

Ideology and the Curriculum: How did Socialist Curriculum Development and Implementation in Zimbabwe from 1980 to 2004 Take Place Through the Social Studies Curriculum?

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KEYWORDS Independence. Consciousness. Educational Policy. Self Reliance. Decolonisation Socialism

ABSTRACT This study sought to examine how socialist curriculum development and implementation took place in Zimbabwe from 1980 to 2004 through the Social Studies primary school subject. Grounded in the qualitative research tradition, a semi-structured interview guide was used to collect qualitative data. Through stratified sampling, 3 schools were selected from the three primary school classification categories in the primary schooling system. For data analysis emerging themes were identified through content analysis of the interview transcripts. From the findings, positive indications are that through the Social Studies curriculum unacceptable racist and Eurocentric content was removed from the national curriculum. Under constraints, first, the concept of socialism was not clearly understood by the implementers and was not always practiced as expected. The teaching methodology used was not as interactive and consistent with socialist praxis as suggested in the syllabus. Secondly, there was a shortage of resources to support the implementation process. Thirdly, no public debate seems to have been initiated to seek views on the new innovation and the modalities for its implementation. The study recommends adequate preparation of personnel before an innovation is implemented, benchmarking with countries that might have already tried similar innovations, provision of adequate human, financial and material resources to support any new education policy initiatives and increased stakeholder awareness and participation in the curriculum development process.

INTRODUCTION

When Zimbabwe attained independence in the year 1980, she inherited a dual education system along racial lines with high quality subsidised education for the white settler community and low quality education for the indigenous black population. As Shizha and Kariwo (2011: ix) show, "When Zimbabwe gained its independence from colonial rule in April 1980, the majority of the people did not have the opportunities and facilities for equal access to formal education. The education system was very restrictive for the Black population and most only finished

six or seven years of primary schooling." The new post colonial regime declared scientific socialism the country's new ideology. According to Margaret (2013) having experienced the ills of colonialism, the choice of socialism from the point of view of the ruling party was justified as the intention was to develop the masses mentally and physically in order to enable them to work for and develop the country as well as provide equal opportunity for education and wealth. Education was chosen as the main vehicle through which this new ideology would be consolidated. The Marxist concept of Education With Production was chosen as a pilot project to model a Marxist-Leninist curriculum based on praxis. Eight pilot schools for returning ex-combatants and refugees were established and designated to kick-start this socialist curriculum model. Meanwhile, as the experiment was being carried out in the eight schools, the rest of the country's education could not be allowed to continue to use the capitalist colonial curriculum. Efforts were made to purge the curriculum of any colonial sentiments and two school subjects,

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namely Social Studies in the primary sector and History in the secondary sector were targeted as the vehicles to be used to orient students towards the new social order. Commenting on history curriculum reform in Zimbabwe, Moyo and Modiba (2013) note that the history curriculum reflected the ideology of the state to familiarize students with what the new political authorities felt needed to be celebrated. This study sought to examine the extent to which socialist curriculum development and implementation in the primary schooling system in Zimbabwe from 1980 to 2004 took place through the Social Studies Curriculum. A prelude to this paper has already looked at how the Education With Production philosophy was used to model socialist ideology at eight pilot schools in Zimbabwe and a sequel to this paper will look at how socialist curriculum development and implementation in the secondary schooling system in Zimbabwe took place through the History curriculum. The researchers conceptualise the Zimbabwean socialist curriculum development model diagrammatically in Figure 1.

The Social Studies Curriculum

As already shown in the preceding section the primary school system used the Social Stud-

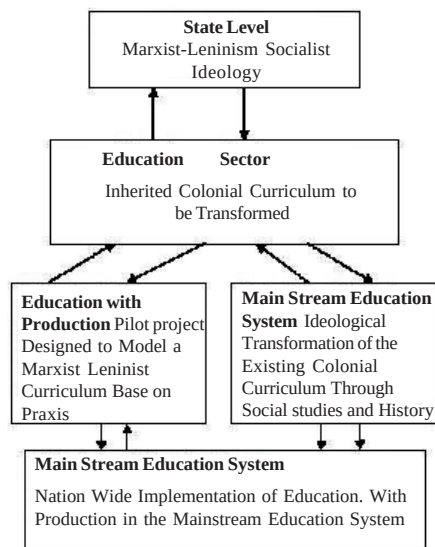


Fig. 1. A personal view of the Zimbabwean socialist curriculum development and implementation model

ies subject to remove racist and Eurocentric sentiments from the curriculum. Notable among the objectives of the first primary school Social Studies syllabus are the following: To develop a spirit of national consciousness and patriotism through interest in and involvement with the affairs and the heritage of his/her community and Zimbabwe and to develop a responsible attitude toward citizenship and a desire to make a purposeful personal contribution to the creation of a united and self reliant Zimbabwe through hard work and dedication to the service of his/her fellow Zimbabweans (Social Studies Syllabus for Primary Schools 1981).

From the two objectives cited above it is apparent that the government intended to translate its socialist ideology into reality. Self-reliance through hard work, a key tenet of socialist ideology was emphasised in the primary school syllabus. The objectives are consistent with the vision of the then Prime Minister of Zimbabwe, Mugabe (1984: 17) now the president, who reiterated that, "While our educational policy must provide the necessary framework and direction of educational innovation and practice, our curricula and methodology must be geared to the production of a new personality which would find a place in and contribute towards the construction of a socialist society." Citing Obanya (2002), Awhen et al. (2014) note that throughout history, societies, both developed and underdeveloped, complex and non-complex, have used education as a relevant instrument for effecting desirable social, economic, political and technological transformation.

The aim of the new social studies syllabus as shown in both the objectives and Prime Minister's statement then was to create a new person who must of necessity be an active force for production and development, not just for himself or herself but for society as a whole. In this way the school system would serve the needs of the nation and contribute immensely towards self-reliance and increased economic productivity. The use of the Social studies curriculum as a vehicle to propagate the socialist philosophy is also cited by Fuchs-Schündeln and Masella (2013: 8) in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) curriculum, who wrote that, "Socialist teaching was an integral and official part of the GDR curriculum. Social studies was an official school subject from seventh grade onwards. It aimed at providing a deep knowledge of Marxism-Leninism, and of the socialist system of the GDR."

Social Studies Teaching Methods

Particular teaching methods are associated with various ideologies. Wuriga et al (2013) contend that curricula for education and training institutions are tailored towards the achievement of the prevailing ideological goals and that teachers need to be able to identify these ideologies and have their own opinions about them. "This is important because these ideologies include assumptions about learning, teaching, the nature of subject knowledge and how education and training are linked to the wider economic political, moral and social circumstances of the time" (Wuriga et al. 2013: 92). This study sought to find out what teaching methods were in place in the primary schooling system in Zimbabwe and to ascertain if these were consistent with socialist tenets. Methodologies used during the colonial era, for example, are not consistent with socialist education. Mutumbuka (1978: 4), commenting on colonial education, bemoans the lack of relationship between what was learnt at school and real life problems. He criticises the yawning gap that separated theoretical knowledge from its practical application and the massive amount of time that was spent on rote learning. He-Mutumbuka (1978: 4) goes on to illustrate the sharp contrast between colonial education and the education system in the liberation war camps thus, "In colonial education the teacher knows everything and the pupils know nothing. In our system there is a symbiotic relationship, the educational process is reciprocated. At one time the teacher imparts knowledge to his pupils while at other times the pupils are his teachers. In this way the two learn from each other... Thus the teacher is not afraid of his pupils knowing something he does not.

Mutumbuka seems to equate colonial education in Zimbabwe with Paulo Freire (1996)'s concept of banking education. Freire (1996) refers to the banking model of education whereby the student functions as an open repository of whatever knowledge the teacher chooses to deposit that day. He argues that in the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. The system of education offered in the liberation camps at the time was consistent with liberation party socialist principles and is consistent with Freire's concept of prob-

lem posing education. Problem posing education counters the hierarchical nature of banking education by suggesting that education should be co-intentional, involving both teachers and students as subjects. In this mutual search for knowledge the teacher and the students develop mutual intentions which make the study collectively owned, not the teacher's sole property. Teachers and students are simultaneously both teachers and learners. They learn from each other and help each other learn. In the same vein, Oats (2014) argues that problem-based learning encourages participation among students through active engagement in cooperative adventures that can turn the learning atmosphere into a democratic dispensation. Freire (1996) argues for a process of conscientization, of an attempt to raise critical consciousness so that learners both understand their social reality and can act upon it. In this regard, Maphosa and Kalenga (2012) argue that by teaching critical thinking skills, the transformative model of instruction enables the students to question and not to take things at face value. They will question knowledge as well as the social injustices that are in society.

Theoretical Framework

The design and development of curricula has been informed over the years by various paradigms and theories. Frame (2003) cited in Ndebele and Ndlovu (2013) identifies three paradigms that have assisted in conceptualizing curriculum development. These are the technical (analytical empirical), the practical (historical hermeneutic) and the critical (emancipatory) paradigms. Although this study is premised on the critical emancipatory paradigm of curriculum development and implementation, the other two will also be briefly explained in order to provide the evolutionary context of the development of the paradigms.

The Technical /Analytical Empirical Paradigm

Understandings of the curriculum within the technical or analytical-empirical paradigm are derived from an understanding of reality as an ordered set of interacting systems operating according to discernible and universal patterns or laws (Ndebele and Ndlovu 2013). Eisner (2002: 123) calls the technical paradigm the rationalist

view that conceives of the curriculum as essentially a technical enterprise. It is argued in this school of thought that schools should be purposive, that they should have meaningful goals and that it should be possible to determine and indeed measure the extent to which these have been achieved. Such an approach follows clearly defined steps beginning with the establishment of broad goals or objectives, followed by the classification of the goals or objectives and their statement in behavioural terms. Next, situations are found in which the achievement of objectives can be shown. Measurement techniques are then selected and used to collect performance data. Finally, the performance data is compared with behaviourally stated objectives. Discrepancies in performance then lead to modification and the cycle begins again.

Harber (1991) notes that this conservative approach attempts to use education to reinforce, support and legitimate the existing system of government and even particular regimes and their policies. It tends to emphasize factual knowledge of the existing system and to devalue the discussion of controversial issues. Emphasis is on knowledge or subject matter rather than on the learner and also leads to hierarchical classification of those that know (the teacher) and those that do not know (the pupils). The major weakness of this model of instruction according to Maphosa and Kalenga (2012) is that it is based on wrong assumptions such as that students do not know and they need to be taught, the lecturer is the all knowing authority and through the telling method students understand. The assumption that lecturers know it all heavily influences them to see student as jugs or containers to be filled with knowledge hence domesticates and kills reflective thinking and innovation among the learners.

The Practical /Hermeneutic Constructivist Paradigm

The second paradigm is the practical paradigm, also known as the constructivist hermeneutic paradigm. In contrast with the technical paradigm, the practical paradigm, according to Frame (2003: 24) assumes that the nature of social reality involves agreement among human agents about what constitutes reality. Knowledge is not seen as free of the interests, beliefs and values of the agents who create it but rather

the process for deciding what is true requires that these agents reach consensus (Ndebele and Ndlovu 2013). The aforementioned paradigm assumes that curriculum work is context-specific and, as Frame (2003: 25) shows, the methodological assumptions that underpin the curriculum in the practical paradigm assume that inquiry and development must involve interaction with the state of affairs to be studied. By implication therefore, curriculum development should take place at the school. Curriculum management under this conceptual framework will involve getting teachers to work on interpreting the syllabuses within the context of their own schools and their understanding of the learners for whom they are responsible. This is unlike the technical paradigm where the tendency to leave the curriculum as it is predominates.

The Critical Paradigm: The Underpinning Theoretical Framework

This study is premised on the critical paradigm of curriculum development and implementation, also referred to as the neo-Marxist or emancipatory paradigm, (Schubert 1986; Ndebele and Ndlovu 2013). The critical paradigm, while acknowledging the socially constructed nature of knowledge like the practical paradigm, differs with both the technical and the practical paradigm in that it views the curriculum as a political process. Critical theory is driven by the interest of emancipation. Therefore, curricula cannot be bounded by considering only issues directly related to education such as teaching or learning but must rather be understood in its broader social, economic and political context. Carl (1995: 8) suggests that in this paradigm a curriculum should enable students to do more than simply adapt to the social order and rather serve to transform the social order in the interest of justice, equality and the development of a socialist democracy. Eisner (2002: 122) argues that this orientation is basically aimed at developing levels of critical consciousness among children and youths so that they become aware of the kinds of ills that the society has and become motivated to learn how to alleviate them. In the same vein, Maphosa and Kalenga (2012) aver that the teaching and learning situation should empower the students and help ease the inequalities in society of power and control which may manifest themselves overtly or covertly through teacher-centred methods.

Curriculum inquiry in the critical paradigm begins with the assumption that the existing curriculum is contestable and requires engagement in political processes that are influenced by the historical and the social context in which they take place. Curriculum development and inquiry will therefore depend on how it has been affected by historical power relations in society. “Central to curriculum inquiry and development process in this paradigm are questions about whose interests are being served or promoted by the curriculum and how students through the curriculum can be moved to greater liberation, equity and social justice” (Frame 2003: 28).

This theoretical paradigm resonates the radical views of schooling advanced by Freire (1996) who draws attention to the need to conscientise the learner to become critical and who sees conscientisation as referring to learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality”. For Freire the essence of education about society is that social reality is made by people and can be changed by people. It is important for learners to see that social and political reality is not immutable and inevitable but that it can be changed and transformed. Critical education means involving students in their own learning and interpretation of the world through dialogue, participation and discussion. As a result, learning must be critical —meaning a facility to concentrate and to question what they read, see and hear so that they can understand that human experiences are multi dimensional, multi cultural and multi accentual (Peresuh and Rahim 1999). For Ndebele and Ndlovu (2013), critical education means involving students in their own learning and interpretation of the world through dialogue, participation and discussion. In the same vein Maphosa and Kalenga (2012) argue that there is a need for students to be taught critical thinking skills so that they do not take things at face value but have critical engagement with any issue that confronts them in life.

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify and analyse challenges facing socialist curriculum reform and implementation in post independent Zimbabwe with specific reference to the primary school Social Studies curriculum. The specific objectives of the study were to:

- ♦ Examine the extent to which the Social Studies curriculum succeeded in modeling the socialist ideology.
- ♦ Examine the extent to which social studies curriculum reforms have been implemented in Zimbabwe.
- ♦ Identify and analyse the constraints, factors and conditions that have affected the development and implementation of the Social studies socialist curriculum reforms in Zimbabwe.

METHODOLOGY

Population and Sampling

Grounded in the qualitative research paradigm this study used a semi-structured interview guide to collect qualitative data from primary school social studies teachers on the implementation of the socialist ideology through education. This study was located in Matabeleland North province of Zimbabwe including the city of Bulawayo. The stratified sampling technique was used to select 9 schools from the three primary school categories. As schools in Zimbabwe were classified into three categories, P1, P2, P3 respectively, one school from each category was selected for study. This was in order to ensure that important insights could be drawn from the different classes of schools. The three school categories offer the same social studies curricula but their historical and colonial contexts differ. P1 primary schools are the former ‘Whites only’ schools found in the former “Whites only” low density suburbs in urban areas. P2 primary schools are the former schools for black pupils during the colonial era located in high density suburbs for the black population. Finally the P3 primary schools are the former rural and farm schools catering for poor rural black communities. The classification was retained at independence for the purposes of affirmative action in funding where the formerly poorly funded P3 schools receive higher per capita grants from government and donations from non-governmental organizations. Five teachers teaching grades 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 were then selected from each school. Because one school had multi-grade teaching, with one teacher taking both grades 3 and 4, total of 14 primary school social studies teachers constituted the sample.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection techniques used for the collection of data in this study were the tape recorded semi-structured interview and document analysis of primary source documents relating to the conceptualization of the socialist education curriculum by the politicians. The main data sources for document analysis were government publications, including, but not limited to education acts, annual reports, policy circulars and school syllabi. The first stage in the data analysis process involved transcribing all the interview tapes. Next, data for each question for all the respondents was mined for emerging themes. Where many respondents provided similar data this was quantified into tables for ease of interpretation. For documents content analysis of the documents was conducted and again themes identified.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results are presented and discussed under the following emerging themes from the data; Social Studies teachers conception of socialist education, teaching methodology for the Social Studies subject, teacher participation in socialist curriculum transformation, student community involvement, the role of training institutions in socialist curriculum transformation, the role of parents in the socialist curriculum process, persistence of the inherited colonial curriculum after Independence and the issue of resources.

Social Studies Teachers Conception of Socialist Education

As the social studies subject was being used in the country to model a socialist curriculum, the primary school Social Studies teachers were asked to give their conception of socialist education. Various divergent definitions and conceptions of socialist education were given. Some viewed it as education that did not have any social class boundaries so that all people were viewed as equals. This is what one respondent had to say; *As far as I understand the main reason behind socialist education is to try and award children equal opportunities regardless of race, tribe or creed so that these may in turn live in harmony with others.* Others saw it as an education that promoted the spirit of giving and

sharing where pupils were taught or oriented in such a way that they could manage to live with anybody from the different cultures and different languages found in the country, sharing resources of the country equitably. Some definitions given were however rather vague. There were others who could not explain what socialist education was, yet they were expected to be the champions of the socialist philosophy as the teachers of the subject. It can therefore be concluded that one constraint of the primary school socialist curriculum process was lack of appropriate knowledge about the philosophy of socialism among teachers. Generally, the definitions given by respondents tend to be consistent with expressions by political leaders. Muzenda (1983: 20), the late vice president of Zimbabwe, notes, "Education must aim to develop attitudes, values and motivation of national unity... development of attitudes of self-reliance and community service." In this regard, Ansell (2002) reiterates that the post-independence government's declared curricular goals were to develop in students a socialist consciousness; eliminate the distinction between manual and mental labour. Similarly Moyo and Modiba (2014) indicate that history (in this case social studies) can be used to inculcate a particular notion of national identity and conclude that school syllabi in Zimbabwe constitute legitimated text created under state supervision. Because the country was emerging from a protracted liberation war, Muzenda saw education as one vehicle through which unity and the healing of wounds could be effected to enable the population to move collectively towards socialism. The quotation implies the stimulation of society towards self-sufficiency through acquiring self-reliance skills. Meanwhile the government of Zimbabwe's economic policy statement, Growth with Equity (1981: 110) views education in a socialist society as an important instrument for achieving equity, translated to mean the creation of relatively more educational opportunities in rural areas which had previously been disadvantaged. Commenting on the aims of socialist education in Cuba, Griffiths (2009), notes that one of the most distinguishing features of schooling in Cuba remains the immediate and sustained move to universalise access to public schooling for all students of school going age, supported by a range of policies to make access equitable for previously marginalised groups. From both respondents' and pol-

iticians' utterances it can be inferred that the new education system was intended to transform society from the colonial mentality of subservience into a new type of society based on the collective sharing of resources. It was intended to create a new African no longer subservient to a master but responsible for his or her own destiny.

To attain this new reality required mental decolonisation as much as political and economic independence. As Banana (1983: 52) observes, "Only a socialist system of education and a socialist way of life can help bring about genuine transformation and the birth of a just socialist society." To transform society therefore it is necessary to first decolonise both the inherited colonial structures and the colonial mentality which accepted and nurtured those structures. Shizha (2013) explains that the school curriculum in post-colonial Africa experiences challenges that are a legacy of colonial education that remained in place decades after political decolonization while Ansell (2002) notes that the Zimbabwe government, for instance, finds it difficult to make innovations acceptable to civil servants or teachers brought up in a colonial environment.

Teaching Methods for Social Studies

This study sought to find out what teaching methods were in place at primary schools and to ascertain if these were consistent with the tenets of socialism. A question was included in the interview guide that undertook to find out teaching methods that were used by teachers with a view to ascertaining whether or not they were consistent with the socialist philosophy. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Teaching methods used by social studies teachers (N=14)

<i>Teaching method used</i>	<i>Number of teachers'</i>
Field trips	2
Guided discovery	4
Participatory discussion	2
Lecture method	6
Dramatization and role play	3
Story telling	1
Project method	2
Group work	2
Questioning	1
Demonstrations	1
Mixed	1

The lecture method emerged as the prevalent method in the primary sector with almost half of the teachers resorting to it frequently. The lecture method is basically a method in which the teacher is more knowledgeable and imparts knowledge while students generally listen passively (Ndebele and Ndlovu 2013; Maphosa and Kalenga 2012). This method has been criticised by Freire (1996) as the banking method of education. Students cannot develop the necessary critical consciousness, reflective thinking and innovation as they cannot question the teacher's authority. It may therefore be concluded that despite the government's call for the learner to control his or her own learning as a precept for critical consciousness this does not appear to be the case in the primary school sector. Thus we find that while social studies should be taught in an interactive manner consistent with the socialist principle of praxis, the passive lecture method is preferred by the majority of teachers instead. In this regard, Makura and Makura (2012) also report that the Zimbabwean primary school curriculum particularly, accepts the notion that teachers are the major vehicles for transmitting curriculum content and associated values. Citing Gatawa (1998), Margaret (2013) observes that the classroom dimensions of Marxist-Leninist socialism were not clearly spelt out to the teachers and that it is doubtful whether the education leadership was itself clear on how this ideological position translated into classroom pedagogy. In a study by Oats (2014) in Botswana, the challenge to make Social Studies/citizenship education more practical was strongly raised by lecturers. Some of them argued that the use of passive methods of teaching in citizenship education lessons defeats the whole purpose of education for democratic citizenry.

Various other methods that were consistent with the Marxist concept of praxis were however also cited by a few of the teachers and these included, guided discovery, participatory method, dramatization, field trips, debates and demonstrations. One teacher wrote "*Eh, usually we involve pupils; let them participate, participatory method. At times they may also discuss and come and share. At times they can also dramatize*" The above teacher's response is in tandem with Maphosa and Kalenga (2012)'s social constructivist view that emphasizes importance of the learner being actively involved in the learn-

ing process, unlike previous educational viewpoints where the responsibility rested with the instructor to teach and where the learner played a passive, receptive role.

Student Involvement in the Community Development

One of the essential aspects of socialism is commitment to assisting fellow members of the community. The community is expected to be a learning centre for the pupils. To find out to what extent students were serving their communities in line with this socialist principle, a question was asked to ascertain what voluntary activities students had undertaken in the community. Six out of the fourteen primary school respondents claimed to have been involved in various activities aimed at assisting the communities they served. Activities undertaken included assisting widows and the elderly with donations in cash or kind and cleaning the local business centers. As one respondent stated, *"We assisted the aged; in topics like voluntary services we could demonstrate that voluntary work... we collected fire wood, fetched water and cleaned their surroundings."* The participation of students in such community initiatives is indeed lauded and as Koliba (2000) states, when students are afforded the opportunity to have a major voice in their schools and local communities, the exposure to democratic practices is amplified.

Teacher Participation in Socialist Curriculum Transformation

One of the main issues in the problem statement was the role of stakeholders and civil society in socialist curriculum development and implementation in Zimbabwe. One of the characteristics of a socialist society is the democratic participation of all citizens in matters affecting their lives, such as the direction their education system should take. A question was included in the interview schedule which sought to find out if the national Curriculum Development Unit had involved teachers in the development of the Social studies curriculum. Only four of the fourteen primary school respondents had at one time during their employment attended workshops on curriculum and syllabus development. The rest had not had any input whatsoever in national curriculum development. Wadesango and Bayaga (2013) argue that participation is a proactive

approach to information sharing among teachers and it makes teachers become good decision makers; participation nurtures teachers' creativity and initiative, empowering them to implement innovative ideas. They go on to add that teacher participation makes decisions more likely to be acceptable and more likely to be implemented because they reflect and serve the interests of the people responsible for putting them into action. The consequences of not including implementers in the development process can be disastrous. What this means is that the curriculum is simply imposed on the teachers without any input from them whatsoever. Ramparsad (2001) commenting on the South African education system advises that in terms of policy development, teachers should be encouraged to make suggestions cautioning however that this has to be supported by training in order that quality information is able to inform policy decisions.

One of the disadvantages of the top down model of curriculum development is that the implementers will reject the innovations, partly because they feel these are alien to them and partly because they might not understand the philosophy underlying these reforms. Examples of rejected subjects due to the top down approach to curriculum implementation in Zimbabwe include Sex Education that was only accepted when it was renamed as HIV/AIDS education and Political Economy that was later reintroduced as Strategic Studies. Failure to understand the philosophy behind socialist education means the innovation cannot succeed. In this regard, in their article examining the challenges of centrally designed curricula in developing educational contexts, Eunitah et al. (2013) recommend an increased and more genuine involvement of teachers in curriculum development to reduce the risk of tissue rejection and disparity in curriculum interpretation and implementation.

Despite a notable lack of zeal by the National Curriculum Development Unit to involve teachers in the curriculum process, there was evidence of school level efforts at involving teachers in understanding and interpreting the new curriculum in the form of staff development sessions. Eleven out of the fourteen primary school respondents had attended school level staff development sessions. Schools were said to have in place subject committees including one for the Social Studies subject. One respondent commented, *Interpreting the syllabus, sometimes the teachers bring topics that they don't understand, some topics that they are not able as far as teach-*

ing them is concerned .So the group looks at that and then they can during staff development pick a topic, plan for it and then one demonstrates how you can teach that topic. Thus we find that although there was lack of initiative for staff development from the national curriculum development unit, teachers in the primary sector had taken the initiative to assist each other at school level. The education process under a socialist democracy should essentially be a collective effort in which teachers together chart the way forward.

The Role of Training Institutions in Socialist Curriculum Transformation

In order for complete transformation to take place, a country's institutions have to redesign curricula in line with the new social order. It was part of this study to find out what role training institutions such as teachers colleges and universities had played in preparing the implementers for the new curriculum. 12 of the 14 primary school respondents had met up with socialism during their professional training, in the Certificate in Education, Diploma in Education and Bachelor of Education professional courses. This was in sociology lessons, theory of education lessons and comparative education lessons. In a study by Ramparsad (2001) on the South African Outcomes Based education system teachers appeared to be severely de-skilled by past education methods, and initiative appeared to be lacking. Ramparsad (2001) recommends that teachers should be trained on policy formulation if effective participation is to be guaranteed. In Botswana, according to Oats (2014) the nature and quality of Social Studies teacher education and training for citizenship education is a key element in expanding the education system to materialise a democratic dispensation. Teachers are thus trained to be able to appropriately impart the social studies curriculum.

The Role of Parents in the Socialist Curriculum Process

Parents were said to be quite active in the primary schools. Parents had built classroom and administration blocks. Parents were said to participate in school activities through School Development Committees (SDCs) and School Development Associations (SDAs). Other forms of

participation were through consultation days, helping with homework and through the payment of fees and levies which constituted the schools' major sources of funds. One respondent sounded quite amused, *Especially with this community, it has been exceptional. They are so much concerned about the education of their children, whenever they have problems they come forward they don't hesitate and the teachers are prepared to meet the parents so that the issues discussed are solved. They don't just sit back and complain but they come.* While classrooms are essential for students to learn comfortably, and fees and levies are critical for the provision of required resources, they do not form part of the curriculum. Parents therefore in the researchers' views seem to play a peripheral role in the actual curriculum development and implementation process. Commenting on the Cuban socialist education system, Gasperini (2000: 13) notes significant involvement of stakeholders in school management and explains that, "School management is guided by the principle that education is everybody's responsibility and participation is an important means of addressing problems of the school. The participatory mechanisms include student assemblies' parents' councils."

Syllabus Misinterpretation

One of the challenges facing the new education system as cited by teachers was the misinterpretation of the new Social Studies Syllabus. Those teachers from the colonial era were at times blamed for failing to correctly interpret the syllabus. *Some teachers went to school before independence and they don't have experience with this new syllabus and that has a negative effect in the implementation,* (Respondent) Another concurred, *Ya, it's like most teachers they don't understand social studies. So at times they really don't understand even how to appreciate it, it's really a problem.* Teachers who were not properly oriented in the new education system could not just be expected to become socialists overnight and implement the new curricula. There was a need for the retraining of teachers educated during the colonial era in order to decolonise their minds. The proper role of teachers in transformation is illuminated by the late Zimbabwean President, Banana, (1983: 54) thus, "The teacher in Zimbabwe today is expected to function in a new social-political environment that is

completely different from that of the Rhodesia of yesterday where he was a constant victim of brainwashing and our schools were the nurseries of servitude.”

The failure of the socialist curriculum in the primary school can therefore be partly attributed to the failure to send for retraining and political orientation of all teachers trained and brainwashed during the colonial era. Even Mutumbuka (1978: 13) predicted the problem when he wrote, well before independence, that the process of deconditioning minds away from the colonial way of thinking would still leave a legacy of values and attitudes ingrained in the minds and attitudes of those people who were educated in the colonial days and that it would therefore be necessary to check and counter reactionary forces and ideas whenever they emerged. Margaret (2013) quoting Gatawa (1998) comments that the impact of the socialist ideology in the classroom practice in Zimbabwe was negligible because the teachers who were the implementers did not get re-orientation in the way of refresher courses or in-service training. Soon, Marxist-Leninist socialism was trivialized due to the fact that their competency in the demands of the ideology was compromised.

The Social Studies syllabus document itself was designed such that it caused problems to teachers in terms of content selection for the various grades. Grades in the social studies syllabus were said to be bunched. So teachers had a problem in selecting the data which fit their grades. One respondent lamented, *As one of the major problems faced by teachers especially teachers who are coming into the ministry you find that this issue of bunching grades, you find that we have got stage one which is grade one to three. You end up having duplication of content.* What the respondent meant was that content for, for example, grades one and two is bunched together and it is up to the teacher to select what content to teach in grade one and what content to teach in grade two. If the grade one teacher is not the same teacher who will take the pupils to grade two, the new teacher might duplicate content taught in grade one. A scenario arises again, here, in which teachers expect to be spoon-fed in terms of content and cannot take their own initiative. The banking concept of education is at work here in which the teachers expect curriculum designers to be the knowers of knowledge providing all the content for them to deliver,

relegating them to mere transmitters of knowledge. Teachers could just sit down at school level and design their own internal syllabii in which the bunched grades could be separated.

The Issue of Resources

Among the factors affecting the implementation of the new socialist education agenda cited by respondents, shortage of resources emerged as the most prominent as shown in Table 2. One respondent lamented the fact that they had to apply to government before they could increase fees and sometimes this was turned down.

One respondent fumed; *Shortage of textbooks. There is shortage of funds because for a book levy you have to write to the government to approve the book levy and at times the government does not approve.* Normally under socialist education tuition would be free and schools would not have to levy parents. The required resources would have to be channeled to the schools from central government. A situation therefore arises where the government wants to please the electorate by refusing to allow schools to levy parents in order to purchase required resources but without being able to supply the required resources. This leaves school authorities in an awkward position, as parents believe they should not pay the required levies. In any case, once fees are charged, the education system ceases to be socialist. Fees mean that those who are unable to pay cannot attend, yet the socialist philosophy argues in favour of equal access to education for all. If parents are not to pay then central government must provide the resources. As Ramparsad (2001) comments in relation to the South Africa situation, there needs to be greater allocation of funds to support infrastructural changes, teacher development programmes, and curriculum resource materials. This echoed by Kanyongo (2013) who observes that lack of financial resources to adequately fund the educational system in Zimbabwe was the main challenge and will remain so for a long time to come.

Persistence of the Inherited Curriculum after Independence

For the new socialist education vision to be realized it was necessary to change the existing education system, including text book material

Table 2: Factors faced by social studies teachers in implementing socialist education

<i>Cite factors</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>
Lack of human, material and financial resources	6
Socialist curriculum not emphasized	1
Lack of knowledge on the philosophy	4
Language of examination	1
Large teacher/pupil ratios	1
Bunching of grades in the syllabus	2

that had been inherited from the colonial era. Primary school social studies teachers were asked to indicate if there were any social studies topics they felt had been retained from the capitalist era and what they felt could be added to reflect a socialist orientation. Some primary school respondents felt there had simply been a merger of various subjects into social studies. One teacher stated, *Ah, social studies encompasses other subjects like science, geography, they were there before independence. Now they have been merged.* This can be translated to mean that the respondent felt nothing new had really been added and that it was simply a change of name. Others felt the wave of change and excitement at independence had since waned as shown in the following response. *I think socialist ideology according to my opinion was also inherited by our leaders but as we progressed over time, I think the socialist aspect of it almost died a natural death.*

From the responses, the emerging conclusion seems to be that very little in terms of content was changed from the colonial curriculum. In this regard, Ansell (2002) citing Chung and Ngara (1985) argues that to preserve and expand the colonial education system and to expect it to form a suitable foundation for the establishment of socialism is both unwise and unrealistic because there is no way in which the colonial curriculum can perform functions alien to its nature and objectives. In the same vein, Ndebele (2007: 286) observes that one of the reasons contributing to the persistence of the colonial curriculum were the economic realities of the country and concludes that, "This task of creating a new consciousness was made even more difficult by the fact that the economy remained largely capitalist and teachers, as the enlightened, would not see sense in implementing a policy that contradicts the reality in practice." Similarly, Shizha (2013)

notes that in Sub-Saharan Africa, arguably, post-colonial school knowledge continues to mirror colonial education residues. Colonial residuals continue to imprison the actions, feelings, attitudes, beliefs and the conceptual capabilities of indigenous people.

A follow up question undertook to establish if there were any socialist themes in the social studies text books in use. All the primary school respondents agreed that socialist themes were evident in the social studies syllabus and that they were also reflected in schemes of work and textbooks. Topics cited included, *Living Together*, which was said to highlight imbalances in various sections of society, the *Liberation Struggle*, *Social Services and Voluntary Organisations and Rules and Laws*.

Some primary school respondents however argued that while initially (in the early eighties) the curriculum was socialist oriented there had since been a shift in curriculum focus in terms of ideological orientation. One respondent argued that the curriculum was now capitalist and economically the country was now pursuing a rather capitalist direction following the re-introduction of fees in schools. Any shift in ideology is usually reflected in all other spheres of the economy. According to the respondents a change in economic policy led to the re-introduction of fees. Since free tuition in the primary sector was the only way to ensure equal access to education for all (a principle of socialism) the re-introduction of fees meant government was abandoning some of the socialist principles. It may be concluded therefore that economic forces had an effect on the social studies curriculum construction and implementation process.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the concept of socialism was not quite understood by the Social Studies teachers who were expected to implement the innovation. There was inadequate preparation of teachers for the new innovation. A comparison of the characteristics of socialist education and the situation at schools visited revealed an interesting phenomenon. While praxis, the process of action and reflection in the learning process is a fundamental element in socialist education, the lecture method was dominant in the main stream education system.

As far as student involvement in community affairs is concerned very little seems to have been

taking place; yet schools are expected to serve the needs of society and hence must integrate with society. In the same vein, parents were also found to be generally passive and had not played any direct role in the curriculum process apart from providing financial inputs.

Another conclusion drawn from the study was that teachers are not prominent in the curriculum process. The top down approach in the curriculum process seems to have been a barrier to implementation of the new socialist curriculum. Although the ideological orientation and consciousness of some of the teachers may be problematic, it is essential that their views be sought during the curriculum development process so that they do not deliberately thwart efforts at educational reform.

A look at the current social studies curriculum reveals that although the country has gone through various eras from the socialist hype, to economic structural adjustment and land reform, the social studies curriculum has remained relatively stable with no notable changes since the new syllabus introduced at independence in 1980.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions above the following recommendations are proposed;

- ♦ Preparation of personnel before an innovation is implemented is pertinent for the success of such an innovation. It is recommended that for any future curriculum innovations, teachers be oriented on the initiative, preferably right from pre-service training in teacher education institutions.
- ♦ Thorough research be carried out and lessons be drawn from other countries that might have experimented with similar innovations.
- ♦ Policy evaluation is a critical component of the policy making process. An evaluation of the challenges facing the EWP experimental schools should have been undertaken before introducing the project into the entire country's education system.
- ♦ Structural enablers (such as clear roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders) need to be put in place that do not constrain the implementation process.
- ♦ Adequate human, financial and material resources be put in place to support any new education policy initiatives

This study left some unanswered questions which could be fertile ground for further research.

- ♦ How a new consciousness is developed through education would be fertile ground for further research as a way of finding out the role of education as an ideological and hegemonic tool.
- ♦ The issue of stakeholder participation in the curriculum process needs further research with larger samples

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