the establishment of socialism (based upon Marxist-Leninist principles). In spite of this clear objective,

24 Ann Marjchrzak: *Methods for Policy Research*. p.12.

the social scientists entrusted with this objective in the Civil Service, and who are supposed to be the translators and implementors of this policy, have fared very dismally. Most policy implementors in Government were ill-equipped to translate broad policy objectives into coherent, detailed and comprehensible action plans primarily because they had no concise knowledge of socialism. Others were not quite convinced of the feasibility of the socialist enterprise in the first place and in consequence implemented their own versions of policy, rooted in the capitalist framework. The result of the actions of the two categories of bureaucrats was the same: inherent contradiction between broad policy and its implementation, resulting ultimately in wholesale implementation of capitalism. There were, of course, convinced and committed social scientists with a Marxist orientation in Government. However, fully-baked Marxists were numerically in the minority and they were widely dispersed throughout the Civil Service. Moreover, it would appear that many of them underestimated the ideological struggle that was likely to ensue after independence, and therefore had no clear strategy. Most thought they could contribute to socialism individually. In other words, the left has never had a clear agenda and they have often not recognized the need for solidarity among themselves. In fact, the leftists have been very successful in denigrating each other personally or struggling along petty issues. They have, therefore, failed to be a decisive force in the levels of policy debate and implementation.

If the bureaucrats in Government had little conceptual and theoretical understanding of socialism, ZANU (PF), the party in Government, did not do any better. Socialism had been adopted as the party's programme during the liberation struggle. It was stated as the objective at independence in 1980, and reaffirmed at the Party Congress in 1984 and again at the Congress of the United ZANU (PF) in 1989. Quite clearly, a significant proportion of the leadership, particularly at provincial, district, branch and cell levels, had the vaguest idea of what socialism was all about. The overwhelming majority had not even read a sentence of Marxist literature. Each person had his/her own individual version of socialism.

The consequences were unfortunate for the Party at two levels. At the intra-party level itself, the Party cadreship remained largely ignorant of and confused about the meaning and content of socialism. The new leadership of the Party, particularly that which had never directly participated in the nationalist and armed national liberation struggles, showed little propensity for socialist discussion. Political commissars at the cell, branch and district levels were often elected, not for their ideological clarity and inclination, but for quite different reasons, usually the ability to shout and coin slogans. The role of the commissar as both an educator and mobilizer was not given its central role. Instead of performing the function of explaining Party ideology and policy, and identifying major issues for discussion and redress, the commissar confined himself to leading the shouting of appropriate slogans at rallies. In fact, at cell and branch levels there was neither open discussion of pertinent political, social and economic issues, nor attempts to make the membership understand the Party ideology. Lack of clarity in the Party of its ideological and substantive goals naturally affected its capacity to exert an influence on Government.

This constituted the second level of the problem arising from the weak ideological disposition of the Party. Linked to this was that the division of labour between the Party and Government was always elusive. Government bureaucrats were often called upon to advise on Party matters with the result that the Party came to be dependent on Government and not *vice versa*. The supervisory role of the Party was thus seriously

compromised. Obviously, if the Party were going to play an effective role in supervising Government, it needed to develop and establish strong technical and ideological units which would have the capacity to advise the Party. This would have enabled the evolution of a much clearer relationship between Party and Government than has been the case to date.

But this is a long diversion from the argument here. The point at issue is, ideological commitment aside, Zimbabwean researchers and intellectuals have a right, duty and responsibility for the socio-economic development of Zimbabwe and, accordingly, to take the consequences for their actions. Like the scholars from Western Europe and North America in relation to the fate of their own societies, Zimbabwean scholars must also have a primary duty to study their own society. Another point of interest is that the movement of scholars tends to be primarily in only one direction: West European and North American scholars come to Zimbabwe to study Zimbabwean problems and offer policy advice to Government and NGOs. There is no corresponding movement of Zimbabweans to Western Europe or North America for the same purpose. Zimbabweans go to the North as students; those from the North come as experts. Typified here are not only the historical colonial relations, but more seriously economic, cultural and intellectual dependency after independence.

At issue, therefore, is that there is need for intellectual nationalism. Admittedly, there are ideological and theoretical differences among scholars, but the debate and discussion on development direction and the future of Zimbabwe must be led principally by Zimbabweans themselves in a serious attempt to create a truly Zimbabwean intellectual tradition. Thus, leftists and liberals must on their own battle it out until they are able

to find a common ground to their own problems and their solutions. This will contribute towards the shaping of an intellectual tradition. This tradition could then articulate the real problems faced by the country. Without this intellectual nationalism, a point of minimum consensus vis-a-vis national problems is going to remain elusive. Discussions are bound to be premised on whether one is leftist or liberal, on the one hand, and the pursuit for universal knowledge, on the other. These should be located in the primary need for building a nation and fighting against foreign domination. While studies by West European and North American scholars have been useful in making us understand ourselves, it has been argued most of these have done so from the perspective of Western Europe and North America. No doubt, a few studies have tried to break away from this tendency by understanding Africa through new paradigms and historiography. But even here the result has been "Africanist" schools as opposed to African schools of thought.

Africanist schools have set the pace for Africa. Africanist scholars, whether leftist or liberal, have also sometimes contributed to the dependency syndrome among African scholars. The consequent pathetic state of African social sciences is characterized and evidenced by:

- the prestige attached to publishing in journals in the North, than in Africa;
- the facilitation of intellectual discussions and debates on Africa by the North;
- the fact that most researchers spend their sabbaticals in the North; and
- collaboration takes place mainly between African and Western European scholars and there is very little collaboration among African scholars themselves.

ORGANISATION OF RESEARCH

The Government of Zimbabwe seems to have been aware of these problems. Since independence it has created facilities meant to promote the development of research, including the social sciences. These efforts have included the expansion of the University of Zimbabwe, the creation of the Zimbabwe Institute of Development Studies (ZIDS), the Zimbabwe Institute of Public Administration and Management (ZIPAM) and the Research Council of Zimbabwe. As part of the State machinery itself, recently the National Planning Agency (NPA) has been established. Most Government Ministries also have research departments, units or sections. But the discussion here will centre on the University and ZIDS.

University of Zimbabwe

The University of Zimbabwe is the largest premier institution of higher learning in Zimbabwe, and the biggest research centre. The Faculty of Social Studies has six departments, namely Centre for Applied Social Sciences; Economics; Political and Administrative Studies; Psychology; Rural and Urban Planning, and Sociology. Geography is taught under the Faculty of Arts. Social science research is not, of course, limited only to the faculties of Social Studies and Arts, but to others, notably those of Agriculture and Education.

The University has the longest tradition of research in the country, the foundation having been laid in the 1960s with the creation of the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Implicitly its orientation and curricula were "instrumentalist",²⁵ in the sense that research was primarily applied or action-oriented. Part of the reason for this was that from the onset the University had been viewed by the white colonial settler society as providing instruction in subjects which would be useful for commerce and industry. The ground for such a focus had been laid long before the University opened, because the white settler business and commercial community had an interest in seeing certain subjects, like Accountancy, a derivative of the social sciences, receiving attention.²⁶ Another reason probably related to the fact that the leadership role in organising the social sciences was played by social anthropologists²⁷ like J. C. Mitchell, the former Director of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute. The institute, it will be recalled, had been established with a bias towards applied and problem-solving research.

When teaching began at the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in March 1957 the Faculty of Arts comprised the departments of English, History, African Studies and Economics. Priority professorial appointments had been placed on African Studies, Economics, History and Philosophy. In 1955 two professors were appointed: J. C.

25 Adele, Jinadu, "The Social Sciences and Development in Africa: Ethiopia, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zimbabwe", Swedish Agency for Research Co-operation with Developing Countries.

26 *Ibid*, p.13.

27 *Ibid*, p.14.

Mitchell for African Studies and O. P. F. Horwood for Economics; followed by that of Dr F. M. G. Wilson for Government in 1960.

Subsequently, the Faculty of Social Studies was created in 1962 with the departments of Economics, Government (renamed Political Science in 1968), Law and Sociology. The action-oriented nature of the focus was again underlined when the following departments were subsequently added to the faculty: Accountancy, Business Studies and Psychology; Centre for Inter-Racial Studies, Regional and Urban Planning Centre, as well as the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute which, though still in Lusaka, was incorporated in 1962. Its relationship with the University College was, however, short-lived with the break-up of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland and the attainment of independence by Zambia.

So it was that the social sciences developed in colonial Zimbabwe. This development was characterized by the "instrumentalist" vocation already referred to above on the one hand, and the contradictions of the University operating in a colonial and racist society, on the other. The instrumentalist vocation meant that there was need for "close co-operation with government ministries".²⁸ Funding organisations of foreign origin like the Rockefeller Foundation, moreover, provided grants for research. One such grant was to the departments of African Studies and Economics for the study of the economic behaviour of urban Africans.²⁹ Other studies reflected interest in the race question, exemplified by the project on racial attitudes in Central Africa resulting in the publication of a book, *Racial Themes in Southern Africa*³⁰ and the establishment of an institute specifically to deal with research on race, the Centre for Inter-Racial Studies.

However, contradictions between the multiracial status of the University and the nature and reality of white settler colonialism soon became evident and unavoidable. The contradictions took the form of attempting to reconcile the racist nature of society and the multiracialism of the University. Much as some might have wished and tried to ignore this, this was not possible with the result that:

An important issue which faced the social sciences in colonial Rhodesia was therefore how to respond to the racist, repressive undemocratic structures of the society. That some social scientists and other members of academic staff at the University were critical of government policies was obvious and the racist minority-led government was concerned enough to take action against them.³¹

Actions taken by the settler colonial regime were varied and included deportations, among others, of Terence Ranger in 1963 and the detention of nine lecturers and nine students in July 1966. Some of those detained included G. Arrighi, Van Velsen, Whittaner, Henderson, Curtin and Hill. Others, like Eric Stokes, resigned in protest.³²

These contradictions were important in exposing the racist character of the white settler colonial society. Equally important was that some social scientists questioned the

28 *Ibid*, p.155.

29 *Ibid*.

30 *Ibid*.

31 *Ibid*, pp. 162-162.

32 *Ibid*, p. 162.

prevailing order. But the dissident elements did not constitute a serious enough challenge to the social sciences order which remained "part of the supernatural mechanisms for maintaining white supremacist rule".³³ However, the unstable and undemocratic political environment characterized by repression, arrests and harassment undermined the climate for the development of any serious research tradition. Some of the problems and their consequences have already been discussed above. This went into independence.

This situation accounted for the fragmented nature of social science research at independence. From 1980 the developments at the University are linked to the return of the exiles and their attempts to fashion a new research tradition.

Zimbabwe Institute of Development Studies

The Zimbabwe Institute of Development Studies (ZIDS) was created in the environment of the newly born nation of Zimbabwe and was a product of the aspirations of the Government for self-reliance. There was then, a clear, if somewhat not always explicit political objective behind the establishment of the institute. For one thing it was generally felt that research in general and policy research in particular had a central role to play in socio-economic development; for another there was the recognized need to develop an indigenous capacity for social science research.

The creation of ZIDS raised a lot of debate before and after it came into operation. The debate is now in low key though it is not completely closed. This has always centred around a number of issues falling broadly within the ambit of

- its relationship with Government; and
- the theoretical/ideological framework of its work.

The two were related, and were a manifestation of the broad objectives of Government in establishing the institute.

The relationship of ZIDS with the Government was a contentious issue then as now which generated controversies within and without Zimbabwe. The major views were as follows: One, the view of the predominant sections of Government itself which felt that such an institute should have a close relationship with the Government, even though it was accepted that the institute needed to have a measure of autonomy from the day-to-day functioning of Government. Two, an argument which accepted the need for such an institute, but saw its role as primarily, if not exclusively, one of undertaking academic research. The general consensus here was that the natural location of the institute should be the University. Third, was the view of an entirely autonomous institute. A number of forces external to Zimbabwe fell into this view. And fourth, there was the view that there was really no need for such an institute. Arguments were also based on what obtained elsewhere in Africa, where such institutes were usually integral parts of the university. But similar institutes in Africa had been created for different

33 *Ibid.*

reasons, so had ZIDS. Evidence of this was clear at the Inaugural Seminar of ZIDS where various institutes shared their views with Zimbabweans.³⁴ Ironically, the need for the institute as conceived and eventually established seemed to receive acceptability from them than from the locals.

After extensive consultations, it emerged that the overwhelming majority of opinion favoured the creation of a social science research institute. Its relationship with the Government, or its structural location was, however, a matter of divided opinion. Government thus decided to create the institute with a close relationship with Government machinery. It would appear that the major consideration behind this decision was the strong feeling of the need for policy-oriented research. To facilitate this role it was necessary that Government and the institute have a clearly defined formal relationship. The formalization of the relationship would be through the Board of Governors which would draw its membership from appropriate Ministries. But it was also felt that the institute needed autonomy, and this resulted in it becoming a body-corporate through an Act of Parliament.

The theoretical/ideological issue was more problematic. Politically, the Government had enunciated a policy of establishing socialism as a long-term objective. Naturally, there were strong arguments that if ZIDS were to contribute to the policy debates and discussions, it had to do so within the socialist framework of analysis. This raised the dust. One group of opinion cast aspersions not only on the objectivity of such research, but its very scientific soundness. Implied here was that socialism was equal to ideology, and not science. A variation of this position was the argument that research should be value-free or neutral. A second view was that the institute should develop a capacity for technical and scientific research without being inhibited by ideology.

There was another, but different level of argument, akin to the questions of relationship with Government and ideological orientation. This was more of a reservation that as conceived, the institute could end up simply rubberstamping Government policy. Such a situation, it was felt, would seriously undermine the credibility of the research conducted by the institute. These fears came from within Government itself as well as from outside. Indeed, at its Inaugural Seminar this was one of the clear messages that participants drawn from different institutes in Africa brought.³⁵

The above arguments clearly revealed one thing: a general confusion characterizing the social sciences in the country today. On the one hand, the non-Marxists have tended to view Marxist social science as pure ideology, something not really capable of tackling technical issues of policy and development. Yet Marxism is in no way devoid of technical and statistical competence. On the other hand, Marxist scholars in Zimbabwe have projected themselves as though their preoccupation was ideological. Marxism, however, is a useful tool for analysis and interpretation of social reality. As a method of social analysis and practice in that context it needs to seriously deal with highly technical matters.

34 "Report on the Inaugural Seminar of the Zimbabwe Institute of Development Studies, 29 March to 2 April 1982", ZIDS Special Paper Series: No. 1, 1988

35 *Ibid*

All the arguments had some validity. The success of the institute, its development and growth all depended on a delicate balancing of the different viewpoints. The story of ZIDS has been precisely that attempt. That ZIDS had to be conceived and created with a close relationship with Government was clearly justified taking its primary role of policy-oriented research into account. Someone had to assume the primary responsibility of undertaking that type of research; Zimbabweans themselves, or expatriate organisations and individuals. The decision to give that role to ZIDS was wise and commendable. At issue, therefore, should not simplistically be the desirability or non-desirability of research institutes or researchers being linked to Government. Rather, the issue is whether social scientists view themselves as having a role in society. And if they do, what role do they see for themselves? Social scientists, except in the liberal sense, must not view their role as primarily if not exclusively to criticize. Such a notion is not only liberal, but is arrogant as well. This is not in anyway to suggest that intellectuals must not be critical of wrong policies and injustice, and stand up for the oppressed. The role of research, however, should be to describe and analyze society objectively and scientifically with the objective of exposing the realities of society. At another level, it is to suggest measures for correction where the system so requires remedying. In other words, the primary role cannot be to rubberstamp or to criticize. More fundamentally, however, social science cannot be neutral or value free. Its normative value must lie in its responsibility in contributing to the alleviation of the social and material conditions of the disadvantaged and exploited in society. That ZIDS would be critical of Government policies where valid was implied in Government's decision to distance the institute from Government. But criticism would be constructive in the sense that the aim would be to suggest, where possible, alternative courses of action. Similarly, it was never the intention that ZIDS should articulate or indeed defend Government policy.

The question of ideology is a fundamental one, but one on which possibilities for agreement are remote. As already referred to above, Zimbabwean social scientists at independence, as now, were a disparate group. Among them were those married to the Marxist theory of social thought. In saying that the institute would operate within a socialist framework of analysis, there was no intention of implying that the institute would be inclusive and exclusive. Indeed, Marxists of sorts have been associated and are associated with the institute, but so have people of different and sometimes opposite intellectual and political dispositions. Like everywhere in life, each researcher is free to present and defend his/her own viewpoint, but defend it solidly and scientifically. The game of social science research is also a battle, but a battle of minds. But the battle is concerned with the destiny of society and whether economic, scientific and technological advances benefit a tiny minority or the majority in society. There are those who believe that capitalism is the appropriate social system, while others equally believe in socialism. As long as these positions remain irreconcilable, the ideological battles will continue. The aim is to win, but without physically annihilating the other person. To sneer at one method of social analysis is neither constructive nor scholarly.

The ideology question, therefore, had nothing to do with objectivity or scientific rigour. The truth of the matter is that those who expressed reservations on this issue were themselves fighting an ideological battle against socialism. How else could one explain the fact that a person questioned the wisdom of the socialist paradigm at one level while swearing by socialism at another level? The end result was that ZIDS was put on the defensive from the onset.

Consequently, the situation painted above bred hostility against the institute. The hostility was augmented by the misconceptions that developed about the institute. During the formative period some Government ministries or departments unconsciously regarded the institute as a "watchdog" body created to point out mistakes. Naturally, no person is charitable towards another he thinks is out to monitor him. Then there was the problem related to co-ordination in Government in general. A very strong feeling developed that, by its functions, ZIDS duplicated or infringed upon the functions of other Ministries and such Ministries resented the idea of research which touched upon their portfolios being done by an agency over which they had no direct control. Some, especially those with their own research departments, saw ZIDS in competition with them. Such perceptions usually emanated from those quarters not closely associated with, or without the full background of why ZIDS was created. There was little appreciation, moreover, that the institute would in no way duplicate any of their functions since its role was to generate ideas, provide data and proffer brotherly criticism, but without being involved in the implementation of policy or projects. Those Ministries with research departments also failed to appreciate that their role was mainly limited to information gathering and short-term research while the role of ZIDS was wider. The worst view was that research had no role to play in policy formulation and implementation. Strangely, those who held such a view often forgot that they either constantly relied on consultants or were constantly providing information to foreign researchers.

So ZIDS came to be and exists. Given its mandate, by 1987, the institute had organised itself into the following departments: Agriculture and Rural Development; Education and Social Development; Labour Studies; History and Politics; Industry, Science and Technology; and Southern African and International Relations.

Something needs to be said about the evolution of ZIDS. A fundamental principle when the institute was established was that it had to be wholly Zimbabwean in personnel, funding and orientation. This included the planning and process of institution-building which had to be undertaken by Zimbabweans themselves. In so saying this was not to suggest that no external assistance would be sought or was desirable. But where such assistance would be sought the criteria would be coincidence of views and mutual respect. Consequently, the Council for the Development of Economic and Social Research in Africa (CODESRIA),

as a pan-African social science co-ordinating body, was called upon and readily came forth to assist at two critical stages during the creation of the institute. The first time was at the stage of conceptualization, when its Executive Secretary was requested to assist in the consultation with Ministries and other interested parties regarding the need for ZIDS and the form it should take. His recommendations constituted a significant element in the decisions that went into creating ZIDS. The second time was when the Deputy Executive Secretary of the organisation was attached to the institute as a Visiting Fellow with the task of assisting in institution-building. Two cardinal principles therefore emerge here. That it was crucial to establish an institute through our own efforts accepting, however, that where assistance was required this should preferably be of African origin. The orientation, therefore, became Zimbabwean and African.

The other area of sensitivity related to funding. In line with the principle of creating a wholly Zimbabwean institution concerned primarily with issues of national concern, an early decision was taken that the major and core funding should be from Government

sources. Even where funds were to be generated externally, this had to be from sympathetic sources. One such organisation was the Swedish Agency for Research Co-operation with Developing Countries (SAREC). SAREC's sympathy was established with Liberation Movements and the region. Not only was it supportive of ZIDS morally, but it agreed with the basic principles underlying its creation and was willing to assist financially. Consequently, SAREC has supported the institute from the planning, formative and consolidation stages through modest grants which have proved to be vital in the acquisition of equipment, books and research materials. There have been other forms of support, but the SAREC one has been the most significant and consistent.

The ZIDS model had its own problems. Some of these were inherent in the model itself, of using Zimbabwean personnel and relying primarily on local resources. A majority of the institutes in Africa and certainly in Southern Africa had traversed different paths altogether. Most had been created with substantial external support which included finance, equipment, books and personnel. In most such cases West Europeans or North Americans simply transplanted similar outfits from their countries to Africa. Moreover, they already had clearly defined and articulated research agendas which they quickly put into operation. No less important was that they were well-endowed financially and materially. Their researchers were "Africanists" experienced in the field and they used the institutes they created to further their research and to train young researchers from their countries as future "experts" on Africa. Within a short span of time they set up well-equipped institutes and embarked on "pre-cooked" research projects. Local researchers either watched helplessly or jumped into the bandwagon, but without a decisive voice on what went on. Indigenous researchers were paternalized and marginalized. At worst their status was worse than that of Research Assistants. But developments at such institutes were dramatic. Since everything was prefabricated the output was correspondingly dramatic and of high profile. The question, however, is for whom was the research being carried out?

There were also problems here. Institutes in Africa were created with a time frame to suit researchers from Western Europe or North America. As long as the country was interesting and there were interesting things to discover, funding and personnel came in. Sooner or later the honeymoon was over, everything dried up and the institute was "donated" to the nationals.

ZIDS' development was less dramatic. Not only were the resources relatively limited, the process of institution-building became painful, arduous and sometimes bitter. None of the people involved had any experience in institution-building or heading such institutes. Critically, being Zimbabwean they were more prone to be tangled in the "politicking" that took place around them. There were, after all, not experts. But problems, real or imaginary, became a constant reminder to those not fully reconciled to ZIDS of the fact that there had been no need for such an institute in the first place. Then, issues often were embroiled in personalities. How and by what means the institute could overcome its problems rarely became a major issue. It was rather why there were problems. And the WHY was addressed from the wrong premise, based upon misinformation, disinformation and lack of information. A most ridiculous position, however, was where even those who had benefited from the services of ZIDS, whether in the form of research, books, advice or seminar participation, were the first to remain silent about its potential. This was compounded by the scepticism that prevailed all

round. Ultimately some of the major obstacles were overcome but others will persist for the life of ZIDS.

A comment needs to be made about the development of research and its orientation at the institute. Problems of *legitimation* and *relevance* propelled the institute into consultancy and commissioned research. This was the type of research demanded by Ministries for it was of immediate practical implications for pressing problems. Not that the original focus was lost sight of, but long-term type of research was shelved. This shortcoming, notwithstanding, research carried out between 1983 and 1989 fell into the areas of rural development, social policy, education, industrialisation, energy and labour.³⁶

A major impediment during this period was a shortage of skilled and experienced personnel. During 1983 the institute had recruited fairly skilled researchers, but by the end of the year a significant proportion of them had resigned for reasons related to poor salaries. Some had, of course, been shaken by the constant criticism levelled against the institute and the resultant lack of security that this bred. There was to be no further recruitment from the middle of 1983 to the middle of 1986. Out of eight researchers operationally on the ground during that time, two were on study leave for two years from 1984 to 1986; one from 1986, and another one from 1987. These four had gone on study leave as part of staff development in areas considered of priority importance.

Lack of immediate impact by the institute was often exaggerated. The views of "think-tank" and ideological transformation became major sources of criticism. The fact that the objective of a "think-tank" was a long-term one which required substantial human, material and financial resources was not often taken into account when assessing the performance of the institute. More particularly, dramatic developments were expected in the context of a handful of people who had to start from scratch in establishing the institute. This included development of a capacity for research, a process which included sending people on staff development courses. The ideological role also tended to be exaggerated. ZIDS could obviously not be the ideological torch-bearer of society. Its role was to undertake scientific research for use by society, Government, popular organisations and NGOs. What was expected of it was to suggest, identify, monitor and assess from a socialist perspective and methodological standpoint, socio-economic development. Despite these constraints, the institute developed to be one of the largest and important centres of research in Southern Africa.

Significant changes took place in 1986 when additional staff were recruited. In 1987 and 1988 the issue of long-term research was seriously discussed, culminating in a Research Plan. The Plan is premised on national priorities as articulated in policy statements especially the First Five-Year National Development Plan. In preparing the Plan the intention was to provide a framework and guide for the research activities of the institute

36 Among some of the major research undertaken by ZIDS during this period are: "Socio-Economic Studies and Needs of Ex-Combatants", "The Political Economy of Hunger", "The Root Causes of Hunger", "Socio-Economic Baseline Study of Rushinga District", "An Evaluation of Agricultural Extension Support to Women Farmers", "The Economic Viability of Collective Cooperatives, Makoni District", "Cooperatives and Contract Mining in the Chrome Mining Industry": "The Protection of Security of Employment", "Vulnerable Working Households", "The Ownership Structure of the Manufacturing Sector", "The Role of Women in Manufacturing Activities", etc.

in relation to policy research. However, the research will also look very critically at the planning process itself.

The Research Plan is also important in that it identifies relevant areas for basic research. The debate on policy *versus* basic research is an interesting one and this will be pursued below. A tendency among many African social scientists has been to regard basic research as of more useful theoretical value than policy research. This position, however, has its own problems because it assumes that policy research must always and necessarily be devoid of theory. On the other hand, it is assumed that all basic or pure research is intrinsically of theoretical value. Nothing could be further from the truth.

DEVELOPMENT ISSUES FOR RESEARCH

The fundamental issue facing Zimbabwe after attainment of independence is that of self-reliance and the creation of a national economy. In a sense these are life and death questions which have political, economic and ideological ramifications. Through colonization and the establishment of a settler capitalist order, Zimbabwe was incorporated into the world capitalist system. Reassertion of nationalism and establishment of democracy were fundamental and principal objectives of the struggle for independence, but not the only ones. Among the principal causes for the struggle were land, control of the economy, unhindered access to facilities and opportunities and removal of racism. These were the basic issues for the Liberation Movement. Another fundamentally broad-based issue was that of imperialism.

Attainment of independence in 1980 provided a framework through which some of these issues could be addressed. At the social and political level the independence era saw the abolition of all forms of racial discrimination culminating in the abolition of racial representation in Parliament in 1987. It also witnessed the introduction of equality between the sexes principally through the *Age of Majority Act* and the encouragement of the full and active participation of women in society and the economy. The creation of a Ministry charged specifically with women's issues underlined the deep concern for the historical and social plight of women. Other measures instituted included the introduction of statutory minimum wages and the promotion of trade unions through the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions; universalization of education especially at primary level and a general phenomenal expansion of education at all levels of the system; expansion of health facilities and generally the democratization of many social sectors of society.

Long-term issues of development proved somewhat intractable because they were not easily amenable to quick and dramatic policy pronouncements. Though tremendous efforts have been made in tackling them, most have either remained elusive, or they have been characterized by *ad hoc* and sometimes contradictory policies. Yet these are fundamental issues and require clear policies, for on them hinge the survival of Zimbabwe and its ability to ameliorate the socio-economic status of its people. Not only are the issues central to the country's socio-economic development, but are of vital political importance.

The social science agenda in Zimbabwe should include: the "Agrarian Question", "Industrialization and Technological Capacity", "Employment", "Debt", "Structural Adjustment" and "Southern Africa". These are broad themes which embrace many concerns having to do with the development debate in this country. Central to the assumption here is that their importance is such that on them is dependent Zimbabwe's pronounced objective of establishing an egalitarian, socialist society. So too do they hinge on the prospect of achieving economic self-reliance.

A critical problem in Zimbabwe is the domination of the economy by foreign private capital. This reality not only underlines the dependent nature of the economy, but its total incorporation into the world capitalist system. But Zimbabwe is not only incorporated into, but is dominated by, the world capitalist system. This means that Zimbabwe is dominated by imperialism and that the objective of self-reliance cannot

be achieved as long as imperialism holds sway. In pronouncing the long-term objective of socialism, therefore, Government implicitly accepts the need to break out of the imperialist chain. Development discussions should consequently not ignore the reality of imperialist domination. Naturally, the relationship with imperialism inhibits the country's ability to implement people and society-centred programmes.

This situation throws into crisis development planning. For development planning at central government level to achieve its goals with a reasonable measure of success, there is need for local control of the economy. Where the economy is dominated by foreign private capital, planning becomes an extremely tenuous process. Foreign companies, particularly transnational corporations (TNCs), do not generate any policies in Zimbabwe, and are involved in very little planning. Policies are made at Headquarters in New York, London, etc. The planning they do here relates to specific implementation of policies emanating from outside.

Neither do TNCs generally respond to national government policies. They respond, rather, to overall social, political and economic conditions favourable to them and their objective of the reaping of profit. Since their interests are not nationally based, they are generally unable to respond to exhortations and appeals for investment and reinvestment, except on their own terms and at their own pace. For nearly 10 years the Government has appealed for foreign investment without much success, precisely because of this reality. Investors had their own conditions for investment, some of which may and do tend to run counter to political beliefs and commitments. It remains to be seen whether the establishment of the Investment Centre and the signing of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) are sufficient conditions for "placating" and attracting foreign private investment.

In the long term, however, the solution lies in the creation of a national economy. Creation of a national economy in the context of Zimbabwe would involve the mobilization of local resources from local public and private sources for investment. It is doubtful, however, whether this strategy can succeed in the context in which foreign capital owns and controls the strategic sectors in manufacturing, finance, insurance, mining, and food processing. Equally, it is futile to contemplate that local capital would be able to compete meaningfully, given the interconnectedness of the above sectors and the entrenched nature of foreign capital.

Unfortunately, there is no other option to the struggle against imperialism, save through the creation of a national economy. Similarly, there is very little option in the attempt to create a national economy, save through elimination of the domination of the economy by foreign capital (and imperialism). It is no longer popular to suggest nationalization these days; the reality, nevertheless, points in that direction in certain cases. Acquiring controlling shares in selected companies is an important mechanism for influencing policy, but it is not the alternative to controlling the means of production. As a mechanism, this should be used in conjunction with more fundamental measures aimed at achieving the control of the economy by Zimbabweans. Control of sectors like finance and banking, for example, is not only of strategic importance, it should have important spin-offs on the economy. Locally owned or controlled financial houses and banks would share the aspirations of Zimbabwe and appreciate the social and political objectives of national development. Some of the failures, trials and tribulations of the local businessmen have to do with the incongruence between the interests of national and foreign private capital.

There are two levels at which this problem affects the local businessman. One is related to the resilience of racist attitudes by the banks and financial institutions towards the black businessman. But, at a more fundamental level, their attitude towards the local businessman, whether black or white, has been unfavourable. Fundamental to this behaviour is the fact that most financial institutions and banks were established to service foreign private capital.

Arising from this are serious implications for the long-term socialist objectives of the Government. At the strategic level the question must be settled first as to what the future of foreign capital is. Unless the question is addressed candidly and substantively, the socialist enterprise is bound to remain elusive. The question is a valid one, at any rate, even if the objective were not to establish socialism. The struggle for independence was a nationalist one, with an objective of attaining national independence. Stage one of that independence was political; the second stage is the struggle for economic independence. This general context provides a framework for throwing up for consideration issues for research.

The Agrarian Question

During the colonial period the land question was of central importance. Indeed, the history of white settler colonialism is the history, in part, of the dispossession of the African people of their land. Legislative measures like the *Land Apportionment Act* and the *Land Tenure Act* legalised that position. As a result of this history, the "Agrarian Question" is important for short-term and long-term political reasons. As a question which constituted a fundamental grievance around which people were mobilized during the liberation struggle, the land issue is of critical importance. Naturally, at independence Government had to address the matter practically and as one of extreme urgency. Part of the strategy included the resettlement of a variety of people; those displaced by the war, landless peasants, ex-farm workers and demobilized ex-combatants. Though people were resettled, for fairly understandable reasons, the programme did not achieve as much as it should have.

A major constraint which has been cited repeatedly related to the Lancaster House Agreement generally, limited funds and the "willing-buyer willing-seller" prescription. But there were also constraints of a fundamental nature rooted in the capitalist nature of the economy. The capitalist system was not favourably disposed to socialist forms of organisation like co-operatives and collectives. Financial institutions, for example, had a capitalist orientation which did not permit them to be sympathetic or charitable towards organisations they felt belonged to a different kind of dispensation. In the event, the performance of most of the resettlement schemes has been disappointing. In the long run, however, the problem must address issues such as, *inter alia*, land hunger; socialization of agriculture through collectives; access to finance and credit services; land utilization and productivity, and finance policy.

These are issues to be viewed in the overall context of achieving self-reliance and creating a national economy. The "Agrarian Question" is also pertinent for the current policy debate on unemployment and employment facing Zimbabwe.

Industrialization and Technological Capacity

The key to the development of Zimbabwe rests in independent industrialization, with the objective of establishing a national economy. During the colonial period, particularly during UDI, a "nascent" capital goods industry was developed, sometimes with the active support of the state through a variety of policy measures. Not only must this capacity be maintained, but it must be built on. Within the current debate on, and impending introduction of liberalization of the economy, it may be emphasized that this sector should be promoted and protected against the vagaries of the new order. Another current debate revolves around the strategy of import-substitution. The strategy was evolved during the colonial period as a response to UDI and the need to protect the economy from vulnerability to external pressures. Independence and the lifting of sanctions opened up the economy. This means it cannot continue to be inward-looking and emphasize import-substitution strategies. The need now is to be outward-looking, especially in terms of trade. Such a strategy would require a completely new policy direction which may permit a more open system of importing inputs and technology to make the goods more competitive.

The issues of concern, therefore, have to do with industrial strategies, ownership structures, and general economic policy issues.

Linked to industrialization strategy is the question of scientific and technological capacity which, though frequently talked about, has not been closely incorporated into broad policy objectives. In particular, though the desirability of a scientific and technological capacity has been recognized, its relationship with the economy has not been clearly articulated. Research needs to be carried out on such policy issues as importation, absorption and assimilation of technology; management of science and technology, and energy uses.

Employment

The unemployment problem is a reflection of the rate and level of growth of the economy. It is a manifestation more of the limitations of macro and micro-economic policies, rather than of the phenomenal expansion of education. Resolution of the unemployment crisis lies in the success of the two key sectors of the economy, namely agriculture and manufacturing. Constraints experienced in these two major sectors have impacted on the rest of the economy and contributed substantially to the rising levels of unemployment. Attributing unemployment to expansion in education is somewhat fallacious; it is doubtful whether a significant proportion of those currently unemployed would have been employed if there was no expansion in education. Unless, of course, the argument is that uneducated people cannot be considered unemployed, which is a different matter altogether. At any rate, the right to education and knowledge is a moral and political issue fundamental to democracy. Moreover, education was one of the thorniest issues during the liberation struggle and, as such, it is not an issue that can be treated flimsily. More fundamentally, however, the failure of socio-economic policies and their impact on the various sectors of the economy is what leads to unemployment. Of course, it is more unpleasant politically to have a large reserve of educated unemployed people.

Issues for research here include manpower planning and educational policies; labour processes and wages and incomes.

Debt

The debt issue is assuming serious proportions in Africa. Surprisingly, the question has not been discussed openly and in a sustained manner at policy level in Zimbabwe. Even at the purely academic level, interest in the issue has not been widespread. Yet debt is the one problem that has afflicted the entire Third World in the manner of an epidemic.

Indebtedness affects all aspects of socio-economic development and attacks the very centre of social and economic policies. The ability to channel funds into development programmes and projects is severely hampered by debt. Its crippling effects are evidenced by the shortage of foreign currency. Shortage of foreign currency itself leads to shortage of virtually everything - spare parts, medicines, books, equipment, agricultural inputs, chemicals, and inputs for manufacturing. The circle is vicious.

Research should be carried out on this and strategies and solutions evolved.

Structural Adjustment

Structural Adjustment, as a policy, has also not received wide attention. There have, of course, been discussions and passing references on the issue but this has not amounted to a serious debate. The effects of Structural Adjustment are universally known, but these have not been analyzed with a long-term perspective in mind.

Like the debt issue, there is need for informed and technically sound research on the impact of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), and the strategies to be adopted

Southern Africa

For geopolitical, historical and emotional reasons, Southern Africa is an area of topical interest in Zimbabwe. Developments in other countries in the region directly impinge upon developments in the country. And these developments are many and of many dimensions. These include the liberation of South Africa; the destabilization policies of the apartheid regime against its neighbours in general, and Angola and Mozambique in particular. Things happen in Southern Africa on an hourly basis. Not only are events moving fast with Namibia becoming an independent state under SWAPO and South Africa involved in a flurry of activities, since the release of Nelson Mandela, purportedly to resolve the question of apartheid, but peace moves in Angola and Mozambique are of direct interest. Pertinent issues for research include the question of imperialism generally; the rapprochement between the superpowers and the impact of this on the region; the political events in South Africa; and regional co-operation.

The issues outlined above do not provide an exhaustive list. Perhaps they reflect more a personal inclination. Central to those issues, however, is a development agenda that might pull Zimbabwe out of the dependency quagmire and provide circumstances favourable for economic independence. They are by no means a prescription for the socialist agenda; for a socialist agenda involves much more than said above. A resolution of the issues outlined above constitutes a framework for laying the foundation of a national economy and, hopefully, accomplishing a national democratic revolution.

The nationalism that propelled thousands to take up arms against colonialism is a sound base upon which people can be mobilized for economic emancipation. Creation of a national economy through a partnership between local private capital and the public sector is a desirable and feasible agenda. It is also a progressive development in the struggle for economic emancipation. Others will disagree totally with this proposition. Given the current historical moment, however, economic nationalism seems a much more feasible and attainable goal for us.

The ZIDS "Five-Year Research Plan 1988-1992" attempts to identify some of the priority areas of research. Not all that is contained in the Plan can be accomplished by the institute alone; what the Plan seeks to do is to serve as a guideline as well as constant reminder about the unsettled issues in our society. Neither can it pretend to provide answers on all issues, if at all.

Wisdom is not the preserve of a few. The ultimate solution lies in the mobilization of the entire society for the collective identification, conceptualization and resolution of these

problems. That is the way forward. Individuals, researchers and institutes can only contribute a part. The people of Zimbabwe, themselves, have the final responsibility for the ultimate destiny of Zimbabwe.

CONCLUSION

Described here was the colonial origin and the development of the social sciences. It has been argued that the importance of this history is in enabling us to understand the role played by the social sciences during the colonial period in the colonies or what is now referred to as the Third World. A major function of the social sciences was undertaking research into these "non-Western" societies. But the motive of colonization, the exploitation and subjugation of colonies, affected the orientation of the social sciences and the researchers, as they responded to the socio-economic changes taking place in Europe and also to their contact with the colonized peoples and societies. A consequence was that the social sciences at times came to accept and assume the ideological dispositions of the colonial power or the colonial administration. The motives of colonialism came to be viewed either as legitimate or as inevitable. Few social scientists, then, questioned the legitimacy of the colonial order.

The post-World War II period was characterized by many far-reaching changes, the most significant of which, perhaps, was decolonization. Independence was simply an act of relinquishing political power by the colonial power, but it rarely involved a corresponding assumption of economic power by the former colony. Relations between the two were characterized by imperialist domination which, while recognizing sovereignty and territorial boundaries, retained its power over the economy and natural resources except that this was done indirectly through multinational corporations. Imperialist dominance embraced virtually all aspects of society, including that of research. Asymmetrical relations between the former colony and the metropolis resulted in the dependence of the former over the latter for knowledge and knowledge production. Like during the colonial period, the intellectual activities of society remained largely influenced by Western scholars.

This is the context in which the role of policy research in Zimbabwe has been examined. The paper argues that it would appear that a dependency syndrome is rapidly developing in Zimbabwe, characterized mainly by reliance on non-African

expatriate consultants and policy advisors. Apart from policy research, there is also considerable dominance by expatriates at the level of academic research. This situation is, of course, the result of colonialism, which denied Africans access to knowledge. But deliberate measures should be taken to redress the situation as a matter of extreme urgency. Failure to do so has its own negative consequences, especially the definition of our problems from a Western, mostly unsympathetic perspective.

One situation specifically called for here is academic nationalism. Such a strategy requires greater investment in research and the building up of capabilities and strengthening of capacities for research. In particular, it is argued that the area of research is a sensitive one which should be left to Zimbabweans themselves. After all, policy research is premised on certain specific national and ideological factors which only Zimbabweans themselves can appreciate. More fundamentally, the direction and destiny of Zimbabwe must be decided by Zimbabweans themselves. It is they who are best equipped to know what they want. Other people can only assist in the realization of our objectives. Research generates knowledge and ideas, and it is these ideas that

must be generated by Zimbabweans. At any rate, the specificity of national problems means that national scholars are better placed to capture the reality.

To promote the type of nationalism referred to above, it is essential to create a conducive environment for research. The research environment is a wide area, touching on various issues. Among these are salaries, terms and conditions of service; personnel; skills; materials and equipment; financial resources; status; confidentiality and secrecy of information, and dissemination of information and publishing. A workshop on "Public Administration of Research in Zimbabwe" held in 1984 examined some of these issues and it was evident that they were of major concern.

Researchers are frustrated by poor salaries and conditions of service; lack of research materials and equipment, and limited avenues for publishing and disseminating their research results. At another level, research activities are often hampered by the tradition of confidentiality and secrecy evident in both the public and private sectors. Much to the chagrin of the local researcher, this aura of secrecy and confidentiality is not always consistently and strictly maintained with respect to expatriate scholars. Other irritants that militate against research also include sales tax and customs duties on materials imported from outside, usually as donations by counterpart institutions abroad. The combination of all these factors seriously inhibits the full growth of research activities. A consequence of this situation which has been observed elsewhere in Africa and may soon develop here is the attraction towards consultancy work by local scholars for them to augment their incomes and acquire materials for their work.

A serious element, too, is society's response to research. In terms of status, research is usually lowly ranked, as reflected by the poor salaries and conditions of service prevailing in public research institutes. A researcher is usually a poor person, struggling on a day-to-day basis for survival. Moreover, what he earns is not enough to enable him to buy books, subscribe to journals, and to buy stationery for his work and other tools of his trade.

Another point which may be raised here is that of theory and ideology. In other words, what is the methodological framework in which the social science discussion should take place in Zimbabwe? The preoccupation of the present argument has been to call for the Zimbabweanization of the social sciences, in the sense that the major trends at thematic, conceptual and theoretical levels should be defined by Zimbabweans. Likewise, the debates and discussions themselves should be led by Zimbabweans. This is the minimum line of argument, culminating in the proposition that there is need for intellectual nationalism.

Theoretical orientation is a critical and major issue. What is critical, however, in the present context is the creation of conditions in which vigorous debates and exchange of ideas can take place, provided, of course, that the discussions are Zimbabwe - and Africa - centred. Leftist or liberal trends, if they do not creatively analyze Zimbabwe's problems, will not be of much use. Advocated here is the development of an intellectual tradition in which schisms along ideological lines can be meaningful and are anchored on national concerns. The point is, disagreements over methodological issues must not be for the sake of it, and must at any rate be based on the substantive developments taking place in society. Put another way, intellectual nationalism not only implies a rejection of foreign dominance and Eurocentric views of Zimbabwe, but the need to agree on the leading issues facing Zimbabwe today. Disagreement should be the result

of how problems should be addressed and tackled. That is, at the level of prescription, the theoretical predilections are bound to hold sway.

The question of policy *versus* basic research should be similarly viewed. Central to this is what the objective of social science is, at a given moment. In Africa, for who and for what are social scientists undertaking research and writing for? Basic research is the search and attempt to unravel the realities beneath the meaning in life, the attempt to explain the notion and dynamics of the development of society. Policy research usually describes what is there, with the specific purpose of recommending action. There is no contradiction between the two. At any rate, if social scientists are going to make an impact on society, they cannot escape from being involved in policy research and engaging in policy debates. But to do so they must avoid the temptation to be esoteric. Governments deal with real-life issues and the researcher must present himself in a comprehensible manner, with minimum polemics.

Sadly, there is an element of exaggeration in the arguments for or against policy research. The relationship between colonialism and social science and its natural consequences have been demonstrated above. So too is the fact that research in colonial Zimbabwe fell within the instrumentalist vocation. Most such research generated theories which still dominate social science thinking today. Policy-oriented research is viewed here broadly to encompass all research whose specific aims are to seriously address policy and attempt to seek or suggest solutions. Consultancy research, commissioned research and position papers are forms of policy research but not the only ones. Policy research may, indeed, be originated by the researcher himself. But policy research is not completely divorced of theory or existing knowledge. The development debates that characterized the 1970s and 1980s were all attempts to contribute to policy in the Third World.

The role of research in society must be to contribute in a critical fashion to the understanding of the dynamics of society, and the search for solutions. In Zimbabwe, the major issues facing the nation are those of nation-building, reconstruction, unemployment, development strategies and economic independence. Researchers must confront these questions with sobriety and intellectual rigour.

Another major question in research is empiricism. Empiricism as a trend was a reaction by the social sciences to criticism that they were not as scientifically sound as the natural or physical sciences because their conclusions tended to be based upon qualitative data. Particularly during the latter part of the 1960s and 1970s there was then a marked shift towards quantitative and statistical data. But it was much more than that: field-based surveys using questionnaires which would yield quantitative data became fashionable. Such information was presented elegantly and statistically in an attempt to demonstrate how scientifically rigorous the social sciences could be. Some of the results were presented in a dry and clinical fashion. This aroused a hue and cry among the social scientists, leading to controversies. Marxist scholars, in particular, attacked the trend partly because of their aversion to empirical research and their concern with macro issues, but also partly because most such research was premised on a very conservative framework. Leftists in Africa have also largely been averse to empiricist approaches largely because their concern has been with theory construction. However, no hard and fast position can be taken here.

The point is, there is need, in Zimbabwe, to integrate the empiricist approaches into the social sciences because they are useful in describing the situation as it is on the ground.

The views presented above are very tentative, but the aim has been to critically assess the role and status of the social sciences. Without being pessimistic, the picture which emerges is not a very happy one. But, of course, the battle is not lost. To win the battle of reducing our dependence on foreign scholars requires the collective will to create the conditions for intellectual nationalism and, in turn, an intellectual tradition. However, the key to all this is the attainment of economic independence.

But social scientists themselves must shed some of their arrogance. Cynicism, frustration and abdication from social responsibility are unfortunately defeatist.

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