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PROBLEMS OF RESEARCH IN A POST-COLONIAL STATE:

THE CASE OF ZIMBABWE

by

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The scope of this paper will cover what can loosely be described as social science research taking place within Zimbabwe.

It will not cover the equally important area of research in the natural sciences in Zimbabwe, an area whose history would expose important aspects of the relationship between scientific research and the development of the state in a former settler colony.

In covering this topic, the paper will focus mainly on the major theoretical and ideological perspectives underlying research in government, and more broadly the political context in which research is being undertaken in Zimbabwe. It will seek to outline some of the assumptions about research methodology in the post-colonial period, which we ought to be questioning; assumptions that are liberally peddled in the press, and upon which government policies are often premised. Within the context of this discussion, the paper will also attempt to outline the research in government, within the broader context of the role of intellectuals in our society.

For purposes of presentation, the paper will be divided as follows:

Part I: Brief Historical Background of Research in Zimbabwe.

Part II: Problems of Theory and Research in Practice.

Part III: The Role of Researchers as Intellectuals.
PART I : BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF RESEARCH IN ZIMBABWE

In the past, most of the research undertaken at the local University could be categorised in the following ways:

(a) That which sought, in various ways, to justify the system of white settler rule;

(b) Liberal research, generally working through structuralist functionalist paradigms, with a characteristic paternalist attitude to the oppressed. This liberal research paradigm was developed by the founding fathers of the Departments of Sociology at the then University of 'Rhodesia' namely Professor Clyde Mitchell, formerly the Director of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, and an Anthropologist by training, and J. Van Velsen, also an Anthropologist. As a report on "The Social Sciences and Development in Africa" noted on the University of 'Rhodesia':

"The founding fathers of the new University College, moreover, saw social science research as an important component of social science teaching, as well as a problem-solving enterprise which required close co-operation with government ministries."

In addition, the report continues:

"What is fairly clear from the list of research topics is that social sciences research was conceived of eventually as applied research to eliminate if not to solve specific problems. It also suggests that a substantial amount of research was being undertaken by a number of government departments, no doubt as much to facilitate social control and
Thus, it is clear from the early 1960's that this structuralist functionalist paradigm was clearly being developed within the framework of settler colonialism, in so far as the paradigm sought not to question the assumptions of settler rule, but to seek ways of adaption to such rule. As Shopo has noted about anthropological theories which sought to legitimate the incorporation of Africans into the capitalist system in 'Southern Rhodesia':

"These theories had crystallised into an ideology by the end of the 1920's - and until today (1977) have provided the main resource of legitimation for government policies relating to rural Africans. During the 1930's a complementary set of theoretical assumptions drawn from social anthropology about urban Africans, sought to justify low wage structures, the absence of social services and poor housing conditions. These also crystallised into an ideology after World War II and were to become the 'conventional' sociological wisdom about African urbanisation." 3

(c) An Africanist school of thought which sought, often uncritically, to assert the active agency of Africans themselves in the making of African history. The most important figure of this school was Professor Terence Ranger, who was subsequently deported from 'S. Rhodesia' in 1963.

(d) Finally, there developed in the late 1960's and 70's, a more radical school of research, utilising selected tools of Marxism. The main figures during this phase were Arrighi, Clarke, Phimister, Van Onselen, Harris and a few others. Their
work centered on the process of proletarianisation and labour supply in the colony, and sought to challenge the dualist assumptions of writers such as Lewis and Barber. The body of work produced was impressive and left an important basis for future radical research.

However, a significant feature of this research 'tradition' is that most of it was carried out by researchers, who for the most part were not integrally linked to the major force for change in the country, the Nationalist Movement.

Most research by blacks was carried out in foreign universities, because of the Zimbabwean diaspora during the colonial period. Writing about this predicament of research during the colonial period, A. Rukobo has written that:

"While research in the country generally supported or ignored the undemocratic, racist and capitalist political order existing then, the research by those in exile sought to challenge the existing order. 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 carried out lacked a linking thread of common intellectual concerns - because there was no formal interaction among these scholars". 5

Thus, most black Zimbabwean intellectuals were scattered across the globe. While many were organisationally linked, in one way or another, with the Nationalist Movement, the development of a national research
tradition under these conditions remained extremely problematic.

Attempts to bring Zimbabwean researchers together during the latter years of the war, took place under the aegis of international organisations such as U.N.C.T.A.D. and I.U.E.F. The two sets of documents produced (The Zimbabwe Manpower Survey, 3 Volumes, 1977; and Zimbabwe - Towards a New Order, 1980) resulted in extremely disparate and eclectic sets of papers, thematically and methodologically linked largely by their anti-colonial position.

It needs to be mentioned also that both wings of the Patriotic Front and research units, whose major concern logically at the time, was carrying out work related to the struggle.

Thus, at independence, Zimbabwe inherited a relatively large number of intellectuals, with varied theoretical/ideological dispositions and certainly not knitted into any coherent national tradition of co-ordinated research.

It is important to keep in mind that by 1980, most of the Zimbabwean intellectuals returning home had been trained in universities in Western Europe and the U.S. This is important, not because of any simplistic causal relationship between Western Education and a slavish adherence to paradigms of analysis developed in the West. Rather, it is important because exposure to dominant social science theories in the West has, in important ways, proscribed the manner in which Africans have examined their own conditions. Often African social scientists have come under the influence of Modernisation Theory which plotted a linear path of growth for all social formations, irrespective of the relationship of one social
formation to another, and notwithstanding the specificity of the position of a particular social formation within the World Economy.

Given this dominant theoretical tendency, the task of social research was then to examine the trajectory and form of growth in the developed capitalist countries, and then to analyse the obstacles to such growth that existed in our societies. Moreover, insofar as planning was concerned, this theoretical perspective led to the:

"systematic and vigorous expulsion from its focal concern of anything that smacked of history. This encouraged a purely technocratic view of planning. Questions as to the class character of the state, or the class context of government policy were scorned upon."\(^7\)

The aggression of such conventional social science positions has been slightly tempered by the critique of the Dependency Theorists.

As will be seen in Part II of this paper, many of the above characteristics of conventional social science have been displayed by research in the government of Zimbabwe. However, it is also important to mention that a radicalisation of theory had taken place during the liberation struggle, with evidence of elements of a Marxist critique entering the discourse of the liberation movements. It must nevertheless be added that this radicalisation was, and remains in the present phase, uncomfortably related to the dominant nationalist tradition. As one recent commentator has noted:

"the national movement of Zimbabwe reflects, in its development and expression, the features of a society paternalised by Western imperialism and, therefore, disinclined towards socialism."\(^8\)
Continuing his analysis, the commentator observed that:

"Even among the gurrillas themselves, there is evidence, less of Marxist ideological fervour than of adherence to traditional and supernatural beliefs."

The relationship between Marxism and Nationalism in Zimbabwe is in need of more serious in-depth analysis, before we can reach a more comprehensive understanding, not only of the liberation struggle, but the post-colonial period as well.

At independence, most exiled intellectuals and researchers returned to Zimbabwe, and many entered the state, while some went to the University. Many academics terminated their careers as academics and took up senior positions in the state machinery. The top echelon of the civil service represents an impressive array of academic qualifications.

There were three major reasons for intellectuals moving into the state. Firstly, the belief, particularly amongst progressives that they would effect policy changes most by entering the state. There was, in retrospect, on often overoptimistic perception of the effect that radical intellectuals would have on state policy. Yet, as in an Ibsenite structure of feeling, the nobility of the initial commitment was not negated by the relative failure of the project. Secondly, the comparatively higher salaries being offered in the state. Thirdly, the sometimes hostile environment created by conservative white intellectuals who dominated many departments of the University of Zimbabwe (U.Z.).

As a result of the movement of many academics and researchers into bureaucratic posts, and the fact that many academics at U.Z. have had
little time for extensive research because of the challenge of student expansion, there has already been a tendency for a good deal of research to be carried out by the foreign consultants. This is a dangerous trend because it can undermine the national research base within the country. It also leads to policy makers being influenced by consultant reports that are often insensitive to national conditions, and reflects more on the dispositions of foreign consultants and their agencies, than the needs of Zimbabwe.

One is not advocating intellectual autarchy for Zimbabwean researchers, nor indeed is one advocating a kind of theoretical delinking, to use an analogy from dependency theory, for Zimbabwean intellectuals. However, we should be extremely wary that dialogue between national and international researchers should take place on the basis of national requirements, rather than on requirements defined by others. The pitfalls of liberal and left paternalism are treacherous. It is disturbing that even at this stage state bureaucrats respond more generously, at times even obsequiously, to foreign consultants, than to national researchers. Moreover, such consultants utilise the skills and accumulated work of local researchers, often without acknowledgement. The result is the continued diffuseness of Zimbabwe research, and the definition of such research more in terms of the requirements of international aid agencies, than by local socio-economic realities.
It is probably fair to say that many people who carry out any form of research in government do so in the form of gathering a multitude of "facts" in a largely empiricist fashion. By empiricist, I mean the assumption that facts, in some stubborn fashion speak for themselves. The obsession with facts takes on an almost Dickensian caricature, with the picture of Mr Gradgrind of Hard Times, pummeling in "Hard Facts", strong in our minds. Moreover, this empiricism pretends towards a non-theoretical position, i.e. the assumption that the facts stand on their own without the luxury of theoretical embroidery. However, this pretence of a non-theoretical position is itself a theoretical position, only based on uncritically accepted assumptions.

Empiricism has a very long pedigree in the social sciences, and its presence is particularly felt among policy makers and policy researchers, who are operating under the immense pressure of immediate policy problems. Under such conditions, the tendency is often to gather an array of data to justify one dominant assumption or another, often uncritically accepted.

Commenting on the empiricism of studies on African agriculture, Mkandawire has written:

"The ignorance about the multi-faceted nature of African agriculture is to say the least stupendous. However, this should not be viewed as a licence for the mindless empiricism that seems to dominate much of the work on Africa.

One feature of the practice of agricultural economics in Africa is its descriptive character. Detailed studies of supply elasticities of particular crops, elaborations of 'Cobweb' cyclical
Accompanying this empiricism is a totally inadequate grasp of the dynamics underlying the historical development of particular phenomena in our society: What one might call the lack of an "historical imagination." As was noted earlier, some of the major features of conventional social science research include an ahistorical approach, and a static functionalist view of social structures.\(^{11}\) Let me proceed by giving a few examples of the ways in which this lack of an understanding of historical dynamics, has operated in terms of certain perceptions of policy issues in Zimbabwe.

(a) The Problem of Hunger

Work recently carried out at the Zimbabwe Institute of Development Studies (ZIDS) has begun to look into the historical roots of hunger and malnutrition in Zimbabwe. In an attempt to establish, firstly, that Zimbabwe has a "major hunger problem" Shopo in an excellent paper entitled, "The Political Economy of Hunger in Zimbabwe", has successfully questioned assumptions that hunger can be attributed to such immediate causes as drought. Thus Shopo writes that:

"Long-term changes in cropping systems have largely determined the amounts and kinds of foods produced. The reasons for calorie - protein deficiencies obviously differ among the different groups, primary reasons likely to be low household incomes, insufficient food intakes and high food prices. Changes in any of these factors have influenced food consumption."\(^{12}\)
In another study on this problem, reported in *The Herald* in October, 1985, another researcher at ZIDS, Sam Moyo, commented on the misconceptions of hunger by government bureaucrats. As the *Herald* reports noted:

"Despite reels of overwhelming evidence indicating that Zimbabwe has a malnutrition problem, there has been a reluctance from some government officials to acknowledge this.

For instance, in Chikwakwa, it was the opinion of a salaried bureaucrat at district level, that there was no hunger in the area; as a result the inhabitants were not given drought relief.

But an investigation into the perceptions of the population of Chikwakwa on their hunger status revealed that there was a real problem of malnutrition. And contrary to the opinion of officials it was not due to laziness or failure to heed extension advice (showing poverty in the level of understanding of bureaucrats), but the hunger problem was grounded in objectively concrete material conditions ..."13

The point of these studies is that policy makers and the media often seek the causes of major problems in what is immediately apparent, *(e.g. drought)*, yet the causes of hunger are to be found beneath the surface in the fundamental social organisation of production and consumption, that has developed since the colonial period.

(b) Labour

During discussions on the Labour Bill in January, 1985, there was much debate and comment in Parliament and the business press about the pro-labour nature of the Bill and the lack of protection for employers. In the midst of the debate, an editorial in *The Sunday Mail* appeared, attempting to 'balance' the discussion. The content and tone of the editorial was interesting.
It read in part:

"It is wrong to assume that workers are angels and all of them are imbued with a sense of responsibility. Experience shows many of them to be hypochondriac malingerers, chronic absentees or lazy and undisciplined drones.

Therefore, while it is necessary to protect workers from unscrupulous employers, it is equally necessary to protect industry from irresponsible workers. The law must seek to balance the interests of the three essential factors - employers, industry and workers." 14

The language and tone is reminiscent of many a settler employer in this country. The imagery of idleness is typical of capital. The attempt is made to pose as an arbiter between labour and capital, in a situation in which, because of the historical relations between the two, the conflict is a very unequal one favouring the former rather than the latter. The implication of such conceptions is that the real relations of exploitation between labour and capital are not investigated. Instead we are treated to pious pronouncements about "undisciplined drones". The result of such a lack of understanding is that genuine forms of collective action by workers are then treated as unpatriotic and denounced in the name of "production" and the "national interest". One does not have to become messianic about the proletariat to understand that to analyse the action of workers, one has to penetrate the social relations of capital. Even such concepts as "lazy and undisciplined drones" must surely be seen within the context of the "discipline" of capital and worker responses to it. This, in turn, must be understood in
terms of the specific migrant nature of the Zimbabwean working class. While it is often politically tempting in the heart of industrial crises to send in the troops, the compulsion of an historical understanding of events often forces its way back to the surface.

(c) School Leavers

In early September, 1985, an announcement was made, and subsequently corrected that children entering secondary school the following year were henceforth to be screened. Once again, the media reaction was interesting. The Sunday Mail, once again, reported:

"Given the often reported pupils' indiscipline in schools and the disturbingly high failure rate, Cde Mutumbuka's decision represents the triumph of enlightened pragmatism over dogmatic inflexibility.

While government policy firmly states that education is a right for all our children, it does not say public funds should be wasted forcing education into an unable and unwilling head." 15

The solution according to the editorial was to provide practical skills training, with a bias towards agriculture for the "academically dull pupils".

There are a number of erroneous assumptions behind the editorial:

1. The blame for the failure rate is placed squarely on the shoulders of the children. No attention is paid to the shortage of teachers, the lack of facilities and other material problems related to the rapid expansion of enrolment.

Moreover, the problem of the poor social and economic
conditions in which children have to go to school is not addressed at all. It is not uncommon that children in the rural areas have to leave school at certain times to engage in work on the land. Such objective conditions have to be analysed to understand the current effects of the expansion in education. Recourse to voluntarist explanations of pupil indiscipline are totally inadequate.

2. The call for more practical training in agriculture for the less able is, in turn, loaded with problematic assumptions. It fails to understand the manner in which technical/practical and academic education have been divided in line with existing divisions of labour under capitalism. The division thus has a class basis, and is based on assumptions of unequal access of different classes to different forms of education. Invariably, the limited vocational type education will fall to the poorest classes whose ability is affected by the disadvantageous conditions under which they have to learn.

Moreover, the call for such practical training to be largely agricultural, is based on neo-populist conceptions of self-sufficiency for individuals on the land. Little account is taken of the historical changes that have taken place in land utilisation, and the dynamics of labour reproduction. The idea is also part of a larger policy disease in this country, known as "one sector chauvinism." This refers to:
"An aggressive or even fanatical support to one sector of the economy. Such a position is often sustained by the all too common tendency to research for the "ONE" constraint to economic development."\(^{16}\)

Such a view fails to analyse the historical links between agriculture and industry and the manner in which the mechanisms of accumulation in one sector have affected developments in the other. It is in effect a version of the dualist theories that used to be peddled by liberal economists in the 1950's, and to which Giovanni Arrighi's critique addressed itself so effectively.

(d) The First T.N.D.P.

The First T.N.D.P. is probably one of the best examples of a failure to understand historical trends in the economy. The first two years of independence brought with them a brief period of boom in the economy. This boom was directly related to a number of factors:

- The end of the war;
- The opening up of rural areas to normal economic activity;
- Two minimum wage increases;
- The fact that local manufacturing could take up the expansion in demand without new capital investment because it was in 1980 operating at less than 60% capacity;
- The short-term 'benefits' of international reconstruction aid.

On the basis of such an expansion and other problematic indicators,
the Plan estimated a five-year plan period premised on 5% annum growth rates. The question, however, was, what was the nature of this new demand in 1980/81 and was it sufficient to sustain the kind of growth patterns expected? Moreover, in terms of the international economy, was the nature of the international economic crisis conducive to such growth rates?

As it turned out, the nature of the demand in 1980/81 did not detract much from the structural deficiencies of the demand pattern established during the colonial period. As to the nature of the international economic crisis of capital, there was little understanding of its historical causes or the level of its severity.

In the years after 1981, when the 'Plan' turned out to be no plan at all, the reasons for the failure were not focussed on the internal social relations of our society, but centred almost solely on the drought, i.e. the external and natural factors. In response to this type of analysis of our economic ills, the Annual Review of Manpower, 1983 commented:

"... a problem with some of our analyses of Zimbabwe's current economic problems is that it has concentrated its attention on factors exogenous to the domestic economy. While it is true that such external factors as the recession and natural phenomena as the drought, have had a major effect on the economy, what has received less attention is the manner in which the internal dynamics of the Zimbabwean economy have allowed such exogenous factors to have such a devastating effect. In this sense, even 'such' natural factors as drought affect countries to a large extent, in so far as they have attempted to plan for the effects of such calamities. Thus, the explanatory basis of the drought/recession litany would be greatly enhanced by greater analytical attentiveness to the internal factors of the Zimbabwean economy and the inter-relationships of such factors with external developments."
These examples of policy perceptions have, we hope, emphasized the point about the need for an acute historical comprehension of policy issues.

For policy-oriented researchers in government, history, when it is not ignored, is utilised in an uncritical manner and often based on what are considered "common sense" notions of our past.

These notions are usually a product of conventional social science perceptions, which still operate at an ideological level in the perceptions of many state activities. An historical imagination rarely seems relevant to careerists in the bureaucracy.

In the words of one writer:

"It is easier for an official than for a policy intellectual to have a successful career while remaining ignorant about any aspect of history except the institutional memory required for personal survival in a particular bureaucracy."
PART III: THE ROLE OF RESEARCHERS AS INTELLECTUALS

A. THE ZIMBABWEAN CONTEXT

Thus far, we have discussed the historical background of research in Zimbabwe as well as some of the major methodological and ideological problems that have been inherited by the young research 'tradition' in Zimbabwe.

We need, now, to examine more broadly the structural constraints that have faced researchers in the country, attempting to place radical alternatives on the agenda. To assess this situation, we will need to examine the actual role of researchers in both the government and academia since 1980, within the context of the broad structural constraints that have proscribed their efforts. In addition, however, we will examine the new initiatives that have arisen in the field of research, not only in the state, but in the broader arena of civil society. Finally, a summary statement will be made on the problems of Intellectuals in Africa.

Since 1980, the government of Zimbabwe has definitely taken steps to provide a more serious place for research in the policy making machinery of government. A small number of research units have been established in the Ministries of Labour, Manpower Planning and Development, Community Development and Women's Affairs and Co-operatives and the Public Service Commission. Most significantly, the government established the Zimbabwe Institute of Development Studies, whose major focus has been to produce
research for government that will highlight some of the major problems and obstacles in moving beyond a dependent settler colonial economy.

In the field of social work, as Brand has pointed out,

"social work Diploma graduates have been widely involved in carrying out research projects over the course of the last few years, whether they were employed by central or local government, voluntary or private organisations. Still, others had been involved in a subsidiary capacity."\textsuperscript{19}

Moreover, in this brief post-independence period, several national research reports have been produced within the country. These include: The Riddel Commission on Prices and Incomes; the National Manpower Survey; the Agricultural Commission of Inquiry (The Chavunduka Report); the Population Census; the National Disability Survey; the Housing Demand Survey; the National Trade Union Survey.

The quality of these reports has ranged in theoretical perspective from what one might call the Basic Needs Approach of the Riddell Report, to the more statistical position of the C.S.O. reports, and finally to the more radical perspectives of the National Manpower Survey and the National Trade Union Survey. The Zimbabwe Institute of Development Studies also produced a number of consultancies, as well as some path-breaking research in the field of the Political Economy of Hunger.\textsuperscript{20} Once again, the theoretical perspectives of the ZIDS research has varied from the plainly empiricist approach to a more serious application of
Marxist political economy.

At the University, it must be said that, many academics have spent a great deal of their efforts carrying out consultancy work. In part, this reflects the financial requirements of academics not only in Zimbabwe, but throughout the Third World. Moreover, however, this trend is related to a broader issue in many African countries in which, "there is an evident funding bias against research projects or proposals which are not demonstrably policy oriented." Policy oriented in such cases means, more often than not, ways of finding means for incremental changes within the limits of structural dependency in African countries. As Jinadu has observed:

"An effect of this concentration on so-called applied research has been the neglect of theoretical and speculative research into problems of development and of research into theoretic - methodological issues in the social sciences."  

Directly related to this instrumentalist conception of the social sciences is a heavy reliance and undue respect attached to foreign consultancies. Most researchers in Zimbabwe will have confronted a state bureaucrat who, while displaying a reticence about giving information to indigenous researchers, will readily volunteer information to foreign consultants, especially those attached to the World Bank and I.M.F. This situation is not peculiar to Zimbabwe as the following observation from India illustrates. Thus Ghosh writes:

"One could understand the reluctance or reticence of government officials to discuss policy
alternatives with civilians. Unless, given the cue, they dare not discuss matters of future policy with non-officials. But the same government officials have no hesitation in sharing their thoughts with foreign institutions. This is the tragic aspect of the story. 23

A major result of these trends has been what one might term a schizophrenic attitude within the state process towards intellectuals. On the one hand, there is a recognition of the need for basic information and research and the role of intellectuals in carrying out this function. On the other hand, there is a dismissive attitude towards what is perceived as the less practical and more utopic ideas of intellectuals in the state. Needless to say, some of these ideas lack a practical application, but there are many that are critical and that demand critical attention. Following from this schizophrenia and ambivalence, intellectuals in the state have become more hesitant and at times, even subservient. The need to relate research and advice to policy implementation has sometimes led researchers to see themselves as the providers of information and advice, but with less concern with the policy implementation that ensues. There is also a tendency for some researchers to proffer advice to their superiors, that they know such superiors would want to hear. Uncomfortable information is not always conducive to job security, promotion prospects, and organisational consensus.

This ambivalence and indeed mistrust of intellectuals can also be seen in the attitude of the state towards academics at the University of Zimbabwe: In Jinadu's words:
"The situation is thus, one which, although the government emphasises again and again, the important transformation role of the University, it has generally tended to keep academic social scientists at arms' length partly because it is not sure of their ideological commitment. To this must be added the antipathy between social scientists in government and social scientists at the University." 24

At this stage, it is necessary to ask why is there this schizophrenic attitude to intellectuals and research in both the state and in academia? A major part of the answer to this question must examine the nature of the state itself in Zimbabwe, which has recently been characterised as the "Post-White-Settler Colonial State".

In the words of the author of this conception:

"The post-white-settler state acquires a special meaning precisely because of the historical legacy of white settler colonialism; the inherited economic and social structures that are associated with it; and its persistent and pervasive role within both the state itself and the society at large, as a viable conduit through which the imperialist forces of international finance capital can compromise and control the new state. But is is a state which, in the circumstances of post-independence Zimbabwe, provides a framework within which the leading sections of the African petit-bourgeoisie can also find fulfilment of their class operations as they enter the arena that was hitherto restricted and confined largely to the white classes." 25

In addition to the state providing an important mechanism for accumulation for sections of the petty-bourgeoisie, this state has also been forced to respond to the popular demands of the electorate. This contradiction within the state has itself
resulted in a series of contradictory policies in which a sensitivity to popular needs has often been countered by policy measures that have effectively undermined the condition of the working people in Zimbabwe. It is no surprise that such contradictory positions have led Tandon to refer to the post-colonial state in general as a "schizophrenic state".26

Within this context, it is easier to understand the ambiguous role that intellectuals have played in Zimbabwe. On the one hand, their role as providers and organisers of information, has been valued; on the other hand, value has been accorded to such information and advice, for the most part, only insofar as such information was directly "policy" related, which in practice has meant adapting to the imperatives of capital.

It needs to be said also that this ambivalence towards intellectuals in the state dates back to the days of the liberation struggle, when the relationship of the Old Guard Nationalists and the younger generation of intellectuals became problematic. This situation was not helped by the peripheral involvement of many intellectuals during the struggle, and the limited participation by intellectuals in party as distinct from state structures during the post colonial period. This area of discussion needs much more research and would take us beyond the scope of this paper.

A final point must be made about research in Zimbabwe. Research has been marginalised partly as a result of the absence of organised planning structures in the state. Under such conditions, research has often remained dispersed and diffuse. It is hoped that the new
Planning Agency will begin to correct this problem.

B. INTELLECTUALS IN AFRICA

It is important to note that this weakness of a research tradition is not peculiar to Zimbabwe. Mafeje has said of intellectual communities that they:

"take very long to form and are usually a result of particular traditions that have persisted over time. In the social sciences Africa has neither the time span nor a particular tradition. Instead, it has been a victim of divergent colonial traditions - British, French, Belgian, Portuguese, German and Italian."27

This weakness of the African social science tradition has resulted, in many cases, in the domination of conventional social science theory in many African countries. Many factors have facilitated the reproduction of such conventional development theories in Africa. These include:28

i. The overseas training of social scientists and bureaucrats due to the lack of adequate training facilities in Africa.

ii. The domination of journals and publishing by the Metropolitan educational and research institutions.

iii. The ambiguous position of researchers and intellectuals in Africa in which, while their role is accorded importance, their ability to carry out critical research is seriously proscribed. Shivji has recently written about the weak status of African intellectuals, that given the basic social and political weakness of the petty-bourgeoisie in Africa, the latter,

"can ill-afford to leave enough space for intellectual activity and freedom which is a condition precedent even for ruling class intellectuals to work in. So political space is closed in two interrelated respects:
extreme control of the civil society and, therefore, constriction of any oppositional civilian politics and absorption of the intellectuals in the state apparatus, and restriction of academic freedom resulting in the constriction of space for academics/intellectuals to play their traditional role of the creators and disseminators of ideas."

iv. The external and internal brain drain, the latter case being a situation whereby "the researcher is physically in his own country, yet he is professionally employed by foreign institutions".

Notwithstanding these strong structural pressures for conformity, there developed between 1960 and 1970 a "rapid intellectual awakening" in Africa, at a time when the Western Europe, Marxism was being increasingly restricted to the often esoteric world of academia. The work of "dependencia theory" popularised in Africa by people like Samir Amin, stimulated a good deal of interest in Marxist theory among African social scientists. Such an interest coincided with the broader national struggles taking place in the Third World during this period.

Yet even as African social scientists responded to this radical challenge, their radicalism remained, in many ways, "essentially an out-growth of Radical Western scholarship." Paradigms of radical analysis were often mechanically transposed without taking account of the peculiarities of the African context. John Saul, who in his own work displayed this problematic, correctly criticised the application of "Frozen Marxism", which he defined in the following way:

"Generalised into a philosophy of nature and raised to the highest level of abstraction,"
this variant tends to degenerate into a catechism rather than providing a tool of analysis. To take an example close to home, it seems evident that many of the earliest attempts to develop the teaching of 'dialectical and historical materialism' in Mozambique paid the price of uncritical adoption of this kind of approach. In Frelimo, itself, criticism of such a 'Marxism-Leninism' has not been that students/cadres in party schools hesitated to learn it, but that they learned it too well. So abstract is this 'science' that it has given even those cadres who most assiduously memorised its formulae, very few tools with which to deal in practice in concrete situations.35

This "frozen Marxism" has not been without its adherents in Zimbabwe, where there has sometimes been a tendency for individuals on the left to vacate valuable political space because of the vacuity of their mechanical structures and sloganeering. In the course of such interventions these individuals have chosen to secrete a steady flow of mechanical logic in an equally turgid prose, digestible only to those with a palate for such fare. The effect has often been a shying away or dismissal of vigorous technical work, as well as a failure to appreciate the complexity and problems of policy formulation and implementation. Into such a void intellectuals and technocrats on the Right have usually been ready to step in with their technical, seemingly apolitical, models.
CONCLUSION

It is important for researchers and intellectuals in Zimbabwe to come to understand their role in relation to (i) the state and its relationship to imperialism, and (ii) the working people of this country. We need to locate our relationship to a state machine that is subject to contradictory determinations in terms of the fundamental contradictions of capital in Zimbabwe. As researchers, it is our duty to understand the contradictions of our state and to point out those trends that are detrimental to our socialist project. This means, first of all, understanding where we are at the moment; that is, the nature of the concrete conditions in Zimbabwe at present.

To carry out such analyses successfully, we need to avoid two dangerous trends, that are apparent in our research community. On the one hand, an empiricism that fails to understand trends and ends up in a continual justification of present necessities. Such a position can either lead to permanent reformism or in some cases, an openly reactionary position towards progressive forces. On the other hand, there is the danger of a static, mechanical ultra-leftism, that sets up an abstract paradigm of what socialism should be and then dismisses everything that fails to reach these dizzy heights. The danger of this position is that it fails to provide a strategy for change because it lacks the discourse to understand the potential in given situations. Policy potential is thus dismissed unless it is presented in purist terms. The dialectic of every situation, and every policy statement is glossed over and the impetus for political intervention is lost. Often the result of such a theoretical position is a lofty cynicism that results in political paralysis and ideological fatalism.
As researchers, our radical critique must be based on a concrete political practice, with the subjects of that practice clearly delineated. We must clearly identify the forces for change and develop an organic relationship and interaction with those forces, through the democratic dissemination of our information and the acceptance of responsibility for our policy advice. As researchers, we are both the object of given political determinations on our organisational structures, and the subjects of a political praxis. The extent to which we are successful as intellectual workmen will depend on our ability to understand the junction between those determinations and the space for political interventions. That junction is where we must intervene, and we must intervene with an historical materialist analysis that is able to comprehend the dialectic between structural determination and historical process.

Antonio Gramsci wrote about the need for a new kind of intellectual in the following terms:

"The mode of being of the new intellectual can no longer consist in eloquence, which is an exterior and momentary mover of feelings and passions, but in active participation in practical life, as constructor, organiser, 'permanent persuader' ..."\(^36\)

"Permanent persuaders" - We could do a great deal worse than to use that term as the leitmotif for our work.
FOOTNOTES


2. Ibid - p. 141


7. Ibid, p. 27.


11. S. Amin et al (op cit) p. 35.

28/10/85.

14. Sunday Mail - 27/01/05.

15. Sunday Mail 15/08/85

16. T. Mkandawire - 1985 op cit, p. 3

17. A.R.M. 1983, Division of Research and Planning, Ministry of 

18. History and Health Policy: An Autobiographical Note On The 
Decline of Historicism - D.M. Fox, Journal of Social 
History, Vol. 16 No. 3, Spring, 1985, p.360

19. V. Brand: Social Work Research In Relation to Social 
Development in Zimbabwe. Journal of Social Development in 

20. Note Appendix 1 for a list of ZIDS publications.

21. L. Adele Jinadu op cit. p. 17

22. Ibid, p. 17.

23. Arun Ghosh: For Official Use Only: Economic and Political 
Weekly, February 21, 1987, p. 307

24. L. Adele Jinadu, op.cit p. 66


27. A. Mafeje - The Development of the Africal Social Science 
Community and the State of the Arts. African Association 
of Political Science Newsletter, October, 1986. p. 5.


31. See A. Mafeje, 1986 op cit, pp. 11-14

32. See P. Anderson - Considerations on Western Marxism, Verso, 1979.


