

The Political Economy of Education and Knowledge under Economic Stress: Reflections on Colonial and Post-colonial Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT This paper presents a comparative analysis of the impact of economic problems on education under the Rhodesian and Zimbabwean post-colonial governments. The analysis is based on human capital investment models, which illustrate how economic growth manifests under different socio-economic conditions. Using a qualitative approach based on secondary data, the paper finds that Zimbabwe experienced economic problems during the UDI era and during the reign of Mugabe as its president. In particular, it emerges that the impact of economic sanctions during the Smith regime were relatively positive while the economy proved to be tumultuous during the Mugabe era. As such, the economic stress experienced by these regimes had contrasting effects on educational policies. The central argument of the paper is that education and knowledge are affected by the political economy of a country and they are instrumental in improving the economy, making it a bi-causal relationship.