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## ADDRESSING SOCIALISM AND CAPITALISM IN GENDER BALANCE: ECONOMIC EFFECT TO HOUSEHOLDS AND WORKPLACES IN ZIMBABWE

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**Abstract:** *The study was based on assessing how socialism and capitalism as economic philosophies affect gender equity in the Zimbabwean environment. The reason being that after Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, the new government introduced equity with growth ideology to manage the country's economic resources. This was a correctional move meant to replace the colonial capitalist mode which benefited the minority at the expense of majority indigenous populace. Globally, there is an increase follow-up on a gender equity paradigm with an objective to uplift and improve recognition of women at both household and workplace levels. The study therefore assessed the relationship between economic governing philosophies and sustainability of the gender equity drive. A qualitative to quantitative sequential mixed method was used to get data from the respondents. The results of the study showed that in a socialist environment, gender balance has left both men and women enjoying their historical socio-setups with men still getting recognition as household providers, mandated and accepted to work for their families in work places. The capitalist perspective revealed that women upliftment results in their strong dominance both at household and workplace level. Respondents intimated that gender equity under capitalism triggered stress in men, reduced submissiveness of women to their male counterparts and eventually led to high levels of divorce. The study therefore recommended respect of gender equity as new global trend that can be enhanced through mutual communication at household and workplace level. Communication will help in removing the negative effect of economic ideologies and remove stigma that women will try to overpower their male counterparts.*

**Key words:** *Equity, poverty, socialism, capitalism, socio-economic, Zimbabwe*

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

During the course of the liberation struggle, Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), in 1977, adopted socialism based on Marxist-Leninist principles as its guiding philosophy for the transformation of the Zimbabwean society (Cornwell, 1993). In line with this thinking, it sought to make those indigenous people historically marginalized by colonial history the owners of the means of production by implementing the much needed political and economic change. In practical terms, this called for the Zimbabwean government to commit itself to a nationalization programme in the spirit of socialism. The socialism agenda developed as a drive towards unlocking value of the country's resources for the benefit of every indigenous black individual. The economic resources which are land, labour, capital and entrepreneurship were now taken to the hands of the locals. It was an antagonistic move in relation to capitalism which left ownership of resources to the minority white colonialists who had a profit motive ideology rather than social equity. The tendency especially in most developing countries has been to associate equity with socialism, yet even in countries that are capitalist at heart, gender equity issues actually directly influence national politics. It becomes more worrying particularly in Zimbabwe where white and black patriarchy harmonized to engender stereotypical relations of female subordination and domesticity. Such a perception had to be corrected through a series of legal frameworks and constitutional provisions under a new black government.

On assuming power after the 1980 elections, government made no secret about its commitment to socialism, having drawn lessons in Mozambique where successes were registered in the initial stages of its implementation. Yet the context in which socialism was implemented in Mozambique was different in that Frelimo won an outright military victory against the Portuguese. In Mozambique therefore, it was out of practical necessity that the economy had to be ordered along socialist lines in order to restore a semblance of order after the hurried departure of the Portuguese. Zimbabwe represented a different scenario in that the liberation wings of ZANU and Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) did not inflict a humiliating physical withdrawal on the Rhodesian army, for which reason the Frontline States comprising Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania, Botswana and Mozambique had to intervene to compel them to reach a compromise settlement at Lancaster House in 1979 (Chung, 2007). This severely put the government in the dilemma of attempting to balance



the interests of the indigenous African people and the whites. Stoneman in (Cornwell, 1993) posits that on one hand the government had to fulfill its land redistribution obligations to the people as earlier promised during the armed struggle. That the war was essentially over land, and that it would be unconditionally restored to its rightful owners after independence, had been the rallying point throughout the course of the liberation war. On the other hand, the Lancaster Agreement made it explicitly clear that compromise meant that the new black government had to abide by the stipulations that whites would have separate representation in parliament; that white civil servants had to continue in their posts; that land had to be purchased on a willing seller willing buyer basis (Ibid.p.20). In other words, the Lancaster Agreement was victory for those who stood for the status quo, and that meant that the inherited capitalist system operative in Rhodesia had to be maintained and adapted. The declaration of a policy of reconciliation was directly the extension of an olive branch to the white community that needed assurances and guarantees of their personal security and that of their property as well. The midway course between the two extremes was an economic approach that sought to balance the needs of the indigenous people against those of the white community whose protective cover were the negotiated political arrangements made both at Lancaster and through reconciliation. Transformation, whether political or economic, had to take cognizance of this reality, characterized as it was by the politics of reconciliation and compromise for the sake of continuity, and for fear that any radical changes would seriously destabilize the economy. The socio-economic imperatives were a damning reality that ensured the survival of the status quo, albeit with cosmetic changes that counted to naught.

The focus of this paper is to test whether the Zimbabwean government has made any significant progress in implementing socio-economic changes that are consistent with socialist transformation as originally envisaged. It seeks to evaluate government strategies designed to correct the disproportionate access and control over power, resources and benefits mainly between men and women. It uses generalisable case studies of urban households and workplaces through cross-sectional approaches for comparative analyses to determine the trends in income distribution with special reference to women. Various national equity-oriented policy frameworks since independence in 1980 are subjected to analysis with a view to assessing the degree at which cultural, political, religious and



historical inhibitions have ever since affected the liberation values, philosophy and ideals. The inevitable co-existence of capitalism and quasi-socialism is analysed to determine the extent to which the consequent contradictions invariably impacted on the urban womenfolk.

## **2. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

There is a growing global acceptance of gender balance as an injector to poverty alleviation and sustainable development. In Zimbabwe, gender inequality has been underscored due to its disparities which have destroyed the basis of economic development founded on households and work environment. The need to close gender-based anomalies has therefore become visible and calling for quick curative in households and workplaces. Nevertheless, just like any other transformational impediments, the drive towards gender balance has faced an ideological setback as socialism and capitalism overtook triumph of this new agenda. It is discernible and even largely reported that the need to emancipate women has resulted in household and workplace conflicts, divorces, disrespect and ill-treatment on gender basis over scarce economic resources. The study investigated the effect of both socialism and capitalism in Zimbabwe so as to achieve a sustainable and economic viable gender balance.

## **3. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The independence of Zimbabwe in 1980 attracted worldwide scholarly attention particularly after it had published policy documents such as Growth with Equity in 1981 and the Transitional National Development Plan to pave way for a socialist transformation. The vision of an egalitarian Zimbabwean society by the year 2000 envisaged soon after independence has been blurred by the failure of development programmes to alleviate poverty and reduce inequalities (Chinake, 1997). Such pro-poor growth and poverty reduction related policies include among others, the Poverty Alleviation Action Plan (1994), the Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation (1996-2000), Zimbabwe Millennium Economic Recovery Programme (2001), the Ten Points Plan (2002), the National Economic Revival Programme (2002), Towards Sustained Economic Growth- Macro-Economic Policy Framework (2005-2006) and the Social Dimensions Fund. From his analysis, market-based economic reforms, drought, debt crisis, declining terms of trade, protectionism and the abandonment of socialism are argued to have contributed to the



alleged failure by government to achieve the goal (ibid). On the contrary, there was rapid expansion of social services especially in the fields of health and education in the first decade of independence, but these could hardly be linked to the socialist philosophical leanings of the government in that these were basic needs any government could have prioritized under the prevailing circumstances. This paper contends that challenges to a smooth transition process from capitalism to socialism are as old as political independence itself.

Another perspective holds that adjustments that occurred in the 1980s relegated the discussion on equity to the sidelines and that emphasis was on growth alone (Hoeven, 2000). This presupposes that the question of equity was an afterthought, perhaps as a result of the rise of feminist movements or groups that articulated the concerns of the historically marginalized African women in the later decade. Even despite this development, discourses on urban women have not centered on the tremendous difficulties they literally go through in defining their ever-changing financial statuses.

The World Bank Publication made a comparative study of rural and urban households in Zimbabwe. It concluded that rural households tend to have a more diversified portfolio of income compared with their urban counterparts, and that the degree of diversification decreases with the level of urbanization (Ersado, 2006). What makes poverty more acute in rural households are the limited sources of income, whereas the urbanites rely on multiple sources of income (ibid). This analysis, though plausible, does not, however, explain the new phenomenon of women predominance in the 'urban pavement economy' characteristic of Harare's Central Business Districts and high density suburbs. Central to the phenomenal increase of women vendors especially in the high density suburbs of Harare are the twists and turns in the national economy which have impacted negatively on the income bases of widows, divorcees, Aids patients and those dispossessed through the cultural or traditional practices of inheritance. The World Bank's report thus provides useful insights into launching an investigation into the plight of the poor urban women during the first decade of independence when the government's socialist thrust seemed to offer them a modicum of identity and empowerment. Adjustments and liberalization during that period led to the informalisation of employment, wage inequality, human capital formation and the rise of workers organizations (Hoeven, 2000).



The era of Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) signaled the dramatic return from socialism to capitalism resulting from the dictates of economic fundamentals. Admittedly, socialist economic principles had to give way to a capitalist economic reform agenda so that Zimbabwe could take advantage of global economic progress and competition although it was not clear that the dreams would come true (Davies & Rattsø, 2000). The shift in policy by government once again impacted in various ways on people's levels of poverty (Chitiga & Mabugu, 2006) in terms of the Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) as shown by their Micro Stimulus Analysis. Both these studies shed light on poverty in general, but do not relate it to urban women especially in terms of the gendered income distribution inequalities under ESAP. Both use the CGE model of analysis, but Davies et al (2000) confine their period of study to 1999, whereas Chitiga et al (2006) stop at 2005. This research seeks to take it up to 2009 when economic vicissitudes were unprecedented anywhere the world over and when inflationary levels reached million levels in Zimbabwe. Of interest to note during the period was the proliferation of single family urban households as a result of death, economic migration to neighboring countries by both men and women, structural unemployment leading to belt-tightening survival strategies and food politics during campaigns immediately before and after the 2008 harmonized national elections. The contradictoriness of socialism and capitalism, and how men and women adapted to transitional demands – migration, moral violations, heightened religiosity and women assertiveness- help to fill in the knowledge void and to further understand the overall impact this interplay, up to 2009, has had on equality and equity in Zimbabwe.

At the inception of the ESAP in 1991, (Mapedzahama, 2009) undertook a case study of urban households in Kambuzuma up to 1992 to determine household savings, incomes, expenditure and debts and concluded that gender is a critical variable in determining effects of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) on men and women. In this study, the effects of ESAP are limited to a very brief period of two years from 1991 to 1992, yet the broad implications of reverting to capitalism continued to haunt the poor years after. Given the short period under his study of Kambuzuma, it becomes clear that his conclusions necessitate 'a new arena for research' as suggested by his research topic, so that comparative analyses can be made based on a wider spectrum of urban locations. Whilst in



agreement with her conclusion, she takes a very limited conceptual framework of its full implications and drew conclusions on only one high density African suburb in the early 1990s.

(Bautista, Lofgren, & Thomas, 1998) in their discussion paper use the Simulation Analysis Model (SAM) to evaluate how the trade policy reform (ESAP) is argued to have increased the aggregate disposable household income significantly as a result of changes in government expenditure and tax policies and the land redistribution schemes as complementary policies. It is unfortunate that the research was based on macro-analysis and conclusions were based on evidence and deductions from a wide spectrum of both rural and urban dwellers as early as 1998 when hopes for the success of the programme were still very high and almost realizable. On the ground, ESAP hit the urbanites the hardest as a result of forced retirements, job shedding and currency devaluation considered desirable and requisite under the dispensation. The same urbanites endured more economic hardships later from 1999 onwards with the emergence of opposition politics and this worsened their plight and subsequently eroded their income. The women were the most vulnerable group that had to devise strategies to cope with the reality of their husbands' joblessness. The intention of this paper will be to unearth these complex realities beyond 1998 in order to ascertain whether equity in the urban areas was compatible with ESAP, and to quantify the countervailing interventionist approaches by government to mitigate the negative effects of economic liberalism on the poor.

This research work makes an evaluation of the full implications of the re-introduction of a capitalist mode of production as indicative of the inevitable demise of socialist-oriented economic transformation with particular reference to the changing income statuses of men and women in the four high density suburbs of Harare. It seeks to bring to the fore, a new analytical paradigm with a clear focus on the intricate connection between socialism and capitalism, through the difficult path of reconciliation when most African elites misunderstood the concept to mean reconciliation with capital rather than with assets, back to capitalism when globalization and socialist philosophies were incongruent. In each case, emphasis will be on equitable allocation of resources, power and benefits in a bid to align them with the Zimbabwean national policy framework (Manyika, no date) as it pertains to gender. (Chabaya, Rembe, & Wadesango, 2009) also make an evaluation of the 2004 National Gender Policy which was a follow-up to the 1999 Nziramasanga Commission, with



its emphasis on eliminating all negative economic, political, social, cultural and religious practices that impede equality and equity. It is through their findings that further investigation into, and assessment of, the government's political will to realize this dream-if ever there was- hit against the hard rock of impending economic realities that it had to contend with.

The economic difficulties between 2007 and 2008 are argued to have been the resultant effect of poor harvest due to lack of sufficient rains throughout the country. On other hand, the British Broadcasting Corporation was quoted by (Cavanagh, 2009) a saying that millions of Zimbabweans could have starved to death in a year as a result of deteriorating food security and political deadlock. These contradictory assessments provide the basis for sober re-assessment of food politics in low income areas in a major city like Harare during the period, and to determine whether urban hunger was induced or not.

#### **4. METHODOLOGY**

The study employed a qualitative to quantitative sequential mixed method. The qualitative approach helped in getting information from experts and gender-based leaders on the main problems of gender balance arising from either capitalism or socialism in the history of Zimbabwe since 1980. This was followed by a quantitative approach whereby questionnaires were randomly distributed to households and employees in selected urban and rural areas. The respondents for in-depth interviews were 2 political leaders, 3 managers from women activists' organisations, 3 church leaders and 7 war veterans. Questionnaires were distributed to urban dwellers comprising 5 from Mufakose suburb, 8 in Mbare and 10 in Borrowdale. Also other questionnaires were distributed to 10 villagers in Mutoko rural area and 10 in Mutare rural. The total population for the study was 58 respondents.

#### **5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The study used a QUAL to QUANT sequential mixed method. Initial interviews revealed that the main issues disturbing socialism and gender balance include high submissiveness of women to their male counterparts, male recognition and dominance in workplaces, growing poverty and women exploitation on gender basis. For capitalism the respondents revealed that the gender issues affecting societies include reduced submissiveness by women to their male counterparts, increase gender related stress of man, increased workplace productivity,



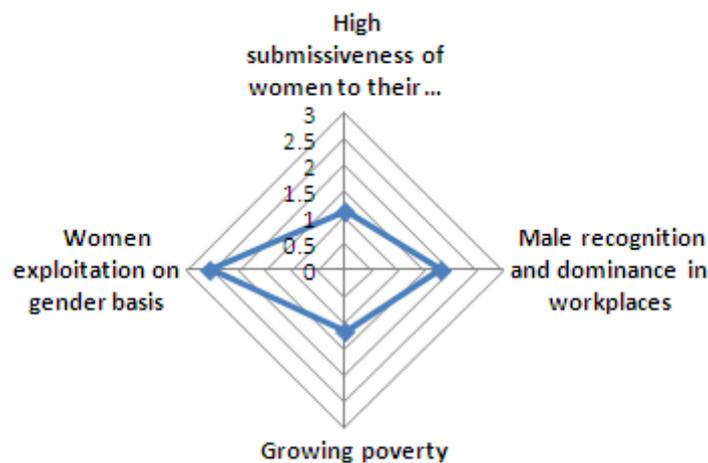
high rate of divorces and family conflicts. These factors for both socialism and capitalism were then assessed on their effect to households and workplaces using survey questionnaires and the results are as shown in table 1.1 below.

**Table 1.1 Responses on gender balance issues related to socialism**

Gender Effect	Households Response (mean)	Workplace Response (Mean)	Composite Response (Average mean)
1. High submissiveness of women to their male counterparts	1.023	1.204	1.114
2. Male recognition and dominance in workplaces	1.671	1.973	1.822
3. Growing poverty	1.314	1.011	1.163
4. Women exploitation on gender basis	1.951	2.561	2.56

Note. The average mean are in a range of 1-5 (1= Strongly Agree; 5=Strongly Disagree).

Source: Research Survey (2016).



**Figure .1 Composite average mean responses for both households and workplace gender balance effects in a socialist ideology**

Source: Research Survey (2016).

Table 1.1 and figure 1 above shows that when the economy is run using socialist ideology women are highly submissive to their male counterparts. This is justified by a lower average mean of 1.114. The reason might be that socialism is based on economic equity which aligns with the traditional equal balance of tasks and other related duties separating those for males and other for females. The two parties are defined according to their duties as traditionally structured that men should be the bread winners of the family whilst women take responsibility of household work and looking after children. The problem with this state of affairs is justified by the following average mean of 1.163 which agrees that in a socialist



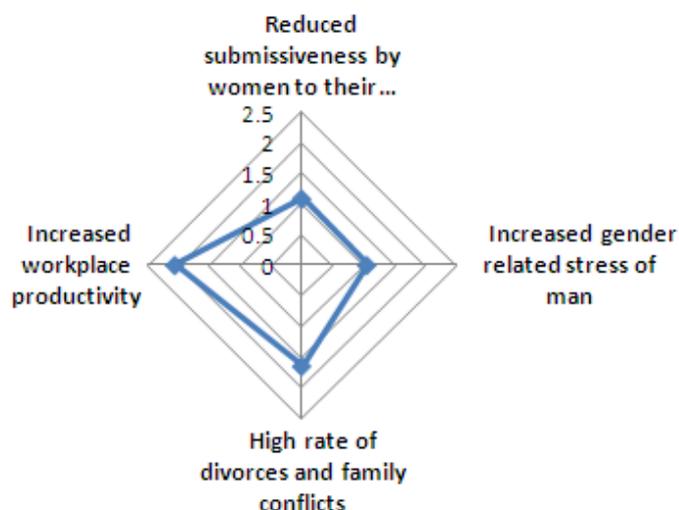
mode there is likely to be more poverty. This is because as equity in the household and workplaces in based on customs and traditional beliefs, men are the only ones responsible for family upkeep and going to work. This limits economic succession in the event that the husband dies leaving the mother without a source of family sustenance. It results in poverty which in turn leads to anti-social survival behaviour such as crimes and prostitution. In a positive way, women are not highly exploited on a gender basis in a socialist economy as represented by a relatively high average mean of respondents disagreeing if this exists in a socialist economy. The reason might be that these women are indoctrinated to believe that their situation is normal and are even restricted to see the other side of life such that they do not see anomalies in their lives.

**Table 1.2 Responses on gender balance issues related to capitalism**

Gender Effect	Households Response (mean)	Workplace Response (Mean)	Composite Response (Average mean)
<b>1. Reduced submissiveness by women to their male counterparts</b>	1.034	1.139	1.087
<b>2. Increased gender related stress of man</b>	1.001	1.122	1.062
<b>3. High rate of divorces and family conflicts</b>	1.341	1.956	1.649
<b>4. Increased workplace productivity</b>	2.145	1.991	2.068

Note. The average mean are in a range of 1-5 (1= Strongly Agree; 5=Strongly Disagree).

Source: Research Survey (2016)



**Figure .2 Composite average mean responses for both households and workplace gender balance effects in a capitalist ideology**

Source: Research Survey (2016)



The statistics in table 1.2 and figure 2 show the adoption of capitalism strongly results in work related stress for male counterparts. This is justified by a lower average mean of 1.062 informing more agreement from the respondents. The reason for this state might be coming from traditional beliefs and setups that men should be leading industries taking up most senior positions and women doing less challenging and secretarial duties. However, with capitalism the forces of demand and supply determine who works which job based on quality of experience, qualification and needs of the time. As men and women are seen equal, only those that contribute to profitability are given high ranks. In Zimbabwe, this has seen many organisations both in the service and product industries employing ladies at higher level. This has not only become a survival threat for men but a point of frustration leading to stress both in the households and working places. From another perspective, dominance of women at senior positions might be an abusive agenda to underpay and manipulate in decision-making. This is because from a physical and traditional understanding, men ask too much and want to criticize or be justified in some decisions which makes them unpopular to capitalists who want to improve revenues by cutting wage bills as costs of production. Likewise as shown by an average mean of 1.087, female uplift in societies has resulted in them being labeled as not submissive to their traditional way of life whereby the man was purported to be respected as the bread winner in the family. The ultimate result can be seen as an increase in household and workplace conflicts which also cause divorces (1.649) as women stand their rights and men sticking to the tradition which can be regarded as oppression in this new gender equity era.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

The study shows that there is a direct relationship between economic ideologies and gender equity. Socialism is regarded as a doctrine that encourages the traditional economic state of affairs in both households and workplaces. It is associated with women being submissive to their male counterparts especially in the home environment. Under socialism male dominance still prevails in households and workplaces such that it can be regarded as an agenda that oppresses women. The lack of initiative from women has then limited their potential to contribute to economic growth such that the levels of poverty are increasing in socialist dominated economies. Conversely, the study concludes that capitalism works with uplifting women in economic decision-making both at home and workplaces. There is high



rate of conflicts between men and women in a capitalist run economy as the former views the dominance of the latter as a threat which reduces their economic power. At a household level it has resulted in high rates of divorces and insubordination by men at work places.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that women activist bodies should combine the supremacy of economic ideologies when they formulate policies to uplift gender balance. This is because; failure to recognise the constructive and destructive power of economic ideologies might result in misinterpretation, bottlenecks and conflicts without achieving the real agenda of women uplift in societies.

Also there is need to improve publicity at all economic levels on the importance of gender balance in economic improvements. This calls for a system that combines both socialism and capitalism when structuring gender balance issues. This might help in economically empowering women without compromising customs and traditional role of both men and women in uplifting economies.

Cultural values change overtime in relation to global needs of new generations and failure to acclimatize will result in redundancy of actions, decisions, skills and problem solving mechanisms. Therefore, governments, societies and other representative bodies should put policies in place which support women events and recognise the factors leading to economic improvement from modernized cultural perspective.

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