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6. PARTISAN POLITICS IN CIVIC EDUCATION

Reflections on the Civic Education Landscape in Zimbabwe

INTRODUCTION

In an ideal situation, the education system should be a microcosm of society's culture, yet in modern class societies, it largely represents the interests of the dominant and elite socio-cultural subgroups (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Marginson, 2009). In Zimbabwe, after nine decades of colonial repression in which African culture and history were largely excluded from the school curriculum, the postcolonial education aimed to represent the values and ideals of *'hunhu/ubuntu'*, and reclaim national identity and pride which had been lost during decades of colonial rule (Nziramanga, 1999; Ramose, 1999; Zvobgo, 1997). Consequently, between 1980 and 1990 the postcolonial Zimbabwean education policies were formulated towards quantitative educational expansion for equitable educational access (an ideal that was later in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on education in 2000) and new disciplines like Political Economy and Education with Production were introduced to empower the masses politically and economically. This was geared to enforce the ruling Zimbabwe African National Unity (Patriotic Front) [ZANU (PF)] party's socialist ideology (Runhare & Hwami, 2009; ZANU-PF, 1980; Zvobgo, 1997).

Due to the economic challenges that followed the depletion of the international donor funds after the first decade of Zimbabwe's independence, the 1990s saw the government instituting cost-recovery measures on social service provision through the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) from 1991. As a result, public expenditure on education and health services was severely reduced, as the ESAP market-oriented policies meant minimal government interference in the education sector (Chisvo, 1993; Gordon, 1997; Machinga, 2000; Shizha, 1998). This period, therefore, saw the establishment of several independent schools in the country, most of which were elitist and exclusionary to the detriment of education for all (EFA) and universal primary education (UPE) a later requirement of the 2000 formulated 15-year Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on education.

ESAP was, however, officially abandoned in 2001 after it failed to achieve the main objective of national economic recovery as the ZANU (PF) government blamed Western foreign interference through ESAP (Raftopoulos, 2003). Therefore, from 2000 onwards, the Zimbabwean government made a radical departure from

ESAP's decade of neo-liberal economic policies. For example, the ruling party was patron to the invasion of the largely white owned commercial farms, a detrimental move, which was spearheaded by the Zimbabwe National War Veterans Association (ZNWVA) from 2000. Ending foreign influence and indigenising the economy were given as the reasons for invading the privately owned farms, which resulted in economic woes that Zimbabwe has been experiencing since 2000. After the farm invasions, the government turned on the education sector in order to use it as an instrument of raising 'nationalist' feelings against the West, non-governmental and human rights organisations which were accused of sponsoring anti-government projects through the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party (Mashingaidze, 2009; Runhare & Hwami, 2009).

The view that the country's economic meltdown, which was characterised by hyperinflation, shortage of basic commodities and decline in the quality of education, was caused by Western sanctions became the ZANU (PF) government's rhetoric to try and shift blame from its unproductive economic policies. During the peak of Zimbabwe's economic meltdown, the justification of the government's re-orientation of education to its radical nationalism and the anti-Western discourses received support from those who claimed that "typical African culture ... abhors such practices as greed, selfishness and corruption in general which the education system seems to be promoting through emphasis of Western capitalist values" (Mavhunga, 2006, p. 448). Thus, from 2000 onwards, the government found civic education as one ideological instrument for justifying its radical land tenure system and its antagonism with the West, especially Britain and the United States of America (USA). Civic education was extensively utilised in popularising the ruling party's new political ideology among the youths (Runhare & Hwami, 2009). This chapter seeks to illustrate how the ideological paradigm shift in education policy and practice, after 2000, was harnessed to prop up political support for the ZANU (PF) party, through civic education in both the schools and teachers' college curricular. Civic education is essential for sustained poverty reduction and could have made a substantial contribution towards the achievement of the MDGs in Zimbabwe. The important role civic education could have had in contributing to the achievement of the MDGs in Zimbabwe and the view that it is a fundamental pillar of efforts to reduce poverty and promote democratic governance cannot be overemphasised.

THE LANDSCAPE AND DEBATE ON CIVIC EDUCATION

Civic education (CE), which is also referred to as citizenship education or education for democracy aims to predispose and develop in students skills, attitudes, beliefs and values that will empower them to participate, remain engaged and involved in their society's culture, politics, governance and general democracy (Finkel, 2000; Goldberg, Golston, Yell, Thieman, & Altoff, 2011; Nieuwehuis, 2007). Illustrating the role of CE in England, Kerr (1999, p. 3) observes that "citizenship or civics education in England is construed broadly to encompass the preparation

of young people for their roles and responsibilities as citizens.” Generally, CE is mainly studied in disciplines of social sciences such as social studies, world studies, studies of society, life skills and moral education, history, geography, literacy and social skills, a respect for and preservation of the natural environment and an understanding of the interrelationship of nations (Goldberg et al., 2011; Kerr, 1999; Munikwa & Pedzisai, 2013; Sigauke, 2013). Literature on CE, therefore, indicates that although its scope is broad, the discipline is in most countries imbedded with, applied to or infused into social science subjects (Sigauke, 2013). Hence, based on the observation and an analysis of CE teacher education curriculum in Australia, Sigauke (2013) recommends that CE should not be limited to social sciences since all teachers are obliged to have the capacity to teach citizenship and civic education.

Benefits and Challenges of Implementing Civic Education in the Curriculum

The benefits of CE are alluded to in the aforementioned key objective of the discipline, namely to initiate the young generation into the democracy and governance of their society. In this regard, Goldberg et al. (2011, p. 126) insist that “children in the early grades need to be made more aware of the world in which they live so that they will be able to assume major decision making roles as well as be informed citizens.” With regards to its implementation in the curriculum, CE has generally been treated alongside or within other subjects. Although many scholars suggest that CE has a democratic inclination, it is also noted that the discipline is open to abuse by sitting governments to entrench their ideologies. In other words, almost all the existing socio-political regimes in the developed, developing, capitalist and socialist states, and even despotic systems could utilise the study of civics to perpetuate their grip on power. For example, in the USA, there is a strong assertion that the unique function of the school is ‘Americanising’ the children of diverse cultural groups by positioning strong emphasis on the history of America (Goldberg et al., 2011). Likewise, in Canada, CE is viewed as a means of encouraging a sense of national identity (McKenzie, 1993). In the UK, the objective of CE is for young people to leave school with some confidence in their ability to participate in their society, to resolve conflict and, if they oppose a course of action, to express that opposition fairly, effectively and peacefully (Kerr, 1999). Although Australia is also part of the pioneering nations on CE, there is concern that the discipline is largely divorced from real life situations and that teachers are not confident enough to effectively handle its content and pedagogy (Sigauke, 2013; Tudball & Forsyth, 2009). In South Africa, Finkel (2000) reports that a USAID funded adult community civic education project was found very successful in raising the political awareness and involvement of communities that were previously marginalised.

The significance of civic education in Zimbabwe is alluded to by the main guiding document on the postcolonial education, the Report of the Presidential Commission of Enquiry into Education and Training, which raised the concern that important elements of civic and citizenship education were lacking in

the country's education system (Nziramasa, 1999). Contributing to this observation, Mangena (2006) adds that there has been growing moral decadence in contemporary society due to failure by schools and universities and other social institutions to teach moral values. In support of introducing CE in the curriculum, it is posited that the teaching of morals requires a paradigm shift from the traditional curriculum to one that encourages the cultivation of a whole and virtuous person (Mangena, 2006). This could be achieved by incorporating Afrocentric values of togetherness, communalism and collectiveness, collectively referred to as *unhu/ubuntu* (Mangena, 2006; Mavhunga, 2006). Mavhunga (2006) argues that lack of *unhu/ubuntu* in the education system in Zimbabwe was due to the foreign orientation of the curriculum. Thus, just like the call for 'Americanisation' of the USA through CE (Goldberg et al., 2011), Mavhunga (2006), likewise, advocates for the 'Africanisation' of the curriculum in Zimbabwe. Like elsewhere, CE in Zimbabwe school curriculum has been implicitly implemented through subjects like social studies, history, geography, religious and literature studies, while at tertiary institutions, civic education is taught in the National and Strategic Studies and National Youth Services programme (Magudu, 2012; Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, 2002; Munikwa & Pedzisai, 2013; Nyakudya, 2007; Runhare & Hwami, 2009). However, of late the Zimbabwe government took the initiative to formally implement CE in schools by producing and engaging educators on draft syllabi for the junior and senior secondary school curricular (Ministry of Education Sport and Culture, 2011a, 2011b).

While the relevance of CE is globally acknowledged (Goldberg et al., 2011; Magudu, 2012; Nieuwehuis, 2007; Nziramasa, 1999; Sigauke, 2013), not much has been achieved in terms of effective and qualitative implementation. The main reasons for the ineffective curriculum implementation of CE range from lack of political-will to inadequate human and material resources (Magudu, 2012; Munikwa & Pedzisai, 2013; Nieuwehuis, 2007; Nyakudya, 2007; Sigauke, 2013). In Australia, for example, research indicates that over a third of the teachers were found not confident to teach CE because few teacher-training institutions prioritise pre-training in the area (Sigauke, 2013). Sigauke (2013) adds that the integration of citizenship and civic education into the subjects offered in the Australian teacher education curriculum did not produce well informed teachers in CE. With reference to challenges inhibiting implementation of CE in Canada, McKenzie (1993) noted that CE is interpreted and presented differently from the diverse perspectives of teachers. Since the very essence of CE is to promote democracy, some teachers feel constrained to teach and nurture a type of democracy they may not believe in. Thus, the challenge in multi-democratic states is that teachers may teach CE from their own socio-political background. With regards to Zimbabwe, which is the focus of this chapter, cited setbacks to the effective teaching and learning of balanced CE include political intolerance, dissenting teacher and students political affiliations, restrictive teaching approaches, and lack of non-partisan literature (Magudu, 2012; Munikwa & Pedzisai, 2013).

EDUCATION AS AN IDEOLOGICAL STATE APPARATUS

The study reported in this chapter uses the neo-Marxist theory of social reproduction, which posits that in capitalist class societies, the dominant ruling class can employ education as an ideological state apparatus (ISA) to perpetuate its socio-economic and political domination (Althusser, 1971; Freire, 2005; Marginson, 2009; Wolff, 2004). To Bowles and Gintis (1976), capitalist schooling reflects and reproduces social relations that are characterised by domination and subordination. Another neo-Marxist view understands capitalist exploitation as not limited to private enterprises. It can also take the form of state capitalism since “in modern capitalist corporations, the capitalists are either private individuals comprising a board of directors elected by share-holders or they are state officials assigned to that position” (Wolff, 2004, p. 10). In the context of Zimbabwe, which claimed to follow a socialist state controlled economic orientation between 1980 and 1990, the monopoly and hegemony of state politics under ZANU (PF) could be viewed as a form of nationalist state capitalism. In the words of Althusser (1971, p. 139), “no class can hold State power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over the State Ideological Apparatuses.”

Although the propositions that education is an ideological state apparatus and uses pedagogies that perpetuate oppression and subordination of the poor working classes have been popularised by the neo-Marxist critics of the capitalist systems in Europe and America, in the African context, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009) equates this to the emergence of a new postcolonial bourgeoisie of a small African ruling elite which is founded on hegemonic African nationalism or ‘nativism’. This mono-nationalism is a threat to multi-political, multi-cultural and multi-racial diversity in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Based on the opposition to neo-liberalism, this narrow reconfiguration of African nationalist identity has turned into ‘nativism’, whereby the postcolonial ruling elite use the masses to fight European capitalist competition, for their personal embourgeoisement (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009).

In Zimbabwe, loyal citizenry and national patriotism have tended to be measured in terms of one’s loyalty to the ruling party, which in the post-2000 Zimbabwean era has been termed ‘Mugabeism’ (Mashingaidze, 2009; Ranger, 2004). The changes made to the principal Education Act in 2006 and the school and tertiary civic education syllabi after the ZANU (PF) radical land tenure system illustrates how the education system can be a partisan political and ideological instrument of those in control of the state (Mashingaidze, 2009; Runhare & Hwami, 2009). This chapter uses civic education to illustrate how education in Zimbabwe was infused with partisan politics for the benefit of ZANU (PF)’s political hegemony.

THE PARTISAN POLITICAL LANDSCAPE IN ZIMBABWE

Since 2000, the demand for civil and political rights in Zimbabwe has been depicted by the Zimbabwe government as foreign-driven aimed at reversing the gains of

national independence and sovereignty (Mashingaidze, 2009; Raftopoulos, 2003; Runhare & Hwami, 2009). Through the 2000 farm invasions, the government has inundated the country with a radical political and economic discourse informed by the need to reverse the colonial land tenure system. This enabled the ruling party to portray itself as a nationalist party with patriotic ideals working against the threat of Western neo-imperialism (Ranger, 2004; Runhare & Hwami, 2009). Ranger (2004) argues that any political party that offers an alternative view to the ruling ZANU (PF) party, such as the MDC, is labelled traitors or sell-outs working for Western neo-imperialists organs such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and the foreign media.

The government's post-2000 fast-track agrarian reforms, which were depicted by the ruling party as a nationalist project for empowering the landless, cost the country enormously. Zimbabwe became a pariah state as it got negatively portrayed in international media. This eventually led to targeted travel bans against prominent members of ZANU (PF) and their sympathisers. As a counter measure, the government organised a strong internal support base through educational programmes such as the national youth service training, 'patriotic' history, civic education and the National and Strategic Studies and a firm control of private educational institutions (Mashingaidze, 2009; Ranger, 2004; Runhare & Hwami, 2009). The approach fits in with what the neo-Marxists oppose, because oppressive regimes use education as an ISA to serve the interests of the small dominant group (Marginson, 2009). To this end, it could be asserted that since 2000, the government calculatedly introduced changes in the education sector to produce a graduate who is expected to become 'patriotic' to the ruling party rather than to the nation (Mashingaidze, 2009; Ranger, 2004; Runhare & Hwami, 2009). This chapter illustrates how education, among other superstructures was harnessed by ZANU (PF) in the fight against internal and international opposition to its political hegemony.

CIVIC EDUCATION IN ZIMBABWE

Two discrete but complementary qualitative research approaches were used to gather data for this chapter. A desk review and analysis of changes made to curriculum policy and content of civic education for the high school and teacher training syllabi were undertaken. Documentary analysis included:

- The Ordinary Level History Syllabus 2167, which was introduced and made compulsory from 2003.
- The Zimbabwe Junior Certificate (ZJC – a 2-year junior high school course) and Ordinary Level ('O' Level – a 4-year middle high school course) Civic Education Syllabi, which were finalised but had not yet been introduced in schools by the time this chapter was written.
- The National and Strategic Studies (NASS) which was also introduced and made compulsory for all teacher-trainees from 2003.

Apart from the desk review and analysis of the above documents, the chapter also reports on the narrative data gathered through interviewing 40 teachers and 10 lecturers who were purposively selected because they taught subjects related to civic education. The teachers had attended a Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) of the Ministry of Education Sport and Culture (MoESC) workshop on the Zimbabwe Junior Certificate (Junior High School) and Ordinary level (Middle High School) civic education draft syllabi. Therefore, to corroborate the documentary analysis, the views of 40 high school teachers and 10 lecturers of NASS on civic education in Zimbabwean were gathered through focus group interviews.

Nature of Partisan Civic Education in Zimbabwe

By its qualitative nature, the study results which are reported in this chapter generated narrative data which explored the meanings that the researcher and the 50 informants gave to the objectives and content which guide the teaching of civic education to Zimbabweans. The narrative data are therefore presented in the form of verbatim accounts to capture the socio-political meanings from the perceptions and experiences of teachers and lecturers to the teaching of CE in Zimbabwe (Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2004; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Content, hermeneutic, discourse analysis and interpretation were the tools for data analysis which were employed to give contextual meanings to the documentary study, gathered views and experiences of the sampled educators (Merriam et al., 2006). The following themes were generated from both the documentary analysis and gathered views.

Centralised control of education. During ESAP, 1991 to 1999, there was liberalisation of education in Zimbabwe (Hwami, 2013; Machinga, 2000; Runhare, 2013; Shizha, 1998), which saw the sprouting of many independent schools, colleges and universities. However, after abandoning the ESAP's neo-liberal economic policies, the government of Zimbabwe interfered into the operations and conduct of private schools, because they were suspected of being foreign owned and therefore 'reactionary' in their political orientation (Runhare & Hwami, 2009; The Sunday Mail Reporter, 2004). Therefore, in 2006, amendments were made to the Education Act of 1987 that were aimed at ensuring that government controlled the levies, fees and staff structures of private schools, because of their so-called 'misplaced' ideology (Government of Zimbabwe, 2006; Runhare & Hwami, 2009). Through the Education Amendment Bill of 2006, it became mandatory for all the levy and fee structures, as well as the recruitment of staff for all schools to be inspected and approved by the permanent secretary of Ministry of Education Sport and Culture (MoESC). The new education bill was passed by the ZANU (PF) dominated parliament in 2006 to empower the MoESC permanent secretary to make regulations on the qualifications and conduct of all teachers in independent schools who may choose not to be members of the government controlled Public Service Commission.

Through this new amendment, the government got the authority to monitor the operations of private schools, which were suspected of hiring expatriate teachers with Western political orientation (Mavhunga, 2006). This move was justified by *The Sunday Mail*, a state controlled weekly newspaper, which voiced a concern that “we cannot safeguard Zimbabwe’s future by allowing Brits and their colonial allies to push British, European, Australian or American educational content through our own education system” (The Sunday Mail Reporter, 2004, p. 9). In the same vein, Mavhunga (2006, p. 449) supported the government’s move to ‘Africanise’ the school curriculum because Zimbabwean children at private schools were “initiated into Western culture through orchestrated ‘hidden curriculum’ to the extent that ... what is African about them is only their skin while the rest is European.” To effectively implement such government thinking through the school curriculum, the MoESC issued the Secretary Policy Circular 3 of 2002, to invoke Section 63 of the Education Act, which makes it mandatory for all school syllabi to be developed and approved by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture. According to this policy statement, no school may teach and/or examine any subjects other than those prescribed by the Permanent Secretary of Education (Government of Zimbabwe, 2006; Ministry of Education Sport and Culture, 2002).

Loss of academic freedom in tertiary education. The common practice, the world over, is that university communities maintain their academic freedom from state manipulation through choice of their own governing boards or councils, chancellors and vice chancellors. Contrary to this, in Zimbabwe, President Mugabe, who is also the ruling party president and the commander-in-chief of all the state security organs, is the chancellor of all state universities. Consequently, for security reasons, state security agents have been found to be infiltrating and planting their staff in tertiary colleges and universities as students and lecturers. This has caused fear, uncertainty, suspicion and insecurity among staff and students at all tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe. According to one concerned statesman, the state interference in tertiary education manifests itself through “the undemocratic expulsion of student leaders and loss of employment for outspoken junior lecturers and academic/non-academic staff” (Zhangazha, 2013, p. 1).

The presidential chancellorship of all state universities implies that since 1980, the hierarchy of authority at the state universities, such as university councils and their vice chancellors have been pro-ZANU (PF) since their appointment is recommended by the Minister of Higher Education for approval by the president. Through such a politically inclined hierarchical order, the ruling party has continued to entrench its political despotism even in education. This has caused instability and loss of credibility to the once respected university education in the country and concerned individuals blame this on political fingers. In this regard, Zhangazha (2013, p. 1) is of the view that “the root cause of the problems affecting the country’s largest university is the lack of academic freedom.”

History as a partisan political agent within the school curriculum. Soon after independence, a socialist oriented new History syllabus 2166, which had a thrust on the then socialist ideology of the ruling party, was implemented in the school curriculum (Taruvunga, 1997; ZANU-PF, 1980). However, the new syllabus, together with earlier attempts to introduce Education with Production and Political Economy as substantive subjects in the curriculum, was thwarted by the introduction of the neo-liberal economic policies of ESAP between 1991 and 1999. Consequently, commenting on the deterioration of History in the school curriculum during ESAP, Taruvunga (1997, p. 36) observes that “History was now one of the options.”

After the 2000 elections, which revealed ZANU (PF) party’s declining political popularity, the government restored History as one of the core-subjects in the school curriculum, basing the move from the recommendations of the Presidential Commission into Education and Training (Nzirasanga, 1999). The subject was viewed by the ruling party leadership as one key instrument for repelling the destructive forces that spread unAfricaness or lack of *hunhu/ubuntu* among the country’s education institutions (Mavhunga, 2006; The Sunday Mail Reporter, 2004). Thus, new policy statements were issued by the MoESC to make the learning of national history compulsory at all secondary schools (Herald Reporter, 2012; Ministry of Education Sport and Culture, 2001, 2002). The political logic for making History compulsory nation-wide was that there was need to “reassert the sovereignty of our state in absolute rejection of imperialist machinations of divide and rule, exploitative globalisation, marginalisation, manipulation and control of our political projections in pursuit of both our national and continental unity” (Muzeza, 2006, p. 7). The subject of History was therefore presented as an instrument through which the ruling class ideology was projected and protected among the young generation or ‘born free’ Zimbabweans, who are at the danger of losing the country’s national heritage (Mavhunga, 2006; Muzeza, 2006). Mavhunga (2006, p. 448) supports this ‘nationalising’ role of History in the school curriculum because of the concern that “the teachers of the new History are, themselves, products of the old History that portrayed the European as the hero and the African as the villain.”

Due to the cynicism associated with the treatment of the new History, teachers who participated in focus group discussions generally expressed fear and insecurity to teach the subject. The popular opinion was that there was political manipulation behind the subject as illustrated by the following narratives:

On Zimbabwe history, all teachers know that they are monitored by their students and cannot afford to be careless with comments on the ruling party or government [History teacher participant # 3].

If a teacher says something which is seen as opposing the government, students can report him/her to the party leaders [History teacher participant # 7]

The above statements are an indication that Zimbabwean history teachers taught their subject within an atmosphere of fear and suspicion of the ruling party leadership, especially in the rural and urban low income group settlements where

ZANU (PF) commands majority support. Reports of teachers being harassed in rural communities in the 2000 and 2008 parliamentary and presidential elections were widespread to the extent that some teachers left their work stations for safety in towns (Runhare & Hwami, 2009).

A critical review of the aims, objectives and content of the compulsory 'O' Level History 2167 syllabus introduced in 2003 reveals that it is one of the ideological apparatus of the ruling party in Zimbabwe. The History syllabus's long term objective is for students to "acquire an informed and critical understanding of social, economic and political issues facing them as builders of a developing nation" (Zimbabwe Schools Examinations Council, 2002, p. 2). To this end, Zimbabwe's three stages of the liberation struggles, namely the 1896–1897 and 1966–1980 armed struggles and the 2000 agrarian reform are points of emphasis in the syllabus. To some, this could be one way in which history is tailor-made to reify the role of the ruling party in these historical epochs of the sovereign nation-state and the land dispossession from the former colonial settlers. This partisan role of history was reiterated by the ZANU (PF) and country's former vice president, Joyce Mujuru who implored, "Schools should teach pupils the country's political history to uphold the vision of liberation heroes" (Herald Reporter, 2012, p. 2).

Due to the radical post-2000 government policies and amendments to laws that threatened the political status of ZANU (PF), the emphasis on party as the liberator in the new 'patriotic history', and the concept of 'positive national identity' were approved by the ruling party. A case in point, in this regard, is the conferment of hero status, which is defined by the ruling party's criteria at all levels. Alluding to the introduction of the new 'patriotic' form of History in Zimbabwe which undermined national historiography in Zimbabwe after 2000, Ranger (2004, p. 7) observes that "education in Zimbabwe is under pressure to teach what has recently come to be called Mugabeism." As a direct response to the political threat of ZANU (PF) by the opposition the MDC party, Zimbabwean 'patriotic history' was fine-tuned to emphasise the division of the nation into 'patriots' and 'sell-outs', as represented by ZANU (PF) and the MDC, respectively (Ranger, 2004). Thus, instead of teaching progressive nationalist history of anti-colonial struggle, education in Zimbabwe teaches a partisan history that fosters division or partisan nationalism, that has no space for questions and alternatives to nation building which is defined by ZANU (PF) (Mashingaidze, 2009; Ranger, 2004). Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009) views such narrowly defined postcolonial African hegemonic nationalism as 'nativism', which is a threat to multi-political, multicultural and multi-racial diversity in the African political landscape. This politicisation of the History school curriculum in Zimbabwe has proved to be a challenge to most subject teachers because it compromised teacher professionalism through its subjective assessment of historical events. The dilemma faced by history teachers in handling the 'new patriotic' history is illustrated by the widely expressed concern by interviewed teachers who expressed the following concerns:

Since 1980, I have noted that history supports the ruling party. One time history of Russia and China was emphasised because the government wanted socialism. Now it is about the programme of taking land from whites [History teacher participant #5].

Making reference to the period of inter-political party violence another History teacher added that:

You cannot separate history from the country's politics. One has to be very careful on how to teach current affairs like elections, land political parties in the country [History teacher participant # 8].

These examples in the treatment of the content of Zimbabwean history point to the political manipulation by the ruling party to use education as an ideological instrument to protect and maintain its political domination which negatively impacts on History teachers' instructional professionalism.

Partisan civic education school curriculum in Zimbabwe. Apart from History, the government sought to introduce CE as a substantive subject in the secondary school curriculum at both the ZJC and Ordinary Level in order to “foster patriotism and national identity among learners” (Ministry of Education Sport and Culture, 2011a, 2011b). From the proposed syllabi content for both ZJC and O Level CE, this aim is reflected through the inclusion of themes such as National History, Nationhood and Constitutionalism, which are broken down into topics such as the country's pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial history in order to portray the negative impact of European imperialism and the successful resistance to it, the land reform and unity accord under the ZANU (PF) government, postcolonial national symbols, national events/celebrations and the country's constitution.

Given the radicalisation of the land tenure system by ZANU (PF) after 2000, it is not surprising that the issue of land reform is emphasised in the proposed ZJC and O Level CE syllabi, (Ministry of Education Sport and Culture, 2011a, 2011b). This was confirmed by most of the interviewed teachers, who indicated that the land issue is at the centre of both the History and proposed CE syllabi because ZANU (PF) aimed to justify and seek support for its post-2000 land invasion which was legally contested. The following sentiments serve to illustrate how most of the interviewed teachers perceived the motives for the repeated inclusion of the land question in the school curriculum:

Land is a political issue in Zimbabwe, ... every teacher knows the danger of teaching against government policy [History teacher participant # 6].

Another teacher who taught both History and participated in the proposed CE syllabi workshops illustrated the relationship between topics on the country's struggle for independence and the land issue:

The Zimbabwe History emphasises that the liberation war was to take back the land from the colonisers... It is the same with the new CE syllabus in which the fight for land is taught as the third war of liberating the country [ZJC CE teacher participant].

The other major aim of the proposed CE Syllabi is stated as the creation of awareness of personal, national and global identity among learners, which is explored through topics like personal identity, relationships, religion, arts, language, Zimbabwean cultural norms and values as well as study of national, regional, continental and international organisations. Most of the interviewed teachers indicated that they understood that they were required to teach about Zimbabwe as an independent and sovereign state so that Zimbabwean youths develop a spirit of pride, and responsibility in order to jealously guard the gains of independence from the former colonial masters and Western neo-colonialists:

With such a new subject, teachers will have to rely on state newspapers and the radio to understand how to protect the country's national pride against the West [History teacher and CE syllabi workshop participant # 3].

To illustrate the general problem of lack of teaching and learning resources which CE teachers encountered, one of the participants indicated that since the CE teachers were not trained, they were left in the deep end and this is why it was first taught by those who were thought to be politically correct on government policies:

One has to first attend the national youth service course... There are no books and so those who have passed through national youth service before college might have the correct knowledge [History teacher and CE syllabi workshop participant # 5]

On a different but related note, some of the teachers who had completed their teaching qualification after the introduction of the National and Strategic Studies as a compulsory discipline in tertiary education indicated that NASS empowered teachers to handle the proposed CE syllabus:

It's better now because at college, there is now National and Strategic Studies which is similar to the new CE syllabus. The topics in NASS and CE are not different at all [History teacher and CE syllabi workshop participant # 7].

Although there was a general agreement among the interviewed teachers that the aims and content of the proposed ZJC and O Level civic education syllabi on paper seem noble in addressing socio-economic and political challenges of Zimbabwe, there were some mixed feelings and scepticism on the actual motives for introducing the subject at a time when the country faced serious political and economic challenges:

CE is good if you look at most of the topics, but the way the subject was introduced will never make teachers comfortable to teach it because it was introduced by force and at a time when there was serious violence against

teachers who were suspected to support MDC [Religious Education teacher and CE syllabi workshop participant # 1].

Another teacher concurred that if there were no political connotations, the proposed CE syllabi for secondary schooling could be progressive:

The problem with CE is not about its content, but how the topics should be taught. Although there is a unity government now, teachers know that the subject should be taught with a bias against the prime minister's MDC party [Geography teacher and CE syllabi workshop participant # 3].

Added to these concerns is the observation that the National Civic Education Panel excluded teachers' professional and labour associations such as Zimbabwe Teachers' Association (ZIMTA), Progressive Teachers' Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ), National Association of Secondary Heads (NASH), National Association of Primary Heads (NAPH) and the Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU) and representatives from non-state actors. Instead, the so-called panel was comprised of the arms of government such as Ministries of Parliamentary and Constitutional Affairs, Local Government, Rural and Urban Development, and Higher and Tertiary Education, the Curriculum Unit, the Zimbabwe Schools Examinations Council, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission and the state instituted Anti-Corruption Commission (Ministry of Education Sport and Culture, 2011a, 2011b). It is on the basis of such an observation that political motives were imbedded in the introduction of the civic education curriculum in Zimbabwean schools and teacher education colleges. This is further reflected by the objective that, as Zimbabwe faced many economic and political challenges in the post-2000 era, education was assigned the function of playing "a meaningful role in nation building and project a positive national identity" (Zimbabwe Schools Examinations Council, 2002, p. 4) in which "the concept of 'positive national identity' [is] defined in terms of what is approved by the ruling party" (Runhare & Hwami, 2009, p. 103).

Political role of national and strategic studies (NASS) in teacher education. The threat of ZANU (PF)'s grip on power since 2000 resulted in educators being strongly suspected of supporting the MDC opposition party (Runhare & Hwami, 2009). This was no surprise since the MDC party has a large following among workers and urban dwellers due to its close links with trade unionism in the country (Human Rights Forum, 2002; Runhare & Hwami, 2009). After the 2002 presidential elections in which the MDC made strong gains, the government saw an urgent need to reclaim what it defined to be a true Zimbabwean identity with a sense of patriotism among all teacher-trainees in the country. Like in the case of the proposed CE in schools, teachers' college lecturers who participated in this study concurred that the introduction of NASS was politically motivated because all colleges were directed to promptly introduce NASS as a compulsory aspect of their Professional Studies course from 2003 (Mapetere et al., 2012; Mashingaidze, 2009; Nyakudya, 2007;

Runhare & Hwami, 2009). This was confirmed by most participants in this study as illustrated by the following two extracts:

I was just recruited without any training to teach the subject and had to use my common sense judging from the objectives of the syllabus [College lecturer participant # 3].

Each college had to come up with a syllabus as a matter of urgency and have it approved by the University. There were some who were lucky to attend a day or so workshop [College lecturer participant # 5].

Through a ministerial directive, teachers' were instructed to design their NASS syllabi for endorsement and accreditation by the University of Zimbabwe's Department of Teacher Education (DTE) which accredits all teacher education programmes in the country (Mapetere et al., 2012; Mashingaidze, 2009; Nyakudya, 2007; Runhare & Hwami, 2009). This is contrary to the formal procedure that "teacher education in Zimbabwe falls under the DTE in terms of syllabus development, examination and certification" (Runhare & Hwami, 2009:106). However, in the case of introducing NASS, the subject was fully initiated, developed and examined by the arms of government, and DTE was only used to rubber stamp it (Runhare & Hwami, 2009). Initially, DTE tried to resist the infusion of NASS into its partnership with teacher education colleges due to inadequate justification on the contribution of NASS to the teaching profession (Mashingaidze, 2009; Nyakudya, 2007; Runhare & Hwami, 2009) but there was coercive pressure from the Ministry of Higher Education for it at all tertiary institutions in the country. Reflecting on first-hand experience, as one of the first recruits to teach NASS, Nyakudya (2007, p. 117) evokes that "the ministry simply produced a statutory instrument making it mandatory... to introduce the new subject that would be compulsory for every student going through the institution."

The objectives and content of the NASS syllabus correspond with and complement the compulsory 'O' Level History 2167 and CE, which were introduced during the period characterised by economic and political problems and the loss of the ruling party's popularity. There was no national representation in the panel that came up with the NASS syllabi since colleges were hastily required to recruit staff and come up with a draft syllabus for consideration (Nyakudya, 2007). Even those who are supportive of NASS, do not indicate the participation of representatives of organisations for students, teachers, college and university lecturers and non-state stakeholders in business and human rights sectors. In fact, what Mapetere et al. (2012) claim to be:

consultation of "a wide array of stakeholders ... prior to the introduction of the subject in teachers' colleges" only comprised government representatives such as "officials from Ministries of Education Sport and Culture, Ministry of Youth Development and Employment Creation, College principals, officials from National Museums and Monuments, the book publishing

industry and the University of Zimbabwe (Teacher Education Department).
(p. 1582)

The parties either represented interests of the ruling party or did not have courage to present any alternative to government thinking. The inclusion of the Ministry of Youth Development and Employment Creation is no surprise given the widely held view that the ministry had taken over the selection of candidates for all public tertiary education institutions through the requirement for national youth service training for all school graduates which was introduced at National Youth Training camps by the late ZANU (PF) national commissar, Border Gezi (Mashingaidze, 2009; Nyakudya, 2007; Ranger, 2004; Runhare & Hwami, 2009). Indeed, a report by a state controlled newspaper, *The Herald*, confirmed that national youth service training was conducted “by an array of fundis in various fields who included war veterans from both ZANU and ZAPU” (Nelson Chenga cited in Ranger, 2004, p. 12). Of the two non-state panellists, it is observed that the University of Zimbabwe’s Department of Teacher Education was represented to fulfil a requirement by the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education that University of Zimbabwe should rubber stamp the subject, while book publishers would by obligation produce ‘relevant’ literature on the subject, in line with government expectations. These observations cast doubt on the extent to which NASS aimed to improve teacher professionalism.

Added to the denigration of the education system through the national youth service training was the lucrative presidential scholarship. On paper, this scholarship is meant to benefit children from poor backgrounds, yet in practice it is only accessed by children of ZANU (PF) cadres, mostly those of the top party officials whose children ended up in top overseas universities when Zimbabwe’s education declined due to the economic meltdown between 2000 and 2008. ZANU (PF) dangles the presidential scholarship as a carrot to lure support from the youths. Although the NASS syllabus is on paper a broad representation of content on national and international civic education issues (Mapetere et al., 2012), most lecturers of the discipline indicated that one had to select topics and teach ‘accordingly’, in view of the background and government’s objectives for introducing NASS:

No one has courage to criticise government policy on things like land reform, elections, media or sanctions. There is no choice, unless one chooses to be picked up by the C10¹ (College lecturer participant # 5).

The problem with NASS is that there is no clear qualification for teaching the subject. Some lecturers think it’s taught by C10. To be safe, most choose topics like Gender, HIV/AIDS, MDGs which are not political at all (College lecturer participant # 3).

What is viewed as teaching ‘accordingly’ is depicted by examinations which are developed by the Higher Education Examinations Council (HEXCO) which put more emphasis on ZANU (PF)’s political hegemony, especially before the MDC and

ZANU (PF) coalition government of 2008. Before then, it was not uncommon to get questions that asked students to identify political parties that are patriotic and those that serve the interests of imperialists. The following extracts of questions from the HEXCO 2011 NASS Paper No. 401/S01 illustrate the bias with which NASS was handled. Section A had the following questions:

1. Demonstrate the need to use the term LAND REFORM rather than any of the following terms: land grab, farm occupations and land seizures.
2. Does the Western Media create a positive or a negative perception about Zimbabwe's land reform?
3. Demonstrate the problems of people who suffer from colonial hangover.
4. In what ways is land reform a fundamental human right in your home area?

In addition to the above, Section B had these questions:

- a. Show how terms like 'land grab', 'farm seizures', 'farm occupations' etc. distorted the Land Reform that commenced in 2000. (20 marks)
- b. Demonstrate the extent to which some non-governmental organisations have created a dependency syndrome among some of our African brothers and sisters. In what way can you avoid the dependency syndrome in your community? (20 marks)

A scrutiny of the NASS examination papers that were availed for this study revealed the following:

- Most questions set before the inclusive government of ZANU (PF) and the two MDC formations in 2008 praised ZANU (PF) for its radical land seizure and attacked the MDC party as sell-outs used by the West and non-governmental organisations.
- During the ZANU (PF) and MDC inclusive government, while students were asked questions that referred to the president (ZANU PF president) as commander-in-chief of the security services, there were no questions that made reference to the prime minister's office (MDC president).
- Question papers set for technical colleges by HEXCO were found to be more radical in attacking opposition parties and the West, as the source of Zimbabwe's economic and political problems. On the other hand, teachers' colleges, especially those in the Western provinces where ZANU (PF) has no majority support since attainment of independence, set questions that were politically mild, more balanced and objective on socio-political events and conditions in the country.

These observations provide further evidence on how the teaching and learning of NASS, not only lacked adequate objectivity and instructional professionalism, but was meant to engender a partisan educational discourse that favoured the ruling party. NASS was clearly introduced as a teacher education discipline to further create the dichotomy between the ruling party and the opposition MDC. ZANU (PF) was depicted as the vanguard of nationalist struggle and MDC members were

portrayed as sell-outs of the nationalist programmes (Sithole & Makumbe, 1997; Zvayi, 2013).

CONCLUSION

According to the MDGs of 2000, education the world over is expected to be responsive to socio-cultural, socio-economic and socio-political developments occurring around it. However, education can also be manipulated to popularise sectarian or partisan ideologies, which affected the attainment of MDGs on both education and development in Zimbabwe. As illustrated in this chapter, through the radical amendments to the school and teacher education curricular that followed the 2000 radical land tenure policy, postcolonial education in Zimbabwe was used by the ruling elite to promote 'nativist' or partisan nationalism among the youth. This chapter has demonstrated that there was a concerted effort by the ruling party, through its government organs, to deploy education to protect its radical political discourse on the controversial agrarian reform programme and to sustain its political support which was under threat due to economic challenges that emerged from the introduction of ESAP.

Zimbabwe's postcolonial education system and successful attainment of the MDGs were compromised by partisan curricular changes in the form of the new 'patriotic' History, the National and Strategic Studies and the attempt to introduce partisan ZJC and 'O' Level Civic Education as a compulsory high school subject. Evidence from this study and related literature indicates that radical educational transformation in Zimbabwe since 2000 aimed to create a new generation of youths who would conform to ZANU (PF)'s political history and ideology. Through partisan civic education which is infused in History and NASS, the Zimbabwean youths are 'protected from being contaminated' by Western ideas which are allegedly channelled through opposition parties, non-governmental organisations, human rights organisations and independent educational institutions (Mavhunga, 2006). Therefore, based on the analysis of the syllabi documents, views and experiences of educators on the curriculum objectives, content, the nature of examinations of the civic education disciplines that were selected for this study, we conclude that partisan politics in Zimbabwe's education was one obstacle to quality education since 2000 and the timely attainment of MDG targets on equality and equity in education.

NOTE

- ¹ The term C10 is the pseudo name used by Zimbabweans to refer to the feared presidential Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO).

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