THE ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY AND ITS FUTURE IN ZIMBABWE

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE PAPERS
THE ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY AND ITS FUTURE IN ZIMBABWE

International Conference Papers

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The Relationship between the University and Government

by Hasu H. Patel

Introduction

It would not be untrue to suggest that the conference on the role and future of the University of Zimbabwe is the most important conference held at this University in the last decade, if not over the entire period of the University's experience. The conference involves academics from outside of Zimbabwe, but more importantly involves the direct participation of, on the one hand, academics of the University and, on the other hand, Ministers, including the Prime Minister, and civil servants in Zimbabwe. This type of conference is an appropriate and highly significant forum to begin the necessary dialogue between the University of Zimbabwe and the Government of Zimbabwe. Hopefully, there will be other forums in which to further pursue this dialogue, involving an unequal partnership (UZ being the junior partner), because only with an on-going dialogue can the university play and continually redefine its role not only in relation to the academic community but also in relation to Government and society at large.

In addition, this conference has been planned to coincide with the installation of Professor W.J. Kamba as Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Zimbabwe. The installation of the first black chief officer of the university is the other momentous event in the history of this University. Therefore, it is right and proper that the University and Government and society wish him all success and accord him all support in the tremendous burden which now rests on his shoulders in navigating this university in the era of independence, particularly since more than likely his role within the University will involve "interventionist radical change with consensus."

This brief paper deals with the role of a university, the Colonial university, UZ/Government relations, and suggests some structural/curricula changes, although not in an exhaustive manner.

The Role of the University

There is a vast literature on the role of a university. It is the intention of this paper to discuss the role of a university with a selective use of literature in order to highlight what appears to be essentially two models which are sometimes seen as mutually exclusive and sometimes seen as complementary. The models may be classified as the "purist" and the "utilitarian" models.

The "purist" model emphasizes matters such as the pursuit and transmission of truth and knowledge, rationality, and a value-free disposition. For example, Jasper states that, "The university is a community of scholars and students engaged in the task of seeking truth," and that "The university is the corporate realization of man's basic determination to know." Shils argues that "The discovery and teaching of cognitive truth is the distinctive characteristic of the academic profession."

This "purist" view of the role of a university has also been incorporated as their own vision by many an African university largely because many African universities, in the contemporary period, have their origins in a western tradition. As Mazrui notes, "As for the African university itself, it is too rationalist for reasons connected with its western ancestry. The ethos of western university systems puts a special premium on a form of rationality which aspires to neutral universalism. To be 'scholar' and 'scientific' are, in western terminology, sometimes interchangeable. And to be scientific includes a stance of detachment."

However, in spite of the western ancestry of contemporary African universities, African leaders and universities have engaged in a re-examination of this "purist view of the role of
a university in Africa; as a result of this re-examination, what might be termed a
"utilitarian" view of the university has emerged. For example, Nyerere has argued that
while the pursuit and extension of knowledge by a university is very important not only for a
particular society but for all humanity, nevertheless, there must be priorities particularly in
poor countries:
For I believe that the pursuit of pure learning can be a luxury in society; whether it is or not
depends upon the conditions in which that society lives... when people are dying because
existing knowledge is not applied, when the very basic social and public services are not
available to all members of a society then that society is misusing its resources if it pursues
pure learning for its own sake... the purpose of establishing the university is to make it
possible for us to change these poverty-stricken lives.5
Nyerere accepts that the purpose of a university is to seek the truth. However, while
academics should seek the truth without consequences to themselves, nevertheless, they
should not seek the truth regardless of any consequences to the society at large. Thus, he
suggests that the university has a dual responsibility, i.e., the expectation from the
university is both "a complete objectivity in the search for truth, and also commitment to
our society — a desire to serve it".6
Analogously the question of the role of the university has also animated African scholars.
The 1972 Accra Workshop of the Association of African Universities was an important
attempt to deal with the question. The Accra Workshop dealt with a whole range of issues.
The conception of the African University which grew out of that deliberation, while it did
not reject the essential components of the "purist" model nevertheless, tilted heavily in
favour of the "utilitarian" model, i.e., the university of Africa "could not in the name of
academic freedom be permitted to be indifferent to the prevailing poverty and squalor.....
(and its new definition would be one)... which would signify its commitment, not just to
knowledge for its own sake, but to the pursuit of knowledge for the sake of, and for the
amelioration of the conditions of, the common man and woman in Africa".7
The above two models, that is the "purist" and the "utilitarian" may be differently seen as
models of intellect and utility or as models of "knowledge for its own sake" and
"knowledge for change". At first appearance they suggest mutually exclusive
perspectives, but this would be a false impression. The difference between the two models
is really one of tilt and emphasis because as indicated in the above quotation the
"utilitarian" model does not deny the legitimacy of the pursuit of truth by universities.
However, what it does deny is the legitimacy of the pursuit of truth for its own sake without
any immediate and deliberate utilization of that knowledge to alleviate the multifaceted
problems encountered by the African societies of which the universities are a part.
Of course it is very difficult to quantify, in economic terms the benefits which accrue to the
society when compared with the large amounts of funds which are expended on African
universities. A most immediate way would be to measure the production of graduates in
relation to financial input. But this would probably show up the high unit cost of output. A
university in Africa as elsewhere has an important function in providing, as best as it can,
the necessary manpower requirements of the country. Nevertheless, the university in
Africa as elsewhere is an investment in the future, not only in terms of manpower
requirements but also in terms of curiosity, creativity and knowledge. A society which does
not invest at least some of its resources in curiosity, creativity and knowledge will be the
poorer in non-quantifiable terms, even though the thrust of a society's expenditure,
particularly in developing countries such as Zimbabwe, must be in areas which have an
immediate and direct relevance for eliminating inequalities in the society.
The Colonial University
An exhaustive history of the former University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland and the
former University of Rhodesia is beyond the scope of this paper.8 Rather, some important
dynamics in the past of this university will suffice to highlight some of the achievements,
shortcomings and contradictions.
The first student intake of University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, armed with the
Royal Charter of 10th February 1955, began in 1957. One of the Royal Charter's important
provisions reflected the preponderance of the view of the British Government and a small
group of liberal whites who were interested in a non-racial university education not only
for the then Rhodesia but also for the then Central African Federation; the establishment of
the University was a reflection of the supposed non-racial hopes of the Federation itself.9
The non-racial provision is enshrined in section 4 of the Royal Charter which states that
"No test of religious belief or profession or of race, nationality or class shall be imposed upon or required of any person in order to entitle him to be admitted as a member, professor, teacher or student of the University College or to hold office therein or any advantage or privilege thereof". The inadequacies of the federal idea were to be exposed by African Nationalists. The victory of the Rhodesian Front in 1962 and the demise of the Federation in 1963 effectively exposed the tenuous link between the University's principle of non-racialism and the dominant racist society in which it was to operate; thus the University has been rightly described by Murphree as an "anachronism".

While the University has maintained the principle of non-racialism and has been instrumental in producing thousands of graduates, nevertheless all has not been well at the University. Initially the University accepted segregated residences for students but after a year the residences were desegregated, although before this occurred there was a great deal of humiliation for Miss Sarah Chavunduka, an Arts student at the University. Thereafter, Dr. Bernard Chidzero's appointment as a Research Fellow in Political Science was not proceeded with after it became known that he was to marry a Canadian woman.

Over the years, there have been many crises at the University, for example, in 1966 and in 1973, which really reflected the political tensions as between black and white both off-campus and on-campus. Particularly since UDI in 1965 the University could not but reflect the division in the society at large. Birley wrote in his 1966 report:

On the one hand, very many of the Europeans are in the frame of mind to regard progress towards a multi-racial society as a prospect to be feared; on the other, the Africans look forward to the possibility of social and political advances which seemed impossible a few years ago... The number, on both sides, left, as it were, in or near the middle has inevitably decreased. The College cannot expect to be unaffected by this process. Not only is it more isolated in the midst of Rhodesian society than it was before, but it is itself more divided. It could not be expected to escape altogether from this process of polarisation within its own walls.

Certainly, it could be argued that during the UDI years there were great pressures to constrict the University's control over its own affairs. Murphree isolates the following pressures, (i) increasing dependence of the University on local government running, (ii) utilization of detention/deportation and prohibition of entry of staff and students, (iii) channelling of scholarships, (iv) denial of access to research data, (v) censorship laws which prohibited publications useful to academic study, (vi) veiled threats of intervention in university affairs.

However, Chideya and Sibanda have offered a corrective to a possible impression that but for the RF the University would have progressed much better:

However, in a sense the term 'non-racial' is misleading in so far as it gives the impression that were it not for the hostile attitude of RF Government, all would be well within the University. As already stated, a university being a social institution has to reflect the social ethos of the larger society. The struggles, attitudes, fears and animosities in the larger Rhodesian society were indeed reflected on the University campus.

For example, as far as academic staffing policy was concerned there were perceptible University and non-University constraints. Firstly, in the colonial period immigration policy was decidedly in favour of whites and it was very much easier for non-citizen white academics to come into the country and be given work/residence permits. This meant that when the University recruited expatriate staff invariably they were white and therefore recruitment from the "Third World" has been largely non-existent. Secondly, the colonial authorities had the power to deport or deny entry to those expatriate whites they felt were a potential or actual nuisance; this was used on a number of occasions, for example, the deportation of Ranger in the early period, and the deportation/denial of entry in the 1970's particularly of members of the Department of Political Science (for example, Maguire, Good and Dixon). Thirdly, it has been noticeable for some time that in some quarters at the University there has been a bias in favour of education/degrees from and advertising of vacancies locally and in UK/South Africa and for interviews to be conducted largely locally or in the UK. All these factors combined to ensure that expatriate recruitment was largely from the UK/South Africa with some input from USA/Canada.

Black members of staff and some non-black members of staff have for some time been disaffected because of the above and related reasons, for example, a general non-African and western orientation of the University, the fact of white domination of the Council and
the Senate, the issue of Africanization of the curricula and administrative and academic staff, particularly at the senior levels, etc. The rather slow pace of Africanization has been a recurring bone of contention which simply illuminates the long presence of what might be termed structural discrimination (although it should be noted that during the UDI years some highly qualified black academics were unwilling to return home because of the perceived illegitimacy of operating in a UDI environment and because of perceptions of possible victimization from the colonial regime). Printed evidence of this may be seen in the publications of, for example, Chideya and Sibanda, Pongweni, Chideya and the "Black Caucus".

Chideya and Sibanda have argued that the gradual Africanization of University staff since 1976 has been the result of three factors, (i) the deteriorating security situation since 1976 made it difficult to recruit expatriate staff and some white staff left because of the call-ups. (ii) there was pressure from a few University staff to gradually localize, (iii) there was pressure from the African members of staff.

As a result of consultations with a newly-constituted Principal's Ad Hoc Advisory Committee, the then Principal, Professor Craig, produced a document entitled 'The University and Constitutional Change' in June 1977. The document indicated that "a policy of vigorous Africanization and localization would be pursued at least with respect to new permanent posts and dismissals". However the impact was considerably lessened in another section of the document which suggested a policy of localization "possibly beginning at the Teaching Assistantship or graduate student level necessary to manage larger student numbers, but also bidding for higher establishment posts".

Subsequently, in July 1977 I submitted a paper to the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies and then to Senate which argues, among other things, for a policy of declaring all or a majority of posts as local/indigenous posts, a "conduct system" for relatively young graduates, and increased relationships with "Third World" institutions; there was no question that the implications were that University staff composition at all levels would reflect the black majority in the country.

The "Black Caucus" manifesto of February 1978 was another landmark document in the struggle to ensure that university staffing properly reflected the black majority in the country. Arguing that "In post-independent Africa, the role of the University is connected with the consolidation of hard-won political independence and the wide variety of expectations of the African masses with the socio-economic and political benefits of independence", the manifesto presented a vigorous case for Africanization of curricula, administrative staff and teaching staff. In pursuance of this the manifesto rejected the Principal's suggested policy of localization from the bottom:

A policy of Africanization should be pursued at all levels:
(i) We reject the ambiguous and meaningless concept of 'localization' of staff used in the Principal's paper. The concept has been abused in certain departments by employing and promoting resident whites at the expense of qualified blacks.
(ii) We also reject the Principal's suggestion that such Africanization should begin at the bottom, that is, at the Teaching Assistantship level. There are many qualified Africans here and abroad who are willing to take up senior positions in the University. The problem is not one of shortage of manpower.
(iii) In order to effect a policy of complete restructuring and re-orientation of the University it is essential that many senior positions be Africanised without delay. We know from experience and from personal knowledge of the persons now in senior positions that many of them would resist changes. Therefore, if no changes are made at the top the recommendations both in the Principal's paper and in our paper will never be implemented.

In terms of teaching staff, the position at the university, as of 24 July, 1981, was that out of 353 established teaching posts, 77 were vacant, 66 were held by black Zimbabweans, not counting the fact that 14 black Zimbabweans had left the university for Government service and that 3 black Zimbabweans had been offered posts but had declined the appointments. Of the 66 black Zimbabwean staff only two are Professors and Heads of Departments! Thus there is no question that there is a long way to go to meet the demands of Africanization, especially of senior academic posts, contained in the "Black Caucus" manifesto. A complicating factor is that it is my impression that perhaps a majority of white staff at the University are either Zimbabweans or dual nationals (I shall return to this point later in the paper).
In terms of Africanization of the university, a related issue is the black/white student ratio. In the first year of the existence of the university there were indeed very few black students on campus. And it was not until 1976 that black students outnumbered white students. For some time government scholarships for black students were largely in "teaching subjects" and the teaching profession was the main employment outlet for black graduates of the university. But "outside funds" (for example, WUS Scholarships) were critically helpful in diversifying the subjects/disciplines studied by black students; this, together with growing output at the form VI level from black secondary schools, helped increase the number of black students. Additionally, the "take-over" in 1976 reflects, in part, the call-up system which increasingly affected non-blacks. When blacks were being called up many black students left the country and the "Black Caucus" declared that it would ignore the call-up. Sometimes crises on campus resulted in a drop in black student intake, for example, the crisis of late 1973 resulted in well over a hundred students being detained. Thereafter some were barred from campus and others left the country. The full-time student registrations by race for selected years are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>African</th>
<th>European</th>
<th>Asian/Coloured</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>727</td>
<td>666</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>1 506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>1 549</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>2 165</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Registry, UZ.

Thus one may generalize to the effect that while the university maintained the principle of non-racialism and often defended it internally and sometimes externally, nevertheless, the pace of Africanization seen in terms of student intake and staff appointments has, for a variety of reasons, been quite slow. This has been a cause of much tension and suspicion as between black and white; this tension and suspicion remains even though over the years there has been co-operation and intermingling as between black and white.

In spite of these major shortcomings the University has been able to maintain a degree of autonomy and academic freedom (dealt with later in detail) because, as Murphree has suggested, of a number of factors, i.e., significant sources of independent financing, pragmatic considerations relating to the provision of certain categories of skilled manpower, a monopoly position as the sole viable employer and agent of academic expertise necessary for university education, the Charter and the legitimacy factor.

The Relationship between the University and the Government

April 1980 was indeed a watershed in the history of Zimbabwe. The successful transformation of the colonial State into a vibrant independent State marked one terminal point in the struggle of African nationalism to obliterate the negative components of the past and move towards a decidedly positive future for the people of Zimbabwe. The particular methodology of Liberation, i.e., the Armed Struggle, delimits the type of Liberation which has swept the country. The African nationalist movement's revolutionary methodology had been built on the conjunction of a radicalized leadership and a radicalized population. Therefore it is to be expected that the process of radicalization will continue after independence of April, 1980.

This radicalization is evident in, for example, the strategic goal of a socialist transformation of society, which is being translated in particular policies or tactical goals such as the emphasis on worker participation and a more equitable distribution of resources which emphasizes distribution without unduly upsetting existing private sector activities, the provision of a more equitable pattern of education, health and housing, generally the mobilization of the country for the benefit of the common man and woman of Zimbabwe. In such a profound reshaping of social, economic and political relations in Zimbabwe few, if any, individuals, groups and structures will remain untouched. Therefore the "wind of radical transformation" will also blow in the corridors of the university. The context of the University has decidedly changed from one of a racist society to that of a liberated society.
and just as independence is now liberating the society from the shackles of its racist past, so will the university be liberated from its colonial past.

A Zimbabwe University Bill is to be presented to Parliament in the near future and the University community is awaiting, anxiously in some quarters and eagerly in other quarters, the publication of the Bill. And it would be logical to assume that the process of liberating the University is likely to be guided by the same policy if “radical change with reconciliation” which has animated the Government of Zimbabwe in the variety of policies which it has promulgated and carried out since independence.

In the wider society this policy of “radical change with reconciliation” has meant that, for example, there have been no “War Crime Trials” as in post-Second War Germany and Japan, those with “colonial mentalities” are being persuaded to change direction not only for the benefit of society but also for themselves (a process of liberation of the colonizer from himself/herself), the wounds and divisions of war are being healed by a process of integration of former adversaries in areas such as the police, the army, the civil service etc., the RF remains in parliament with parliamentary privileges for free speech, which free speech the RF so visibly denied to those who now form the Government, and at the very top, i.e., in the formation of Government itself, the overall perspective is glaringly highlighted by a Coalition Government involving the majority ZANU (PF), and the minority PF and white membership. Thus it can hardly be that by the measure of significant objective criteria a veritable miracle has occurred in Zimbabwe, and that the prophets of doomsday scenarios will have had to bring out their “slide rules” to understand what went wrong with their projections.

Therefore, in line with this policy of “radical change with reconciliation” it would be reasonable to assume that, internally, the University will have to undergo radical changes while contrary forces within the University, i.e., the progressives and the reactionaries, reconcile for a better future, and, externally, in the University’s relations with the Government, the University acknowledge and pursue, the national development goals and the Government considers the University as its partner rather than its adversary, with the Government knowing full well that it is the senior partner and the university realizing that it is the junior partner. And just as the power-sharing at the Government level is a policy based on the twin pillars of magnanimity and pragmatism, so it would be reasonable to posit the view the partnership between the Government and the University would be based on the very same pillars of magnanimity and pragmatism.

It is an objective fact that in Zimbabwe or any other country no university can exist without the blessing and support of the Government. This may be a statement of the obvious and the banal, nevertheless it needs to be stated and acknowledged. As Jaspers notes, “The state has easily the upper hand over the university and can in fact destroy it”. Thus there is the glaring fact that the Government, as the “Executive Committee of the State”, has at its disposal the powers of coercion, namely physical force; even if the university had its own police force it would be no match to the coercive capabilities of the Government.

The second important resource at the command of the Government is the legal one. With its preponderant majority in Parliament, the Government can enact Bills which, having passed through Parliament, can constrain the University, even against the University’s wishes.

The third important resource of the Government is that it has the “power of the purse”. As of now the Government contributes more than 90% of the University’s budget and any non-Zimbabwean funding, outside of minor amounts, must be channelled through the system of priorities as defined by the Government. Thus the Government is able to develop priorities which the University has to follow. Of course, there is nothing in the Charter, as presently constituted, which says that the Government must be the major financial backer of the university and, theoretically, the university could be funded largely by non-Governmental and non-Zimbabwean sources. However, it is quite unlikely that the Government will allow the university to be, for example, so privately endowed as to leave it areas of “financial openness”.

A fourth major resource at the command of the Government is the fact that it is democratically elected by the people of Zimbabwe. The basis of its legitimacy rests in the will of the people while the University is not elected by the people and cannot claim any such legitimacy. Since the budget of the university goes to Treasury through the Ministry of Education, there is no question that in very important respects the Minister of Education and Culture is the “financial overseer” of the university, and whereas the Minister is
elected by the people, the Vice-Chancellor is appointed by the Council of the University. Further, while the Prime Minister is also elected by the people and is, in a very real sense, the leader of the people, the principal and Vice-Chancellor is leader of only a tiny segment of the people, i.e. the University.

Thus there is no question that in power terms there is a basic structural inequality and therefore in any serious contest of wills and in any confrontation the University is bound to lose. It is this structural inequality which should portray the relationship between the University and the Government. But in spite of this structural inequality there is no reason to suppose that a partnership of unequals is not possible indeed it is the only mode of relationship which will benefit both the University and the Government.

However, it would not be untrue to suggest that it is quite possible that the Government views the present University with a mixture of perceptions. Firstly, it is quite likely that the importance of the University in the life of the country is not in doubt, i.e., its role in providing, as best as it can, the necessary high-level skills, as an institution of higher education in Zimbabwe which has some measure of international prestige etc.

Secondly, it is likely that the Government has little pride in and much deal of suspicion of the University as it stands. This likely lack of pride and great suspicion may indeed result from a perception that the University as presently constituted may want to divorce itself from the Government and the society at large, i.e., how far and in what manner the colonial university can truly become an African university in terms of structures, incumbents, and attitudes and orientations of staff and students, — in sum, the Zimbabweanization, and, in particular, Africanization, of the curricula and administrative and academic staff, and how far the goals of the university can be harmonized with national developmental goals and particularly with the strategic goal of a socialist transformation of the society.

Of course, the University of Zimbabwe Bill may overtake any internally generated reforms by the university. However, we at the University can still think of changes which would help the realization of the kind of partnership with the Government which has been presented here.

For example, in terms of goals, the University could possibly do no better than adopt the goals of an African university formulated at the 1972 Accra Workshop: these goals were (i) pursuit, promotion and dissemination of knowledge with emphasis on practical knowledge useful to the generality of people and thus locally orientated and motivated, (ii) Research — both fundamental and applied — with priority in research into local problems which ameliorate the conditions of life of the rural poor, (iii) providing intellectual leadership — particularly against the backdrop of illiteracy and where other functionaries may be inexperienced, the university needed to diffuse knowledge but with intellectual honesty, simplicity of language, and a non-patronizing attitude in a two-way communication process with the ordinary man and woman in the country, (iv) manpower development — with production of graduates who were not deficient in professional and practical skills, with the university producing not only high-level manpower but also participating in planning, organization, curriculum development and superintending of institutions for training middle-level manpower, (v) promoting social and economic modernization — in arresting divisive and centrifugal tendencies arising from situations of ethnic multiplicity and low levels of economic organization; thus the university, i.e., academics, administrators, research workers and students, promote social cohesion and set examples in democratic institutions, and become extension workers helping small-scale trader, artisan and farmer in improving their lives, (iv) promoting intercontinental unity and international understanding — pursuing research and disseminating knowledge and taking all necessary steps to emancipate Africa from the shackles of ignorance, and break barriers of artificial isolation arising from colonialism, and barriers of language and cultural separation; the university must rediscover Africa and provide the proper intellectual and enlightened foundation for Africa’s image in the world and promote the ideals of the Organization of African Unity and continental rapprochement and international understanding.32 A firm acceptance of the above goals would put the University firmly on the side of the “utilitarian” model of a university discussed earlier.

The University should also seriously look at certain structures for changes which will better place the University in terms of Zimbabweanization, and particularly Africanization, and democratization. After all, even though Zimbabweanization is a principle of the Government, nevertheless, in, for example, the Public Service, there is the constraining and liberating factor of the Presidential Directive. The University does not have a Presidential Directive but even in its absence the University could take some meaningful
steps. Secondly, in the wider society the principle of democratization has been seen in the
general elections of April 1980, in the elections to Municipal and District Councils, in the
idea of worker committees and in the emphasis on equality between the sexes. The
University could analogously effect its own steps towards democratization.

Firstly, the Council of the university; in terms of the statutes, membership of the Council is
composed of: (i) the Principal and Vice-Chancellor, the Deputy Principal and Deputy Vice-
Chancellor, and other Vice-Principals — as of now there are three, of whom two are black,
(ii) 9 members appointed by the Government of Zimbabwe — as of now there are 5
vacancies, with 4 in post of whom 3 are black, (iii) 7 academics appointed by the Senate —
all are filled of whom 3 are black, (iv) 9 appointed by various outside bodies — all are filled of
whom 3 are black and 1 is Asian, (v) on invitation of the Council, 1 or a maximum of 2 — by
convention only 1 is filled by nomination by the Students Representative Council with the
proviso that the nominee must be a graduate student — the office holder is black, (vi) 2
appointed by the Council — both are white, (vii) 2 persons distinguished in the University
world, appointed by Council with concurrence of the Senate — both are white. 33

Theoretically, in order to effect Africanization, the different kinds of membership could
remain the same as present. However, besides the issue of Africanization, there are the
factors of the adequate level of participation of the Government, and democratization. A
broad mathematical perspective, which would take account of the partnership between
the University and the Government, and the interests of the wider community would result
in a rough balance of forces, i.e., one third Government members, one third academic
members (not counting the two or three main officers of the University), and one third
“outside bodies, which should include one representative each from the Senate and the
House of Assembly and the trade union movement all of which at the moment are
unrepresented on the council. Additionally, the provision for distinguished academics and
student representation should remain, but the workers at the University should be on the
Council and there should be determined efforts to have adequate representation of
women.

The question of membership of the Senate and any change of “complexion” in it is
governed in large measure by the “complexion” of senior academic staff on campus. In
terms of the Statutes, membership of the Senate is composed of: (i) the Principal and Vice-
Chancellor, the Vice-Principal and Vice-Chancellor and any other Vice-Principal, (ii) Deans
and Deputy Deans of Faculties, (iii) all Professors and Readers, (iv) all non-Professorial and
non-Reader status heads of academic departments, (v) the Librarian (vi) one representative
each from all faculties who is a full-time lecturing staff and is elected by the faculties, (vii)
members of staff appointed by Council after consultations with the Senate. 34

Given the fact that most senior academic staff are white, the majority of Senate
membership is white. Thus if Africanization of the Senate is to be effected it can only be
done through a system whereby the university rotates headships of departments and, in
addition, adopts the American system of designation of staff, which would mean that an
incumbent in any academic post could rise “in his/her own line” to full professorship. This
combination of two factors would democratize departments from the “bottom”, and would
also help in Africanization of Departments and the Senate, at least over a reasonable
period of time; an additional factor which could influence this process is a revamping of the
criteria used for initial appointments to temporary and permanent staff. The merit of
combining these three factors would be that the principle of Zimbabweanization would be
married with the principle of Africanization, just as it has been done by the Government.

It is my impression that the majority of white staff at the University are either Zimbabweans
or dual nationals. If I am correct, and if one wants immediate Africanization, then the
simplest solution would be to ask everyone to resign and reapply; but this would send such
shockwaves of demoralization through the University as to put its efficiency at risk at least
in the immediate term. Additionally, this may well raise some legal questions, and in any
case would make the treatment of staff at the university so different in comparison with the
treatment of staff of for example, the Public Service, as to make the transformation at the
University a special case. My solution may take a little longer and may mean that some staff
may have to wait a while longer, but at least it has the merit of opening up the staff
distribution system at the University with disruption kept as much as possible to the
minimum. Perhaps there may be other formulas which may have greater merit but the
above suggestions regarding the Council, the Senate, and the Departments are offered, for
what they are worth, as bases for starting the dialogue for “radical change with
consensus”. Some of the above-mentioned changes at the Departmental level have been
proposed by various members at the University but progress has been slow, in part because the university has moved slowly and in part because the university has been awaiting the Zimbabwe University Bill since 1980.

An additional factor to be taken into account in the process of Africanization, married as it is with the Government’s policy of Zimbabweanization, is that there must be definite programmes of staff development. Yesufu has commented on the question of “staff localization and development” as follows:

To the extent that localization is often hampered by unavailability of highly qualified nationals, a policy of indigenization of staff should include programmes to recruit young first degree holders as graduate assistants, and awarding them fellowships, scholarships and study leave, to enable them to undertake post-graduate work for higher degrees.35

The university has made some attempt in this regard but a full-scale programme of staff development will require additional finance from the Government or other sources. As stated earlier, Africanization of the curricula has been often asked for by the “Black Caucus” and, as Mazrui has noted, indeed has been one of the major pressures of African nationalism after the gaining of independence in many an African country.36 Of course, the University already offers a variety of courses on Zimbabwe and Africa in many departments, for example, in Political Science, Economics, Sociology, African Languages, History, Literature, and in Education, Agriculture, Medicine, etc. Recently, the offering of a course on Government and Politics of Zimbabwe in the Department of Political Science and the subject “The African Experience” in the Faculty of Arts, initially through the Department of History have considerably helped matters. Nevertheless, much more could be done, but again this would require a great deal of finance from the Government as the preponderant financier of the University. Additional departments can and ought to be created if the University’s function in preserving and promoting African culture is taken seriously by the University and the Government. For example, as Pongweni has argued, there is urgent need for a department of Music, and a Department of Fine Arts at the University, to these one should add the disciplines of Dance and Drama. In such Departments and other related departments financial provision for appointing musicians, dancers, dramatists, writers, painters, sculptors, film-makers, designers, oral historians, etc., even if they do not have academic qualifications, would make a world of difference to the ability of the University to meet its task in helping to preserve and promote African culture and would be in the interests of the Government and the society.

Further, there is urgent need for what one might call a “Foundation Course” which should be compulsory for all students at the university. The “Foundation Course” would focus on the developmental problems of Zimbabwe in particular with perhaps some analysis of the region from both the socialist and non-socialist theoretical perspectives. Initially, one could mount such a course in the first year and then see whether such a course should be offered over more than one year. This course may appear to some as an “ideological course” but that would not be the intention, rather the intention would be for students at the university to know something about the developmental problems of their own country through the prism of relevant ideologies, i.e., both socialist and non-socialist.

If Ajayi is correct in his view that “the idea of the university is tolerated but not truly accepted in Africa, either by the masses who pay taxes, or by the political leaders who dispense the taxes. If the universities succeed in achieving greater relevance, the mass of the people may move from toleration to understanding and acceptance”, then it is suggested that if the above-mentioned suggestions, or some better ones, are followed by the university then the university will be much better placed than in the past in relation to the Government and the society.

However, one should add a note of caution because universities cannot be expected to perform miracles. As Kwapong has observed:

In the atmosphere of approaching independence, they were indeed accorded great indulgence and respect and generally high hopes and expectations were entertained about them and they were credited with almost magical qualities and near-miraculous powers for independence... A decade and a half later no one today expects these universities in Africa to work miracles.39

Further, there are special problems associated with what Wandira has described as “the one-country-one-university institution”. To some extent Wandira disagrees with Ajayi’s view that the idea of the university is tolerated but not accepted in Africa. He writes:
The university became the symbol of independence no less than the flag, the national anthem or the aeroplane. Africa firmly accepted the belief that the university was a vital institution for the sustenance of independence and development. The legitimacy of the university as part of the national apparatus could no longer be questioned. Next to government itself, a university is the most essential instrument in a country seeking to enter the modern world. Next to government it has the greatest concentration of expertise and talent which can be put to the service of that nation's development.40

Notwithstanding this special position of the university in Africa, the limitations upon the "one-country-one-university institution" are very real:

It cannot share its burden of service to society with another university or institution of equal size and standing . . . Government is also the university's main source of finance. Uneasy sensitivities sometimes exist between university and government. Situations sometimes arise when what the university does and says is immediately heard in the corridors of power and may be weighed against political and security considerations . . . The resources of the one-country-one-university institution are usually very limited. Academic departments are small and the university as a whole is small . . . In most cases the university is totally dependent upon government financing. With this comes strict governmental supervision of university finance and the general management of the university. As most innovations must, in the end, cost money, the university can only innovate as fast as government or external donors will allow.41

Thus there is no question that if the university is expected to Africanize curricula and staff and in the process engage in innovations, which it ought to do, then considerable financial backing will be required largely from the Government. This financial input will need to be greater if, as the university expects, the student intake will be about 5,000 in the next five years, if not in the next two years (as I suspect); this will further strain the already strained situation in terms of additional staff, offices, lecture theatres (especially large ones) which are required even as of now without some of the innovations suggested above.

Further, if the university's links with the outside world, especially with the "Third World", are seen as important, as I do, then there is a problem of permission and finance, i.e., since the legitimate changeover of the Immigration Promotion Board to the Immigration Control Board Zimbabweans must receive first preference in appointments at the University. This is quite correct and indeed it might be added here that for some time the Department of Political Science has been involved in the struggle on campus for the Zimbabweanization and Africanization of posts and that outside of the Department of African Languages the Department of Political Science is the most Zimbabweanized and Africanized department on campus. Nevertheless, even though expatriate staff may be appointed after permission by the relevant departments of the Government, the fact remains that, especially in some disciplines, there is a very good supply of highly-skilled Zimbabwean African academic manpower. Thus there is the virtual impossibility in some Departments of the ability to appoint specialist persons even from Africa, and the "Third World" generally. Therefore unless special funding is made available to the university, for visiting appointments, there is great danger that the University will become incestuous and insular because the University will not be able to engage in the essential Zimbabwe/non-Zimbabwe interchange, particularly Zimbabwe/Africa and the "Third World" interchange.

Finally, I turn to another major element in the relationship between the University and the Government, i.e., the question of academic freedom and autonomy. Universities in Africa, as in many other places, are caught in a paradox because while they may be funded largely by their taxpayers' money through their governments they also tend to be quite firm about the need to have academic freedom and autonomy. This is quite evident in, for example, Ajayi's view of the university in the African and developing situation, which is:

... the idea of a group of scholars and students living together as a community, financed by the public, claiming a large measure of autonomy to regulate its internal affairs, and claiming that such autonomy is essential for its proper functioning and well-being.42

Ajayi recognizes the fact that:

No government, taking seriously its responsibility for developing its human and material resources, can ignore the development of higher education. Higher education is an expensive facility ... The position in most African countries is
complicated by the struggle for power between various group interests... university appointments become part of the resources of the new nation which, like appointments in the civil service, armed forces, police or public corporations, affect the relative importance and balance of the various peoples making up the nation... This means some degree of government involvement in the planning, development and control of universities.43

Therefore inevitably the university in Zimbabwe must expect some degree of control by the Government. The question is what kind of control which may or may not be compatible with the idea of university autonomy. Here I have indicated some kinds of structural changes, for example, at the level of the Departments (and consequentially the Senate) and the Council which would have the twin merit of, on the one hand, significant changes at the university and, on the other hand, allowing for autonomy of the university and obviating direct control by the Government. The suggested one-third participation by the Government on the council would mean that the Government would be involved in the highest body of the university; of course, as noted earlier, representatives of the Government are already able to sit on the Council but here I have suggested an increase from approximately 20% representation to approximately 33% representation. Additionally, the question of public accountability which Ajayi refers to is decidedly taken into account by the suggested addition to the membership of the Council of two representatives from Parliament, one each from the House of Assembly and the Senate, because ultimately it is Parliament which will enact the legal instruments under which the university will operate and it is Parliament which will vote the necessary funds which the Government will request from it.

Ashby suggests that academic freedom may be defined as:

that freedom of members of the academic community, assembled in colleges and universities, which underlies the effective performance of their functions of teaching, learning, practice of the arts, and research. The right to academic freedom is recognized in order to enable faculty members and students to carry on their role.44

In his study of various African universities, Ashby concludes that academic freedom, used in the above sense, has not been curtailed, although there have been assaults on university autonomy. To some it may also appear that universities may "want to have their cake and eat it too", and in a real sense this is true. It may also be suggested that somehow there is something obscene about universities clamouring for or defending their academic freedom when the mass of the people may not have adequate education, health, housing, income and wealth, etc., and in a real sense this is also true. Further, it is also true that we academics may sometimes use issues of academic freedom to mask other motives and behaviour; while we academics proclaim that we are involved in learning, or truth and knowledge, or as I have earlier stated it in another way, in curiosity, creativity and knowledge, or as I have earlier stated it in another way, in curiosity, creativity and knowledge, nevertheless, we would do well to remember that we are not always motivated by the pursuit of learning, truth and knowledge, that sometimes we invoke this pursuit as an attempt to camouflage our individual and corporate privileges, that sometimes we are more animated by our own biases, prejudices and passions rather than by rationality and intellect, that sometimes we choose a university career, because we may be better at no other profession and/or because the university environment may afford us a less taxing, more prestigious and economically beneficial life-style than other environments.

However, even granting all these and other deficiencies in ourselves, I would argue that the relationship between the university and the Government should be based on a greater, rather than lesser, measure of autonomy and academic freedom, with the proviso that the university more emphatically sees its role in terms of the "utilitarian" model suggested earlier, which while emphasizing "knowledge for change" does not neglect "knowledge for its own sake". Analogously, we academics should have no difficulty in accepting Marx's dictum "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it";45 the "utilitarian" model of the role of a university emphasizes the idea of change and the fact that before one can change the world one needs to understand it, or if you will, one needs to philosophize about it.

On this need, both to understand the world and to change it, there surely cannot be, or ought not to be, any disagreement between the university and the Government? After all the university is in important respects a "house of intellect" and so, I admit, is the Government, whether based on Shil's definition of an intellectual as "all persons with an
advanced modern education and the intellectual concern and skills ordinarily associated with it.66 or on Mazrui's definition of an intellectual as "a person who has the capacity to be fascinated by ideas, and has acquired the skill to handle some of those ideas effectively"67. Indeed many have commented on the fact that the Government is the most highly educated Government in the history of this country, and there is no question that the Government is indeed a "house of intellect", most visibly personified by the generally acclaimed intellectual qualities of the Prime Minister himself. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that the two "houses of intellect" (with many individuals and Departments, on either side, already engaged in consultations, meetings, co-operation, etc.) would be better placed for the kind of partnership I have discussed earlier, which partnership would recognize the role of the intellectuals; after all it was Lenin who noted:

The teaching of Socialism, however, has grown out of the philosophical, historical, and economic theories that were worked out by the educated representatives of the property classes — the intelligentsia. The founders of modern scientific Socialism, Marx and Engels, themselves belonged by social status to the bourgeois intelligentsia.48

Of course Lenin is not used here to justify "bourgeois" activities but rather to emphasize the role of intellectuals. And yet, one must recognize that sometimes there may be differences of views between the university and the Government, because the latter is more deeply involved on a day-to-day basis in solving the various developmental problems of the country and whereas the university, while it may be heavily assisting the Government, will nevertheless have a less direct responsibility, for both success and failure, than the Government. Additionally, not all academics and students may necessarily agree with the tactical equations or goals made in the immediate term. Further, because of the "questioning" environment of the university, academics and students may have views substantially different from those of the Government.49 But here again both sides in the partnership need to acknowledge that, as Mazrui notes "What a university owes the government of the day is neither defiance nor subservience. It is intelligent co-operation";50 or as Yesufu observes "The African university should, in normal circumstances, therefore, accept the hegemony of government. But the relationship should not be one of master and servant as such... The relationship between the university and government should be one of mutual accommodation, respect and positive co-operation".51

Differences of views between the University and the Government ought not to lead inevitably to confrontation. The changes in the Council suggested earlier should help matters but if they prove to be inadequate then it would be useful to set up a permanent committee with equal representation between the University and the Government with a neutral chairperson. Possibly this committee should be a mediating/advisory body which would try to resolve differences, for example, policy questions, legal interpretations, and any "emergency" situations, and generally allow time for a relatively dispassionate consideration of areas of disagreement, and submitting its views/reports to both the Council of the University and to the Minister of Education and Culture.

CONCLUSION
This paper attempts to put forward some ideas on a possible relationship between the University and the Government. It has been argued that a serious self-appraisal of our role would involve our tilting more decidedly in favour of the "utilitarian" model, which could imply the kinds of changes in attitudes, structures, curricula, etc., suggested here, which would keep a proper balance between "knowledge for its own sake" and "knowledge for change".

Of course, ideas presented here may well be overtaken by the Zimbabwe University Bill, nevertheless, it is still important for us on campus to think seriously about such matters and it is hoped that this important conference is not the first and last of such dialogues between the University and the Government.

Further it is argued that even though at times the University and the Government may have differences of views, there are many factors which indicate that there is no reason to suppose that the University and the Government cannot be allies in the consolidation of our hard-won independence and in jointly tackling the immense developmental tasks which lie ahead. The essential components of the relationship between the University and the Government lie in a partnership of unequals, based on mutual respect, trust and co-operation, because, as Ashby notes:
"In Europe universities have stood for continuity and conservation; in Africa universities are powerful instruments for change. They must, therefore, go into partnership with the State, and for this purpose they require a fresh constitutional pattern.""


19 The University and Constitutional Change: A Reply. February 1978, pp.1-7

20 Ngoni T. Chideya and Misheck Sibanda, "Decolonizing the University of Rhodesia," op. cit., pp.4-5

21 The University and Constitutional Change: Note by the Principal, 29 June, 1977, p.4

22 Ibid., p.5

23 The University and Constitutional Change: A Reply, February 1978, p.1

24 Ibid., pp.3-4


26 Ngoni T. Chideya and Misheck Sibanda, "Decolonizing the University of Rhodesia," op. cit., p.3.

27 Marshall W. Murphree, op. cit., p.114


33 Character and Statutes of the University of Zimbabwe, n.d., Section 3.

34 Ibid., Section 15.

35 T. M. Yesufu, "The Role and Priorities of the University in Development," op. cit., pp.42-44.

36 Asavia Wandira, "The Special Tasks and Problems of the 'One-Country-One-University' Institution in Middle Africa"; in Hendrik W. Van Der Merwe and David Welsh, eds., op. cit., pp.84-85

37 Karl Jaspers, op. cit., p.135

38 T. M. Yesufu, "The Role and Priorities of the University in Development," op. cit., pp.42-44; Asavia Wandira, "The Special Tasks and Problems of the 'One-Country-One-University' Institution in Middle Africa"; in Hendrik W. Van Der Merwe and David Welsh, eds., op. cit., pp.84-85


40 Asavia Wandira, op. cit., p.80

41 Ibid., pp.86-87

42 Ibid., p.11

43 Ibid., p.15; also see Pierre L. van den Berghe, Power and Privilege at an African University, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), p.9


47 Ali A. Mazrui, op. cit., p.347

48 V.I. Lenin, What is to be Done? (London: Panther, 1973), p.80


50 Ali A. Mazrui, op. cit., p.275

51 T. M. Yesufu, "The Role and Priorities of the Universities in Development," op. cit., p.45
