

Examining the Extent to Which Socialist Curriculum Development and Implementation in Zimbabwe from 1980 to 2004 Took Place through the History Curriculum

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KEYWORDS Praxis. Consciousness. National Identity. 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 History curriculum. Grounded in the qualitative research tradition, a semi-structured interview guide was used to collect data from nine secondary schools. For data analysis emerging themes were identified through content analysis of the interview transcripts. From the findings, positive indications are that unacceptable racist content was removed from the national curriculum. Under constraints, the concept of socialism was not clearly understood by the implementers, there was a shortage of resources for implementation support and no public debate seems to have been initiated to seek public views on the new curriculum and the modalities for its implementation. The study recommends adequate training of teachers, provision of adequate human, financial and material resources to support curriculum reform and increased stakeholder participation in curriculum development.

INTRODUCTION

The year 1980 saw the attainment of political independence in Zimbabwe signaling the end of colonial rule. Efforts were put in place to realign the country to the new political order and one key area targeted was education which had hitherto been denied to the indigenous population, where while the white minority population received high quality subsidised education the indigenous black population had to struggle to find resources to send their children to school. 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.” A similar situation is found in apartheid era South Africa, where according to De Villiers and Ntshoe (2014), non-white learners did not receive quality education during this period because neither the government provided sufficient educational resources, nor did their parents have the monetary capacity to pay for additional educational resources.

The new Zimbabwe post-colonial regime declared scientific socialism as the country’s new ideology and targeted education as the vehicle through which the ideology would be propagated. 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. History was chosen as one of the subjects, alongside Education with Production and Social Studies to model a Marxist–Leninist curriculum based on praxis. Efforts were made to purge the History and Social Studies curricular of any colonial sentiments (Nde-

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bele and Tshuma 2014). This study sought to examine the extent to which socialist curriculum development and implementation in the secondary schooling system in Zimbabwe from 1980 to 2004 took place through the history curriculum. A prelude to this paper has already looked at how the socialist curriculum development and implementation in the primary schooling system in Zimbabwe took place through the Social Studies curriculum.

The History Curriculum

As already shown in the preceding section the secondary school system used the history subject to remove racist and Eurocentric sentiments from the curriculum. A look at the secondary school history syllabi however (2157, 2167 and 2168), does not reveal any specific aspects addressing socialist issues. The entire list of aims appears to be purely academic as shown below:

To stimulate interest in and study of the past;

To promote the acquisition of knowledge and the understanding of human activity in the past, linking as appropriate with the present;

To help pupils towards an understanding of the development over time of cultural and social values and;

To promote the basic understanding of basic historical concepts, such as cause and consequence, continuity and change;

It would have been expected that following a strong socialist base in the primary school syllabus, this would have been cemented in the secondary sector and that direct reference to Marxist-Leninism would have been evident in the syllabus aims. However the aims as they stand do not seem to show how socialist consciousness would be instilled in students. This seems to echo Shizha (2013)'s assertion that despite the advent of decolonisation that started in the 1960s, African education systems mirror colonial education paradigms inherited from former colonial governments. The absence of a socialist emphasis in the aims is in contrast to the curriculum 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. Curricular must provide and enhance knowledge, skills and values which will help the school leaver or college graduate to live better happier and more productive lives in the society which they are helping to mould.

The use of the history curriculum as a vehicle to propagate particular ideology is also cited in the literature. Mafela (2010) argues that history is the most politically and culturally sensitive of subjects, because of the manner in which it relates to an often highly politicised public discourse over national identity. Meanwhile Obanya (2002) cited in Awhen et al. (2014) argues 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. In the same vein, Chitate (2010) avers that in Zimbabwe, from the standpoint of policy makers, history was at the cutting edge of the process of politicising the curriculum content and its position as a school subject was in part justified on this basis.

History Teaching Methods

Teaching methods are usually underpinned by various beliefs and ideologies. *"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). Methodologies used during the colonial era, in Zimbabwe for example, were not consistent with socialist education ideology. Mutumbuka (1978) cited in Ndebele and Tshuma (2014), commenting on colonial education, bemoaned the lack of relationship between what was learnt at school and real life problems. He criticised the yawning gap that separated theoretical knowledge from its practical application and the massive amount of time that was spent on rote learning during the colonial era. Commenting on the Botswana social studies curriculum, Awhen et al. (2014) argue that for the implementation of the repositioned social studies education curriculum for national transformation, there must be methodological shift from the traditional subject-centered meth-

ods of teaching (lecture, project, discussion methods) to child-centered and problem-solving methods.

Mutumbuka seems to equate colonial education in Zimbabwe to Paulo Freire'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 new history syllabus 2166 according to Barnes (2007) encouraged a varied approach to history teaching, involving problem-posing, problem-solving, role play, written exercises and discussions which are tenets of Freire's problem posing education approach. Problem posing education (Freire 1996) 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. Naidoo and Muthukrishna (2014) aver that the primary goal of a learner centered curriculum is to get teachers to guide learners to generate their own individual understandings of different forms of knowledge and that in this methodology, learners are supposed to cease being passive recipients of various knowledge forms and actively create their own meanings. Barnes (2007) further notes that the new post colonial syllabus, "*was designed as an antidote to the rote-learning styles of the past and aimed to encourage the development of students' interpretive and critical skills.*" The rote learning styles are what Freire (1996) refers to as the banking concept of education. 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. Barnes (2007) further states that the new syllabus 2166 took a thematic approach to historical topics, emphasising a skills-based approach by relying on a

wide variety of source-based exercises, and encouraged the development of empathy as a tool of historical understanding. This study sought to find out what teaching methods were in place in the teaching of history in the secondary schooling system in Zimbabwe and to ascertain if these were consistent with socialist tenets.

Critical Theory: 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, acknowledges that knowledge is socially constructed and 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.

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 (Ndebele and Tshuma 2014). Curriculum development and inquiry will therefore depend on how it has been affected by historical power relations in society. Looking at the history curriculum development process in post-colonial Zimbabwe means looking at what the interests of the new ruling party were and how it intended to propagate their ideology through the history subject. As Frame (2003) explains, central to the 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.

The views of Freire (1996) are evident in this paradigm. For Freire (1996), the essence of education about society is that social reality is made

by people and can be changed by people (the socially constructed nature of knowledge). 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. In the same vein Maphosa and Kalenga (2012) argue that there is 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. Premised on this paradigm, the study sought to find out the extent to which the new government succeeded in promoting critical consciousness through the history curriculum.

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 secondary school history curriculum. The specific objectives of the study were to:

- ♦ Examine the extent to which the history curriculum succeeded in modelling the socialist ideology and the development of critical consciousness.
- ♦ Examine the extent to which history curriculum reforms have been implemented in Zimbabwe.
- ♦ Identify factors and conditions that have affected the development and implementation of the History socialist curriculum reforms in Zimbabwe.
- ♦ Advance recommendations on plausible models for future curriculum development innovations.

METHODOLOGY

Selecting Participants for the Study

Grounded in the qualitative research paradigm, this study used a semi-structured interview guide to collect qualitative data from secondary school history 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 tech-

nique was used to select nine schools from the three secondary school classification categories in Zimbabwe. As schools in Zimbabwe were classified into three categories, Secondary School 1 (S1), Secondary School 2 (S2), and Secondary School 3 (S3) respectively, three schools from each category were 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 history curricula but their historical and colonial contexts differ. S1 secondary schools are the former 'Whites only' schools found in the former "Whites only" low density suburbs in urban areas. S2 secondary schools are the former schools for black pupils during the colonial era located in high density suburbs for the black population in urban areas. Finally, the S3 secondary schools are the rural and farm schools formerly 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 S3 schools receive higher per capita grants from government and donations from non-governmental organisations. The secondary school history teacher teaching ordinary level (the school leaving certificate) at each of the secondary schools constituted the sample, bringing the total number of interviewed history teachers to nine.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection techniques used in this study were the tape recorded semi-structured interview and document analysis of primary source documents relating to the conceptualisation of the history 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 participants 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; history teachers conception of socialist education, teaching methodology for the history subject, teacher participation in socialist curriculum transformation, 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.

History Teachers Conception of Socialist Education

As the history subject was being used in the country to model a socialist curriculum, the secondary school history teachers were asked to give their conception of socialist education. Various divergent definitions and conceptions of socialist education were given. Most history teachers' viewed socialist education as education that aimed to promote the equality of man and equitable distribution of resources and which prepared students for a classless society. The issue of nationalism and unity were also mentioned. The following were some of the definitions given;

Socialist education is education that seeks to promote equity and equality. Harmonious relationship and living together

I take this as education that teaches principles of equality and equity

Socialist education I think is having the same ideology of working together and sharing the resources. It is that kind of education which focuses on sharing of resources.

This is when wealth and power are shared equally in society.

Some participants were evasive on the question demonstrating that they did not really know what it was. One history teacher commented; *That's a tricky one. Because you tend to think you know socialist education but when it comes to talking about it, ah.* Generally, however, the definitions given by participants tended to be consistent with expressions by political leaders. Muzenda (1983:20), the late vice president of Zimbabwe, noted, "*Education must aim at developing attitudes, values and motivation of national unity...development of attitudes of*

self-reliance and community service." This echoes a participant from the study who stated that socialist education, '*Is a kind of education that seeks to instill feelings of belonging to the students and the community and the citizens at large. It seeks to bring about national unity.* 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. This is echoed by Moyo and Modiba (2013) who state that the first post-independence syllabus declared unambiguously that the purpose of teaching history was to enable pupils to acquire an informed and critical understanding of social, economic and political issues facing them as builders of a socialist developing Zimbabwe. 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 and supported by a range of policies to make access equitable for previously marginalised groups. From both respondents' and politicians' 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.

Teaching Methods for History

This study sought to find out what teaching methods were in place at secondary schools and to ascertain if these were consistent with the tenets of socialism. Citing history syllabus 2166, Barnes (2007) states that methodologically, the syllabus encouraged a varied approach to history teaching, involving problem-posing, problem-solving, role play, written exercises and discussions; it was designed as an antidote to the rote-learning styles of the past and aimed to encourage the development of students' interpretive and critical skills. A question was included in the interview guide that undertook to find out teaching methods that were used by history teachers and the results are presented in Table 1 below. Some teachers indicated more than one method used.

As shown on Table 1, the lecture method emerged as the most commonly used method in

Table 1 Teaching methods used by history teachers (N=9)

<i>Teaching method used</i>	<i>Number of teachers'</i>
Field trips	3
Lecture method	7
Dramatization and role play	2
Story telling	1
Group work	2
Questioning	1

secondary school history teaching with seven out of the nine teachers using 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. Nwachukwu (2007), cited in Awhen et al. (2014) urges teachers to move away from the present dwarfing and enslaving style of rote learning to a more liberating kind of education, to move from the ceaseless note copying habit and the rote learning habit which produce a generation of school graduates who even after first degree still operate at the concrete operational stage of learning development instead of the synthesis level. It may therefore be concluded that despite the government call for the learner to control his or her own learning as a precept for critical consciousness in Zimbabwe, this does not appear to be the case in history teaching. Problem-posing and problem-solving teaching and learning methodology as advocated in history syllabus 2166 seemed not to be followed. 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.

Teacher Participation in Socialist Curriculum Transformation

One of the main issues in the problem statement was the role of stakeholders and civil society in history curriculum development and im-

plementation 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 history curriculum. Only two of the nine secondary school teachers had attended workshops with seven out of nine in the dark in as far as curriculum development was concerned. In fact, of the two who had attended, one had this to say, *No it wasn't really conducted by the Curriculum Development Unit but it was just a district meeting*. In a study by Naidoo and Muthukrishna (2014) teachers also explained that the educational reforms were carried out unilaterally, the process was not consultative and that the education department just imposed the curriculum on them.

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. Commenting on the syllabus development process, Chitate (2010), states that the structure and composition of the National History Subject Panel, which planned the new History Syllabus 2166 project was not representative of all the interest groups in the country. *"The absence of some of the key stakeholders from this important national, curriculum change organ meant that their expressive views on the new syllabus were not taken on board. When the syllabus was eventually released for their use, they did not identify with it. Neither would they claim its ownership"* (Chitate 2010: 16).

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. Failure to understand the philosophy behind socialist education means the innovation cannot succeed. 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. 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 (Ndebele and Tshuma 2014). 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. Similarly, Wadesango and Bayaga (2013) note that teacher participation makes decisions more likely to be acceptable to the teachers and more likely to be implemented because they reflect and serve the interests of the people responsible for putting them into action.

School level efforts of involving teachers in understanding and interpreting the new curriculum in the form of staff development sessions were evident in some of the schools notwithstanding the notable lack of zeal by the National Curriculum Development Unit to involve teachers in the curriculum process. Half of the respondents in the secondary schools had attended while another half had not attended staff development programmes on the socialist curriculum. One of the reasons given was that the syllabus was no longer socialist. As one respondent announced, *The school is no longer following a socialist curriculum. The syllabus has scrapped the Russian history which was largely socialist.* The quote tells that although initially the Russian Revolution had been a key socialist component in the history syllabus this had now been removed by the implementers. This implies that it was no longer seen as worth learning by students, yet Russia is one of the first countries where socialism originated in practice. Probably, following the collapse of the Russian Federation there was a rethink on socialist ideology by policy makers and this is then reflected in curriculum reform. This again shows that education can never be ideologically neutral.

The Role of Training Institutions in Curriculum Transformation

In order for complete transformation to take place, a country's institutions have to redesign

teacher education curricula in line with the new social order. As the literature shows however training institutions such as teachers colleges and universities were not given enough time to re-align their teacher education curriculum. Chitete (2010) asserts that with reference to the History Syllabus 2166, the problems of its implementation partially arose from the inadequate preparation of the history teachers through in-service training and as a result the teachers concerned experienced serious problems in interpreting the new syllabus. *"The failure by the authorities, to fully acquaint the history teachers with the spellings of the new syllabus made its semantic implementation problematic"* (Chitete 2010: 23). With reference to the social studies curriculum in Botswana, Oats (2014) argues that the nature and quality of social studies teacher education and training for citizenship education is going to be a key element in enabling the education system to realize a democratic dispensation. Similarly, in a study by Ramparsad (2001) on the South African Outcomes Based education system teachers appeared to be severely de-skilled by new 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. 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 got no re-orientation in the way of refresher course 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 Role of Parents in the Socialist Curriculum Process

Parents were said to be quite active in some secondary schools where they had built classroom and administration blocks. In some institutions, parents were said to participate in school activities through School Development Committees (SDCs) and School Development Associations (SDAs). A study by Ndebele and Tshuma (2014) on the role of parents in the primary schooling system in Zimbabwe also found that parents were active in the primary schools contributing both financially and physically in the

building of classrooms through coordination by the School Development Committees (SDCs) and School Development Associations (SDAs). Other forms of participation in the secondary schools were through consultation days, and through the payment of fees and levies which constituted the schools' major sources of funds.

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 seemed to play a peripheral role in the actual curriculum development and implementation process. Meanwhile, other participants lamented the lack of enthusiasm on the part of parents in school matters as shown by one who commented "*Some parents do not even bother to attend consultation sessions with teachers to discuss performance of their children.*" One reason attributed to the lack of parental zeal was that some parents had not enjoyed much educational opportunities in their days and therefore did not see much value in education. In a socialist democracy parents are expected to take an active role in curriculum matters. Parents could for example be incorporated into the various subject committees at school level. Support could be enlisted from those parents who might have participated in the liberation war to share their knowledge and experiences of the armed struggle as part of history with both staff and students.

If schools could integrate with their communities, then parents would gain greater insights on the operation of schools. As Bowles and Gintis (1977) show revolutionary educators, teachers, students and others involved in education should vigorously press for the democratization of schools and colleges by working towards a system of participatory power in which students, teachers, parents and other members of the community can pursue their common interests and rationally resolve their conflicts.

More than half of the respondents also saw the role of the parent as complementing that of the teacher in educating the children. One teacher urged parents, to *interpret history through maybe songs and poems to their children so that when these students come to school they are in a position to link what they have been told by their parents with what is taught at school.* Parents therefore had to augment what teachers had delivered at school through prac-

ticating the values in the syllabus for pupils to emulate. This echoes sentiments by Muzenda (1983:21) who aptly put it, "*The popular people's organisations must actively participate in the administration of their own schools. They must take the requisite decisions and accept responsibility and accountability for these decisions.*" Bowles and Gintis (1977) challenge socialist educators to a programme of revolutionary reforms built around such issues as democracy, that is, active participation by all stakeholders, among them the parents, free classrooms, open enrolment, adequate financial aid for the needy students and the development of a critical anti-discriminatory and socialist content of education.

Heads of schools need to take the initiative to encourage the participation of all stakeholders in school matters. Naidoo and Muthukrishna (2014) recommend the creation of appropriate forums where critical engagement and negotiation occur amongst the relevant stakeholders, over issues and struggles in areas of policy-practice. Mutumbuka (1985: 37) offers some advice: "*Why must our headmasters be dictators? Let them share the decision making with the teachers, parents, workers and students, so that schools become collective communities where socialist democracy is learned in practice.*" It can be gleaned from this subsection that parents have played a very minimal role in the curriculum development and implementation process. They have contributed only indirectly through the provision of inputs and resources. Thus despite the socialist call for schools to become democratic centres, (Youngman 1986) the findings suggest that parents are being left out of the 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' and parents' councils.*"

Syllabus Misinterpretation

In the secondary sector, history syllabus change was slated as being too rapid since in-

dependence, impacting negatively on teachers and resource provision. One participant complained that, *The history syllabus has been changing frequently and teachers have to keep adjusting.* The rapid change in the syllabus was insufficiently matched by a corresponding change in the re-writing of learning materials with the result that teachers continued to use old text book material rendering the syllabus changes useless. The rapid rate at which the history syllabus has been changing suggests that the policy makers did not have a clear sense of what the subject required. Commenting on rapidity of syllabus change, Barnes (2007:647) notes that history Syllabus 2166 was revised in 1999–2000 and then again in 2002, another post-independence history syllabus was released and that, *“This came as a surprise, because the revised 2166 syllabus had only been operational for one year.”*

The Issue of Resources

History teachers also expressed deep concern in terms of resources as shown by one participant who complained that, *Resources were stretched to the limit, the re-writing of the history curriculum called for numerous, enormous resources which the country could not afford.* Similarly, among the factors affecting the implementation of the new social studies curriculum in Zimbabwe cited by respondents in a study by Ndebele and Tshuma (2014), shortage of resources emerged as the most prominent. This is 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. The rewriting of the history curriculum called for competent personnel with the right ideological orientation who would be able to properly design materials that would lead to the re-orientation of the population towards the new social order. Even if the national authorities were able to produce syllabuses there still remained the mammoth task of rewriting books, a task normally undertaken by independent publishers who might not necessarily agree with the new ideologies. According to Chitate (2010: 23), *“Apparently, the new syllabus was disseminated for general use without adequate, relevant teaching and learning resources. Particularly, in critical shortage were History kits with the*

subject matter and visual materials needed for the development of historical skills.”

Textbooks are a most readily accessible resource for teachers and it was therefore essential to ensure that the colonial text books which had been designed to instill a sense of white superiority among the blacks were removed from the scene. Apple (1991) discusses the ideological role of textbooks. According to him, though textbooks pretend to teach neutral, legitimate knowledge, they are often used as ideological tools to promote a certain belief system and legitimise an established political and social order. In other words, the selection and organisation of knowledge for schools is an ideological process that serves the interests of particular classes and social groups (Ndebele and Tshuma 2014). It is therefore imperative to introduce new textbooks imbued with socialist rhetoric and a strong sense of patriotism. Leaving the writing of textbooks to the same colonial publishers would have meant that they would only superficially change their original colonial texts. Shizha (2013) correctly observes that, *“after the decolonization of most African states, the curriculum and textbooks, along with teaching methods were in the hands of the educational industry and publishers of the North, mostly former colonial masters.”*

Persistence of the Inherited Curriculum after Independence

For the new socialist education vision to be realised it was necessary to change the existing education system, including text book material that had been inherited from the colonial era. Secondary school teachers were asked to indicate if there were any history topics they felt had been retained from the capitalist era and what they felt could be added to reflect a socialist orientation. The majority cited international affairs since 1900 as having been carried over from the colonial era with another eighteen percent arguing that the present syllabus was okay with nothing carried over. As to how the syllabus content could be made to reflect a socialist orientation, one respondent advised that for history to reflect a socialist orientation it should be stressed how the Second World War contributed to nationalism in Africa, in retrospect of the adverse effects experienced during colonial rule. Recommendations for additions of topics that

had a socialist bias in the syllabus included the histories of Russia and Cuba and the expansion of the National Strategic Studies Course, currently in colleges, into the secondary sector. There was one respondent who felt, *nothing socialist should be added as the international world has abandoned socialism with the breakup of the USSR (United Soviet Socialist Republics)*.

Seven of the nine participants in the secondary school category stated that socialist themes were evident in the syllabus in contradiction to the two who argued that there were no such themes any more. Topics cited by history teachers included the Chinese revolution, the struggle for Zimbabwean independence and the Russian Revolution which, however, was said to be optional now. Participants recommended that post-war Zimbabwe be made a central component of the syllabus. Text books with socialist themes included, Garlake and Proctor (1985) *People Making History*, Mukanya (1995) *Dynamics of History* and Sibanda and Moyana (1992) *African Heritage*. A look at the mentioned history books confirmed respondents' responses. Mukanya (1995), for example, defines the concept of socialism, and then chronicles the historical development of socialism before going on to give an account of the Russian Revolution.

Some secondary school participants 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. A participant gave the following narrative:

Before the 1990s the syllabus was more socialist oriented. There was no way that a teacher could go through the syllabus without teaching the revolutions of Russia and China as well as the struggle for independence in Zimbabwe. The new syllabus introduced in 2003 is now open as it is no longer divided into sections. The teachers can now get away without teaching topics with a socialist bias like the Chinese revolution and the struggle for independence in African countries.

Any shift in ideology is usually reflected in all other spheres of the economy. According to the respondents the introduction of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) signaled the end of socialist ideology. The relaxation of the syllabus provision concerning socialist related topics like the Russian and Chinese revolutions and the struggle for indepen-

dence in Zimbabwe as shown in the new History Syllabus 2167 (2002) effectively meant that socialism no longer held a priority position in the country. The loose link with socialism therefore meant it had also to be accorded a peripheral role in the curriculum. It may be concluded therefore that ideology does have an effect on curriculum construction as the curriculum cannot be ideologically neutral.

It is apparent from these findings that efforts were made to design new curricula in line with the new social order. As the years went by and circumstances changed, for example, the fall of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, curricular adjustments were also made, for example, the scrapping of the Russian revolution from the compulsory component of the history syllabus.

From the responses, the emerging conclusion seems to be that very little in terms of content was changed from the colonial curriculum. This agrees with Barnes's (2007) findings which show that in the first full decade of independence, the pre-1980 syllabus which had been in use since the mid-1970s was used, sometimes with new and more Africa-centred texts with the first 'nationalist' syllabus released only in 1991. To expect the colonial syllabus to drive the new socialist agenda was in the researchers' views incomprehensible. 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. The issue of the failure of the education system to dismantle itself from the vestiges of colonialism is also raised with regards to Botswana. Oats (2014) cites the then Minister of Presidential Affairs and Public Administration, in his official address to the Biennial Conference on Teacher Education in 1997, who wondered whether despite policy developments that had taken place in the country, the education offered in Botswana government schools produced people with critical thinking, problem solving ability, individual initiative, interpersonal skills and readiness for the world of work. Ndebele (2007) observes that one of the reasons contributing to the persistence of the colonial curriculum in Zimbabwe were the economic realities of the country. Ndebele (2007) 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.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the concept of socialism was not quite understood by the history 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 secondary 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 teaching of history discouraging critical thinking and critical engagement with those issues that confront students in life. Another conclusion drawn from the study was that those expected to implement the curriculum were left out of the curriculum development process. The imposition of the curriculum from the top by the new rulers seems to have been a barrier to implementation of the new socialist curriculum. Similarly, parents appear to have generally played a passive role in the curriculum process only peripherally participating through financial inputs in the form of school fees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions above, the study proposes the following recommendations;

- ♦ Firstly, the issue of involving stakeholders should be prioritised in any future history curriculum innovation in order to promote ownership and prevent tissue rejection. 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
- ♦ Adequate human, financial and material resources be put in place to support any new education policy initiatives
- ♦ Adequate preparation of personnel before an innovation is implemented be instituted

preferably right from pre-service training in teacher education institutions.

- ♦ That pilot testing of new curricular be done before a large scale implementation is rolled out.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study could not answer all questions related post-colonial curriculum reform and leaves fertile ground for further research. The issue of the role of publishers in supporting curriculum reform could be one area of research focus. Analysis of the country's educational ideology could be compared with content in textbook materials to examine the way publishers translated policy into texts. As this study focused on teachers and learners, a further study could be conducted with parents to determine their views on history curriculum reform and what they would have wanted included in the history curriculum.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Due to resource constraints, the study was carried out at nine schools in one province of the country. A larger sample involving schools from across the country's ten provinces might have painted a different picture. The study focused only on teachers and learners and the inclusion of parents and civil society views could have enriched the findings.

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