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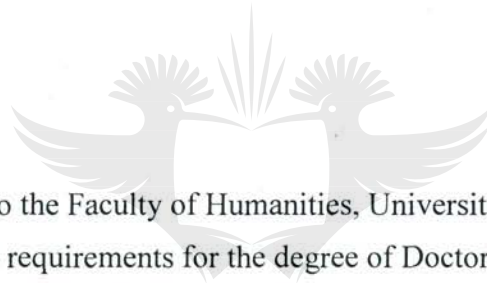
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THE RESPONSE OF THE WORKING CLASS IN HARARE, ZIMBABWE TO HYPER-INFLATION AND THE POLITICAL CRISIS, 1997-2008

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of Johannesburg, in
fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Literature and
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ABSTRACT

The dissertation traces the responses by Harare's working class to the economic and political crisis that gripped Zimbabwe in the years 1997 to 2008. It starts with 'Black Friday' in 1997, which initiated a period of rising inflation culminating in the second worst hyper-inflation in world history, and ends with dollarisation. This was a period marked by rigged elections, notably in 2000 and 2008, and by considerable political repression. Drawing mainly on interview data, the repertoire of reactions is considered at three levels: unions, work and the household.

A distinction is made between three kinds of response: workerism, partyism and survivalism. Combined with economic and political data this leads to a periodisation. First, from 1997-2000 there was a shift in the dominant response from workerism to partyism. Secondly, following failure by the unions and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) to respond effectively to the stolen election of 2000, and with a rapidly declining economy and bouts of state terror, there was a move towards survivalism. Thirdly, this became more pronounced during years of hyper-inflation, 2006-08. But, fourthly, survivalism failed to provide the solution to people's problems, and there was a return to partyism, with this feeding into the MDC's success in 2008 and, thus, to dollarisation. Finally, there are signs of a limited return to workerism in the period since 2008. Whilst there was significant numerical and organisational disintegration in the working class from 2000 onwards, this remained partial, with the unions contributing to the MDC's electoral gains in 2008.

Accounts of the period that privilege survival strategies not only obscure other responses to the crisis, they also occlude an appreciation of the role of repression in atomising workers, thus reducing their options, and the significance of the failure of workerism and partyism in encouraging individualised responses. A more rounded view can also assist us in making sense of the outcome and implications of the 2008 elections, and along with it, moves that went beyond survival strategising.

The dissertation considers the experiences of four groups of workers and shows how these differed greatly. Teachers stayed away from work, in large measure to save on travel costs and participate in cross-border trade; factory workers often benefited from non-salary and even non-monetary remuneration; the catering workers at times relied on small-scale deals in the informal sector; banking workers suffered less than other workers and were better placed to engage in financial scams. It is possible that this unevenness further undermined the

possibility of unified action by workers.

A comparison is made with working class responses to hyper-inflation in Germany, 1920-23, Argentina, 1988-89, and Yugoslavia, 1993-94. This draws attention to cross-border trade and urban agriculture as novel responses to economic collapse.

Finally, in general this study provides support for Giddens's theory of stucturation, with people responding as active agents to changes at the level of economic and political structures; sometimes simply keeping themselves alive and sometimes directly shaping the nature of those very structures. The disintegration and atomisation of the working-class were never total in Zimbabwe, and survival provided a basis for subsequent advance.



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Finally, I declare that the thesis submitted in fulfillment of the Doctor of Literature and Philosophy at the University of Johannesburg, apart from the assistance recognized, is my work, and has not been submitted to another university for any degree.

Tapiwa Chagonda

Johannesburg, May 2011

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIPPA	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
ANC	African National Congress
ATUC	African Trade Union Congress
BACOSS	Basic Commodities Supply Side Intervention
CCZ	Consumer Council of Zimbabwe
CFU	Commercial Farmers Union
CHRA	Combined Harare Residents Association
CSO	Central Statistical Office
CZI	Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries
EMCOZ	Employers Confederation of Zimbabwe
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
FBAWU	Federation of Bulawayo African Workers Union
FTLRP	Fast Track Land Reform Programme
GAPWUZ	General Agricultural and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNU	Government of National Unity
GPA	Global Political Agreement
HHIZ	Hanke Hyperinflationary Index for Zimbabwe
ICA	Industrial Conciliation Act
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
ICU	Industrial and Commercial Workers Union
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISO	International Socialist Organisation
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
NAFU	National African Federation of Unions
NCA	National Constitutional Assembly
NDP	National Democratic Party
NECF	National Economic Consultative Forum
NIPCC	National Incomes and Pricing Controls Commission

NLHA	Native Land Husbandry Act
PDL	Poverty Datum Line
POSA	Public Order and Security Act
PTUZ	Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe
RBZ	Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe
RICU	Reformed Industrial and Commercial Workers Union
RNLB	Rhodesian Native Labour Bureau
RRAEA	Rhodesian Railways African Employees Association
RTGS	Real Time Gross Settlement
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SPT	Solidarity Peace Trust
SRANC	Southern Rhodesian African National Congress
SRTUC	Southern Rhodesian Trade Union Congress
STERP	Short Term Emergency Recovery Programme
TNF	Tripartite Negotiating Forum
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UZ	University of Zimbabwe
WENELA	Witwatersrand Native Labour Association
WOZA	Women of Zimbabwe Arise
ZACU	Zimbabwe African Congress of Unions
ZANU (PF)	Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front)
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZBAWU	Zimbabwe Banking and Allied Workers Union
ZCHWU	Zimbabwe Catering and Hotel Workers' Union
ZCTU	Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions
ZEC	Zimbabwe Electoral Commission
ZFTU	Zimbabwe Federation of Trade Unions
ZIMPREST	Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation
ZIMTA	Zimbabwe Teachers Association
ZimVAC	Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee

ZINASU

Zimbabwe National Students Union

ZSF

Zimbabwe Social Forum

ZUM

Zimbabwe Unity Movement



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Problem and Rationale for the Study

The formal working class in Zimbabwe faced unprecedented levels of hardship between 1997 and 2008. This was a consequence of the economic meltdown that was marked by a high rate of hyper-inflation and a political crisis that was triggered by the violent elections held in Zimbabwe in the 2000s.

Raftopoulos (2002: 7) contends that the Zimbabwean economic malaise was triggered by the compensation and gratuities given to war veterans in 1997. Almost 50,000 of these veterans were given a lump sum of Z\$50,000 each and were to be paid a monthly pension of Z\$2,000. Initially, the government refused to disburse these funds, but the veterans under the leadership of Chenjerai 'Hitler' Hunzvi, were able to force the Zimbabwean government to accede to their demands. Raftopoulos (2003) argues that by capitulating to the demands of the war veterans, the Zimbabwean government was forced into printing larger amounts of money and that this caused the Zimbabwean dollar to collapse against the world's major currencies. On Friday 14 November 1997, the Zimbabwean dollar crashed, a day that has now come to be known as 'Black Friday'. In 1998, the government joined the war in the Democratic People's Republic of Congo and billions of unbudgeted Zimbabwean dollars were spent there, resulting in further economic decline. The economic crisis was further exacerbated by the farm invasions of 2000, which caused the agricultural sector, which is the backbone of the Zimbabwean economy, to be plunged into chaos. In 2000, the country also held general elections that were widely regarded to have been unfree and unfair. This, together with the farm invasions, led the international community to impose economic sanctions. As a result, foreign direct investment dwindled to a negligible amount.

The afore-mentioned are those major factors that caused the Zimbabwean economy to decline into a parlous state. From 2000 to 2008, the national economy contracted by as much as 54% (UNDP Report 2008), and it was estimated that the GDP per capita was down to the same level as it had been in 1953. Hyper-inflation was officially reported to have peaked at 231

million percent in July 2008. The Cato institute, however, argues that hyper-inflation in Zimbabwe peaked at 89.7 sextillion percent in November 2008, which made it the second highest rate of hyper-inflation ever recorded in history (Hanke 2009). During the 2000s, there were persistent shortages of foreign exchange, local currency, fuel and food. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) calculated that the proportion of the population below the Poverty Datum Line (PDL) was at 80 percent in January 2007.

The political, economic and social crisis that Zimbabwe underwent between 1997 and 2008 has been represented by opposing sides of a deeply polarised political divide as either a 'land crisis' (this mostly by ZANU (PF) and old style nationalists) or a 'governance crisis' (by the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and a broad spectrum of civil society groupings). However, as Hammar and Raftopoulos (2003: 2) have argued, the crisis is not about a single issue, neither is it rooted in a one-off event or single historical trajectory. Rather, it emerged from and is sustained by a dynamic pattern of -'simultaneous, incomplete and competing projects of transformation, legitimation and resistance'- that involve a range of differently positioned actors in shifting combinations of alliance and animosity (Hammar and Raftopoulos 2003: 2). Among the most salient of these projects since independence, are those connected to three interweaving analytical and empirical arenas, namely, - 'the politics of land and resource distribution; reconstructions of nation and citizenship; and the remaking of state and modes of rule' - (Hammar 2005: 5).

Hammar (2005: 5) contends that these need to be considered within the context of, among other things: Zimbabwe's long settler-colonial history of embedded inequalities in land and civic rights, which were deeply racialised, as well as gendered and class-based; the nationalist guerrilla struggle during the 1970s; an inherited bureaucracy at independence with strong technocratic, centralising and authoritarian tendencies; the positive expansion of public services and infrastructure during the 1980s and initial economic growth, followed by economic decline and the adoption of standard structural adjustment policies in 1991, whose complex and mostly negative impacts were exacerbated by droughts; declining state legitimacy in the 1990s, culminating in both a broad-based constitutional challenge driven by civil society and the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) as a formal opposition party in 1999; further challenges to the state and ruling party by war veterans in 1997, and added economic strains caused by Zimbabwe's entrance into the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

in 1998; and the failure of the land reform initiatives from 2000 onwards. These are discourses that are discussed in detail in chapter 5 of the thesis that traces the political, economic and social contexts of the Zimbabwean crisis.

It is against this background that this dissertation considers its central question: How did the Zimbabwean working class, specifically in Harare, respond to the economic and political crisis that marked the decade 1997-2008?¹ Various sub-questions, including the following were considered: What coping mechanisms were developed? Were workers engaged in strategic planning? How significant were remittances from Zimbabweans in the diaspora? Were workers engaged in other income generating activities and were they able to retain their jobs? What was the impact on workers' involvement in trade union and political activity? Whilst these questions were posed in relation to Zimbabwe, the study provides insights into how workers have survived hyper-inflation elsewhere.

The responses that the different sections of the working class in Harare came up with in the face of the economic and political crisis are analysed at three levels: workplace responses to the crisis, which are termed workerist responses in this dissertation; working class households' survival strategies; and the political responses to the Zimbabwean crisis by some sections of the working class. The political response mainly took the form of supporting and voting for the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), a party that was founded largely through the efforts of the workers in 1999. This type of political response is labeled partyism in this dissertation. The terms workerism, survivalism and partyism are explained along with other key concepts in use in Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

1.2 Literature Related to the Study

The dissertation focuses on two bodies of literature. First, there is material on survival strategies and coping mechanisms that have been used by some of the sections of the working class in countries that have, like Zimbabwe, been affected by hyper-inflation in the past. A selection of these countries that have been affected by hyper-inflation will be examined in this dissertation, namely Germany, Argentina and Yugoslavia. In discussing some of the livelihood strategies employed by the Zimbabwean working class during the crisis years in the 2000s, the dissertation

¹ Chapter Three, Page 59, justifies why Harare was chosen for the case-study of working-class responses to Zimbabwe's decade of crisis.

also refers to some literature on the survival strategies of poor communities in Latin America, due to some of the parallels that can be drawn between poor workers in Zimbabwe and South America. Thus, literature from Castells and Portes (1989), Roberts (1994), De Soto (2000), Acosta (2005) and Lingham (2005) is discussed in the dissertation. Such research burgeoned in the 1980s and 1990s in the Global South, as developing economies, especially in Latin America where these studies were conducted, underwent dramatic economic restructuring, mainly as a result of the implementation of neo-liberal Structural Adjustment Programmes. Feminist researchers have considered how poor women, in particular, managed to cope in the face of widespread economic problems (e.g. Sparr 1994). Two main types of survival strategies have been conceptualised (notably by Gonzales de la Rocha in 1991 and Beneria and Roldan in 1987). First, there are 'negative' strategies that involve curtailing consumption, such as changes in diet and cut-backs in the use of utilities. Secondly, there are 'positive' strategies that entail generating additional sources of earnings, including working extra hours or more household members entering the labour market, or moonlighting (Chant 1996).

In the Zimbabwean context, Gibbon (1995) carried out a comprehensive study on the survival strategies of vulnerable groups, namely workers and informal traders, in the wake of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme introduced in 1991. Gibbon discovered important responses that included cross-border trading, operating flea market stalls and moonlighting (see also Maphosa *et al* 2007). However, Gibbon's study, together with others conducted by Sachikonye (1995), Kanji (1995) Muzvidziwa (1997), Gaidzanwa (1999) and Raftopoulos (2000), was largely interested in the effects of ESAP. A limitation of the above literature is that, either it does not deal with Zimbabwe or, if it does, it predates the time when the crisis had its greatest impact. The literature also does not consider the full breadth of issues that the researcher was interested in, which included a wider range of 'responses', including those involving, or possibly rejecting collective action and participation in party politics.

Secondly, there is literature on the labour movement and the working class in Zimbabwe. Scholars such as Sachikonye (1995), Phimister and Raftopoulos (1997), Raftopoulos and Sachikonye (2000) and Alexander (2000) have traced the history of the labour movement in Zimbabwe from the colonial era, into the post-colonial era. Alexander (2000), Dansereau (2000), Gwisai (2002, 2008), Raftopoulos (2006, 2008) and Matombo and Sachikonye (2009), have also looked at the links between workers and the MDC. The limitation of these studies has been that

they have not considered the day to day survival of workers in detail, and the relation between this and trade union and political mobilisation. Chapter 4 of the dissertation maps out the history of the working class in Harare, from colonial times into the post-colonial era up to 1997, when Zimbabwe's economic and political problems began in earnest. The aforementioned scholars' work on the labour movement and the working class is utilised in this chapter.

A comprehensive study that focuses on the unprecedented political, economic and social crisis that the working class faced in Zimbabwe in the 2000s, and the responses that were deployed by this class, has yet to be conducted. This is the gap that this doctorate intends to address.

1.3 Sectors Selected for Study

1.3.1 Teaching Sector

During the first decade of Zimbabwe's independence, the government followed a redistributionist path. The main driving principle was 'Growth with Equity' (Government of Zimbabwe 2001). This principle was adopted so that the government could redress the inherited inequities and imbalances in access to basic needs such as education, health facilities and services. In line with the above policy, the Government of Zimbabwe invested heavily in the education sector, such that primary and secondary education enrolments expanded by 79 percent and 841 percent respectively in the period 1980 to 1989 (Government of Zimbabwe 2001). Primary school education was made free. This resulted in gross admission rates climbing to well over 100 percent and, by the end of the first decade of independence, Zimbabwe had achieved universal primary education (Government of Zimbabwe 2001). As primary and secondary education expanded at a rapid pace in Zimbabwe in the first decade of independence, the number of teachers also increased and by 1997 when the crisis began, the Zimbabwe Teachers Association (ZIMTA) estimated that there were about 100,000 primary and secondary school teachers in Zimbabwe's public schools.

Advances made in the education sector in the first 17 years of independence were undone during the crisis, resulting in a mass exodus of teachers due to poor remuneration that stretched across the civil service. ZIMTA and the Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ) claimed in 2009 that a staggering estimated 45,000 teachers quit the profession and sought jobs in the diaspora in the 2000s. However, ZIMTA and the PTUZ reported that by

August 2009, 60,000 of the estimated 100,000 that had been teaching before the crisis began had heeded a government call to return to work since February 2009, when the Government of National Unity (GNU) came into place. This hinted at some form of gradual re-composition taking place in the teaching sector, although staffing problems continued to concern some of the government schools when the 2009 academic year came to a close.

In 2008, during the peak of the crisis, the teachers in the government schools were on strike for almost the whole year as their salaries had been so severely eroded by hyper-inflation. Since the state schools almost completely ground to a halt due to the very low levels of remuneration, this study decided to focus on the primary school teachers, who were teaching in these state schools, in an attempt to find out how they were coping with the Zimbabwean crisis, since most of them had stopped teaching in 2008.

1.3.2 Manufacturing Sector

Manufacturing sector workers were chosen for this study because, since independence in 1980, the manufacturing sector was the second major employer of formal labour after agriculture (Mlambo 2000: 80). Manufacturing is also important in Zimbabwe's economy, because at independence in 1980 Zimbabwe's economy was, with the exception of South Africa the most diversified and industrialised economy in sub-Saharan Africa (Mlambo 2000: 80). However, this situation changed from 2000 onwards, as the Zimbabwean crisis deepened. According to the July 2008 Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (CZI) manufacturing survey², industrial production declined 59 percent between 2005 and 2007 and, by the end of 2007, output in surveyed firms was less than 30 percent of its 2003 levels.

Capacity utilisation collapsed to less than 20 percent in 2007 with only four percent of firms operating at over three-quarters of installed capacity. At the other extreme, 75 percent of industry was operating at less than 50 percent capacity utilisation (CZI 2008). The survey further estimated that most workers were not earning a living wage, with unskilled employees earning less than US\$20 a month. Only two percent of respondents in the survey described themselves as optimistic about their future, while 70 percent said they were pessimistic. CZI interviews conducted in 2007 revealed that industry was operating at just over one-third of its installed

² The 2008 CZI manufacturing survey polled 100 manufacturing firms in Zimbabwe through a questionnaire completed by owners of the firms. Follow-up semi-structured interviews were conducted with the owners/employers and employees.

capacity and that output had halved since the onset of the crisis in 2000 (UNDP 2008: 127). The key reason for choosing the manufacturing sector was its size and importance, especially in Harare, where the manufacturing workers comprised the core of the working class and were a critical force in the ZCTU, and later the MDC. Given the rapid shrinking of a sector that had contributed in no small measure to the growth of the Zimbabwean economy, during the pre-crisis period this study decided to focus on the artisan workers in the manufacturing factories to find out how they were responding to the Zimbabwean crisis.

1.3.3 The Banking Sector

The banking sector workers were also the focus of attention in this study because the sector was reported in the media to be doing very well during the period in question. Casual conversations with people and observations of people known to be working in the banking sector, including those not so high in the banking hierarchy such as the bank tellers and clerks, suggested that these workers appeared to be faring better than other sections of the working class. The monthly lists of minimum wages among the 36 affiliates of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) published by *The Worker* in 2008, during the peak of the crisis, always revealed banking as the most rewarded sector.

When the study was conducted in 2008, the banking sector had 15 commercial banks, of which three had some degree of state ownership, and the others were wholly privately owned. There were also six merchant banks, three discount houses and four building societies (UNDP 2008). Four of the private commercial banks, South African-owned Stanbic Bank, the Merchant Bank of Central Africa, and British-owned Standard Chartered Bank and Barclays Bank were multi-national banks commanding 55 percent of the commercial banks market share (UNDP 2008). The three banks that had a degree of state ownership, the Commercial Bank of Zimbabwe, ZB Bank and the Zimbabwe Allied Banking Group, were gaining market share through preferential treatment from the state.

While several indigenous owned banks had been forced to close in 2004-05, the banking sector was in good general health during the peak of the Zimbabwean crisis. This was a consequence of the speculative activities that most banks were engaged in, as a means of cushioning themselves from the hyper-inflation. As a result, most banks were trading in the best performing stocks on the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange (ZSE), which also happened to be doing

very well during the period of the crisis, as individuals and companies chose to trade on the bourse's best performing shares, as opposed to saving money, which was being eroded rapidly by hyper-inflation. The excellent performance of the ZSE defied basic economic reasoning, causing Koning (2008) to suggest that some stock market commentators and analysts of making simplistic linkages between the stock market and a country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Stock market analysts normally inform the public that any event that stimulates GDP growth drives stock prices up, and any event that hurts GDP growth pushes stocks down (Koning 2008). The economic malaise that occurred in Zimbabwe, however, completely contradicted that logic.

Koning (2008) argues that the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange (ZSE) was the best performing stock exchange in Africa, with the key Zimbabwe industrials index going up by 595 percent over a period of twelve months in 2007. Koning (2008) and Hanke (2008) are of the opinion that one of the ways for people to hedge themselves against hyper-inflation was buying stocks of the best performing counters on the ZSE. Another way of hedging against the hyper-inflation was to buy property. Thus, real estate and the ZSE boomed during the crisis as individuals and companies scrambled to maintain and even add to the value of the Zimbabwean dollars that they had. Banks were no exception and profited a great deal from the booming ZSE and the property market.

The above activities in the banking sector saw the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) Governor, Gideon Gono, accusing most of the banks of engaging in activities that were not the core activities of the banking sector (Gono 2008). Such criticism was highly ironic, considering that the RBZ Governor, whose central bank was engaged in quasi-fiscal activities, along with the printing of money, was fuelling hyper-inflation and in turn driving the increase in speculative activities of the banking sector (The International Monetary Fund, 2009).

It is against this backdrop that bank workers, notably bank tellers, were interviewed, in an endeavor to find out whether their response to the Zimbabwean crisis was different from other sections of the working class.

1.3.4 The Catering Sector

The catering sector was chosen because it is part of the Tourism and Hospitality industry which was reported to be booming in Zimbabwe in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This sector however suffered immensely from the late 1990s and onwards because of the negative publicity that Zimbabwe received as a consequence of the violent land reform programme, electoral disputes

and the general political repression that was happening in the country. The Zimbabwe Catering and Hotel Workers Union (ZCHWU) revealed that during its zenith in the mid 1990s, it had a membership of around 13,000 workers. However, during the peak of the crisis, the union's membership plummeted to just over 5,000 members.³ The ZCHWU Information and Publicity Secretary revealed that the union estimated that most workers in the hospitality and catering industry had lost their jobs, notably those who were employed in the hotels. He added that most hotels during the crisis in the 2000s had consistently reported very low business, with less than 20 percent of hotel rooms being occupied at all times in most hotels. The catering sector was therefore chosen to find out how workers in this 'once promising' sector were faring.

1.3.5 Informal Forex Dealers

Informal forex traders were also interviewed. It was not an initial intention to interview informal forex traders. The major targets for this research were workers in formal employment in the manufacturing, teaching, catering and banking sectors. However, during the course of the research I came across a number of former artisans in the manufacturing industry as well as teachers who had become informal forex traders. These forex dealers were interviewed in an endeavor to find out whether their lives had changed as a result of the shift from formal employment to informal employment. I also wanted to capture the experiences of the forex dealers, as foreign currency dealing became one of the most popular survivalist strategies taken up in response to the crisis.

1.4 Outline of Chapters

Chapter 2 defines the key concepts that are used in this thesis. The theoretical framework is also discussed. Literature from countries that have been blighted by hyper-inflation other than Zimbabwe, notably Germany, Argentina and Yugoslavia, is reviewed. This sets the context for the study of hyper-inflation in Zimbabwe, and it allows one to distinguish the unique facets of the responses of the Zimbabwean working class from those of workers from the afore-mentioned countries. Literature from Zimbabwean studies on survival strategies conducted in the pre-crisis period is also considered. The chapter argues that most of the studies that have been conducted in

³ Membership figures for the ZCHWU union were revealed by Thomas Masango, the Information and Publicity Secretary for the union.

the Zimbabwean context have mainly concentrated on the Zimbabwean informal sector and the survivalist responses that people have devised in this sector. Chapter 2 contends that, in addition to the survivalist strategies at individual and household levels, workplace and political responses should be considered as reactions by the working class to the Zimbabwean crisis. This dissertation argues that taking on board such a broad repertoire of responses will enable us to fully understand the working class' experiences during the crisis. This is the contribution toward the literature on the Zimbabwean situation that this thesis intends to fill.

Chapter 3 discusses the methodology. A qualitative methodology was used and three vantage points were utilised to look at the responses of the Harare working class to the political crisis and hyper-inflation. These were interviews conducted with key informants, mostly union leaders, workplace interviews and household interviews. These points of view allowed the researcher to grasp a representative array of responses of the working class to the crisis.

Chapter 4 traces the history of the working class in Harare and reveals the continuities and discontinuities in the different responses that have been adopted by the working class since colonial times during periods of hardship. The pre-1945 working class mainly relied on survivalist strategies such as maintaining strong rural-urban linkages in order to obtain food from the rural areas and also for purposes of augmenting its income through farming. The repressive nature of the Master and Servant Act of 1901, which governed industrial relations, and the lack of class consciousness amongst the African working class, possibly because of the temporary nature of the African working class during this period, militated against responses such as workerism and partyism. However, strikes did occur in Wankie in 1919, 1921 and 1926. The post-1945 African working class showed signs of workerism, which reached its peak between 1945 and 1948. Flirtations with partyism were witnessed in the mid and late 1950s, as workers took the lead in founding nationalist parties, although these parties were later dominated by the middle-class intelligentsia in the 1960s. In the post-colonial era in the 1990s, the working class continued with some of the survivalist strategies that were witnessed during the colonial era, as it faced hardships under ESAP. As the hardships worsened for the workers in the mid and late 1990s, a shift towards workerism was witnessed, which reached its zenith between 1996 and 1998. Thus, the chapter contends that in order to fully understand the responses of the working class during the decade of crisis, we have to trace the continuities, discontinuities and some of the shifts that occurred in the responses of the working class to crises it faced in its history.

Chapter 5 provides the political and economic context of the Zimbabwean crisis, and argues that hyper-inflation was a result of political decisions that in the process also created a political crisis in Zimbabwe. The controversial land reform programme of 2000, the political violence, electoral irregularities and the sanctions that were supposedly called for by the MDC, lie at the heart of these political problems. Zimbabwe's economic performance is traced from 1965 when the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) was proclaimed. It is argued in the chapter that the working class' economic problems did not start in 1997, but during the Economic Structural Adjustment (ESAP) years, when a number of workers lost their jobs in both the private and public sectors. The real incomes of the workers also decreased considerably during the ESAP phase. The politics of ZANU (PF) and the MDC is also assessed in relation to the political crisis Zimbabwe faced from 2000.

Chapter 6 focuses on the state of the trade union movement between the years 1998 and 2008. It is this chapter's contention that the trade union movement was weakened in terms of numbers, organisation and scale of mobilisation. The reduction in the number of workers in formal employment during the decade of crisis and the dwindling numbers of trade union members in most sectors of the economy weakened the trade union movement. The repressive nature of the ZANU (PF) government in the 2000s also partially incapacitated the organisational and mobilisation capabilities of the trade union movement. The chapter concludes by suggesting that the weakening of the trade union movement demobilised the once militant working class, once highly active in the late 1990s, and considerably reduced the possibility of radical political responses by the workers to the Zimbabwean crisis. Despite this, it is however also evident that the MDC's 2008 electoral victory suggests that union-led support for the MDC and political responses by workers, such as partyism, were not totally debilitated during the decade of crisis.

Chapter 7 focuses on workplace responses to hyper-inflation and the political crisis. The chapter argues that workerism as a response to the crisis lost currency amongst most ranks of the working class who were interviewed. The workplace interviews appear to suggest that workerism receded, when one would have expected it to be similar to that witnessed in the late 1990s, because of the extent of the crisis. Workerism most probably declined because of the depletion in the numbers of workers in most sectors of the economy. The constant staff turnover in some sectors and the increased repressive nature of the ZANU (PF) government were also cited by some of the workers as the reasons behind the de-radicalisation of the working class.

Rather, it was in the survivalist realm that the working class shifted and concentrated its energies, to counter the political crisis and hyper-inflation. The chapter contends that most of these survivalist responses were speculative in nature and were confined to the informal sector, as most workers retained their jobs in the formal sector, but also tried their hand at informal activities. Finally, the chapter argues that there was unevenness and paradox in the experiences of the different sections of the working class during the decade of crisis.

Chapter 8 argues that with the limitation of workerist responses that for the most part were only successful with regards to non-salary concessions such as free lunches and transport, to and from work from their employers, in sectors such as manufacturing and to some extent catering, most working class households in Harare devised various survival strategies in a bid to mitigate the effects of hyper-inflation that had wreaked havoc on the livelihoods of many workers. Most of the working class households were operating strategically, as most family members, including children took part in informal earning in a bid to supplement family income.

Chapter 9 ties up the arguments raised in the thesis, and arrives at the conclusion that the Zimbabwean crisis left the working class weakened at the physical, and organisational and mobilisation levels. However, despite the difficulty of their circumstances, some of the sections of the working class showed high levels of both individual and collective agency in response to unfavourable economic and political conditions and devised various strategies encompassing workerism, survivalism and partyism that allowed them to continue attending work in their areas of formal employment. Responses of workerism, partyism and survivalism displayed by some sections of Harare's working class during the crisis years revealed both continuities and discontinuities with past activity of the working class. Shifts and unevenness in the responses were also witnessed amongst the workers in different sectors of the economy, as the crisis worsened in the 2000s, hence exposing the heterogenous nature of the working class and paradoxical effects of the crisis on different workers. Giddens' structuration theory is insightful in understanding the agency of the workers, and the implications of this agency on the structure. The survivalist nature of some of the agency displayed by the workers re-shaped the structure (Zimbabwean society) negatively, as a 'dealer culture' which in some cases involved extra-legal activities gripped many workers and most sections of the population in general, as people strove to insulate themselves from hyper-inflation. The political agency of some sections of the working class (partyism) resulted in the MDC winning the March 2008 harmonised elections. This agency

partially managed to re-shape the political structure of the country that had held power during the crisis in the 2000s, as a Government of National Unity (GNU) was formed in 2009. The partial re-shaping of the political landscape as a consequence of some of the workers' agency to support and vote for the MDC in the 2008 elections partly eased the suffering of the working class. However, the political and economic situation had still not normalised in the immediate aftermath of the GNU and dollarisation of the Zimbabwean economy, when this research was brought to a close.



CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to clarify concepts that are utilised in the dissertation. The chapter also engages with some of the debates around concepts such as 'the working class' and 'class consciousness' that are used in the dissertation. Definitional issues for concepts such as, 'disintegration', 'survival strategies', and 'hyper-inflation' are explicated in this chapter. The phenomenon of hyper-inflation and how it affected Germany under the Weimar Republic in the early 1920s, Yugoslavia under Slobodan Milosevic in the early and mid 1990s and Argentina in the late 1980s is also explored. These countries were specifically chosen because they are amongst the countries that have experienced some of the worst bouts of hyper-inflation in recorded history. The responses of the working class in the aforementioned countries are juxtaposed in relation to the responses of Zimbabwe's own working class to the hyper-inflation that Zimbabwe once went through. Thus, the agency of the workers in Germany, Argentina and Yugoslavia at the individual and household level, to cope with the devastating effects of hyper-inflation, is examined. Collective forms of responses that display a sense of class consciousness such as strikes and riots are analysed. Political consciousness and the participation of these workers in the political domain are assessed.

In the Zimbabwean case, the discussion makes use of Philani Moyo's recent thesis on urban livelihood strategies. Moyo (2009) specifically focuses on food security amongst the urban poor in Bulawayo. Other recent doctoral studies by Hamadziripi Tamukamoyo and Jeremy Jones, focusing on how informal sector traders have been coping with Zimbabwe's economic crisis, are also considered. These are used because there is a gap in the Zimbabwean literature on Urban Studies, Labour Studies and Sociology of the Family Studies, on the responses of the working class to the inflationary and hyper-inflationary pressures that the working class in Harare experienced. Other studies focus on one particular form of response to the Zimbabwean crisis, for instance, Bracking and Sachikonye's study published in 2006 focuses on the role of remittances as a form of survival strategy amongst middle-class and working class households.

One of the last major studies on the livelihood strategies of the working class in the face of an economic crisis in Harare was published by Sachikonye in the mid 1990s, when he was looking at the effects of and workers' responses to the Economic and Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP). Other studies of that era have mainly focused on the workers in the informal sector or have not differentiated people's different class positions and these are studies by Gibbon (1995), Mupedziwa (1995), Gumbo (1995) and Mhone (1992, 1993), made on informal sector traders in the 1990s. Muzvidziwa (2005) and Ndlela (2006) looked at mainly female cross-border traders. Gaidzanwa in the late 1990s focused on medical personnel, namely doctors and nurses that were migrating from Zimbabwe. Thus, there is a dearth of literature on livelihood strategies of the working class in Zimbabwe. This dissertation contributes by highlighting the different workerist, partyist and survivalist responses to the Zimbabwean crisis by some sections of the working class.

2.2 Workerism, Partyism and Survivalism as Responses to the Zimbabwean Crisis by the Working Class

Three concepts of workerism, partyism and survivalism are used in the dissertation to refer to the different responses some sections of the working class in Harare adopted at the workplace level as well as at the individual and household levels in the face of hyper-inflation and the political crisis. The first concept of workerism was theorised in the 1960s and 1970s in Italy by Antonio Negri. For Negri (1977), workerism (*operaismo*) was a neo-Marxist interpretation of class struggle in Western societies. A new worker, the mass-worker, was the leading subject of confrontation in the capitalist contradictions found in the factories (Negri 1977, Wright 2002). Negri (1977) labelled the 1960s and 1970s the 'classic phase of workerism' in Italy. This phase, according to Negri, was characterised by three central ideas which were: an emphasis on the wage struggle; identification of the working class and the immediate process of production; and the working class as the driving force in capitalist society. In this dissertation, workerism is mainly based upon Negri's first idea of wage struggle within the workplace environment. As a result, the workplace struggles amongst some ranks of the working class in Harare during the crisis years, which endeavoured to improve the income of the workers and included the collective bargaining exercise, striking and other union-led forms of protest such as mass stayaways and demonstrations are referred to as workerist responses.

The second concept of partyism refers to the electoral support that most ranks of the working class gave to MDC, a party that was formed in 1999, partly as a result of the efforts of the workers. The party's first leadership reflected this fact, as the top hierarchy was dominated by the trade union leaders. It is therefore argued in the dissertation that, as the workerist responses proved to be inadequate as the crisis worsened and the ZANU (PF) regime became more repressive in the 2000s, the ranks of the working class did not become politically apathetic. Most workers chose the political response of supporting and voting for the MDC in the 2000, 2005 and 2008 harmonised elections as they hoped that an MDC government would end the Zimbabwean crisis. This working class support for the MDC in the 2000s is referred to as partyism in this dissertation.

The third concept of survivalism refers to the innumerable individual and household survival strategies that some sections of the working class resorted to in the informal economy, to survive the economic meltdown. Most working class households had to strategise as social units in order to survive the crisis. The concept of survival strategies is covered in detail elsewhere in this chapter and also in chapters 7 and 8 of the dissertation.

2.3 Disintegration of the Working Class

The concept of disintegration is key in the thesis, as the dissertation argues that the working class in Harare partially disintegrated at two levels which resulted in its incapacitation and inability to engage in collective action to protest the hyper-inflation and political crisis Zimbabwe faced in the 2000s. A concept almost synonymous with disintegration - that is decomposition - has recently been used by scholars to describe the working class' apathy towards political issues in the West and also the general weakening of the working class at the organisational and mobilisation levels in most Western countries. Decomposition of certain classes or particular sectors in a country's economy has been theorised in the sociology of work by scholars such as Eley and Nield (2000). These two scholars asserted that the working class in the West showed signs of decomposition in the early 1980s at the ideological and organisational levels, as trade unions became weaker than in previous decades, notably the immediate post First World War years. Eley and Nield (2000) argue that this class ceased to be united in the classical Marxist sense of being a class for itself, as a consequence of the onslaught from the right-wing politics and economics of Reagan and Thatcher in the 1980s. This dissertation though will use the term

disintegration instead of decomposition to refer to the general decline of the Zimbabwean working class during the period of crisis. This is because, even though the working class in Zimbabwe showed general signs of weakening during the crisis, it did not completely 'die' and decompose, as the immediate wake of the Government of National Unity (GNU) and dollarisation of the Zimbabwean economy in 2009 witnessed signs of a gradual reformation. This issue is explicated in greater detail in Chapter 7.

Firstly, the concept of disintegration in this thesis is conceived of at the physical level. This refers to the dwindling physical numbers or contraction of the working class during Zimbabwe's decade of crisis. Secondly, the concept is used to refer to organisational disintegration. This is the weakening of the organisational and mobilisation structures of the trade union movement in Zimbabwe during the period of the crisis. Related to this organisational and mobilisation weakening of the trade union movement, there appeared to be a weakening in the class consciousness levels of some sections of the working class. This is largely because interviews with some of the workers suggested that some sections of the working class lacked a sense of class consciousness that would bring the workers together and lead them to engage in collective forms of action, to protest Zimbabwe's hyper-inflation and electoral crisis. Class consciousness refers to consciousness of one's social class or economic rank in society. From the perspective of Marxist theory, it refers to the self-awareness, or lack thereof, of a particular class; its capacity to act on its own interests, or its awareness of the historical tasks implicit to it (Wolpe 1970, Wright Mills 1963). Ollman (1972) contends that class consciousness is the interests of a class becoming its recognised goals. These interests, for those who accept Marx's analysis, are objective and they accrue to a class because of its real situation (Ollman 1972). Rather than indicating simply what people want, 'interest' refers to those generalised means which increase a class' ability to get what it wants, and includes such things as money, power or structural reform. Wright Mills (1963) argues that becoming class conscious in this sense is based on the recognition of belonging to a group which has similar grievances and aspirations, and a correct appreciation of the group's relevant life conditions. Ollman (1972) asserts that the step from being class-conscious to engaging in action (protesting or revolting) aimed at attaining class interests is an automatic one. The latter is already contained in the former as its practical side (Ollman 1972). Class consciousness however, is a more complex phenomenon - and, hence, more fraught with possibilities for failure - than Marx and most other socialists have

believed. With hindsight, we can see that what Marx treated as a relatively direct if not easy transition is in fact neither. Progress from the workers' conditions to class consciousness involves not one but many steps, each of which constitutes a real difficulty for some section of the working class. Ollman (1990) highlights 9 steps that workers have to go through: First, workers must recognise that they have interests. Second, they must be able to see their interests as individuals in their interests as members of a class. Third, they must be able to distinguish what Marx considers their main interests as workers from other less important economic interests. Fourth, they must believe that their class interests come prior to their interests as members of a particular nation, religion, race, etc. Fifth, they must truly despise their capitalist exploiters. Sixth, they must have an idea, however vague, that their situation could be qualitatively improved. Seventh, they must believe that they themselves, through some means or other, can help bring about this improvement. Eighth, they must believe that Marx's strategy, or that advocated by Marxist leaders, offers the best means for achieving their aims. Ninth, having arrived at all of the above, they must not be afraid to act when the time comes.

The above steps towards achieving class consciousness that are articulated by Ollman (1990) are not all that easy to follow through right to the end, even in the extreme circumstances of countries that have been blighted by hyper-inflation, such as the case studies that are discussed in this dissertation. Collective action as a response to the hyper-inflation that was being experienced in Yugoslavia took time to happen, as Milosevic remained in power for eight more years after hyper-inflation had reached its peak in 1994. One of the aims of this dissertation is to determine the extent of collective organisation amongst Zimbabwe's working class in Harare as a response to the high inflation and subsequent hyper-inflation that affected Zimbabwe between 1997 and 2008.

Even though the levels of class consciousness may be difficult to attain for the working class, this does not imply that it is impossible to achieve some levels of class consciousness amongst some sections of this social class. Thompson (1980: 11) reports on the growth of a sense of working-class consciousness in the years between 1780 and 1832 amongst some ranks of the English working class. He claims that the English workers came to feel an identity of interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests were different from theirs (Thompson 1980: 11). Thompson argues that, for instance, even though most could not read, they set up community educational activities at which adults met together, not only to

become literate, but also to read aloud political philosophy, to discuss their current state and how to change it, and to spread the word to others by distributing underground newspapers and pamphlets. The early English working class also developed mutual benefit societies in which all members paid small amounts of dues in order to provide a fund to help workers who faced sudden needs, and to pay their burial costs upon death. Thompson (1980) contends that through all this, workers were developing not only political knowledge, but also a sense of themselves as a group with common interests and skills that they could later use to organise unions.

2.4 Inflation and Hyper-inflation

The most commonly used definition of inflation defines the phenomenon as a situation where too much money chases too few goods on the market (Cagan 1956, Hanke 2008). This generally means that there will be too much money on the market and this is caused in most cases by the excessive printing of money. Zimbabwe began to experience a rapid increase in the rate of inflation in late 1997, when its year-on-year rate of inflation hovered near the 50 percent mark. This was as a result of the Z\$4.5 billion that had been printed for the war veterans and the fear generated with the gazetting of the land reclamation programme that challenged private property rights (Raftopoulos 2001, Bond 2002, Moore 2002). Zimbabwe's inflationary scourge continued into the 2000s and, officially, it peaked at 231 million per cent in July 2008 (Central Statistical Office of Zimbabwe (CSO), August, 2008). Hanke (2009)⁴ from the Cato Institute, however, contends that Zimbabwe's hyper-inflation peaked at an astronomical 89.7 sextillion⁵ per cent in November 2008. Hyper-inflation is defined by Hanke (2008) and Cagan (1956) as a situation where the month-on-month rate of inflation reaches 50 percent. An inflation rate of 50 percent per month is equal to a year-on-year rate of 12,875 percent (Hanke 2008). Taking these calculations, it is evident that Zimbabwe started to hyper-inflate in February 2007, when its month-on-month rate of inflation breached the 50 percent mark. Hanke (2008) goes on to assert that Zimbabwe is the first and only country in the world to have hyper-inflated in the 21st century. The country that holds the record for the highest rate of hyper-inflation is Hungary, whose rate of hyper-inflation peaked in July 1946. Zimbabwe is second in the record books, with a calculated peak of 89.7 sextillion per cent. Yugoslavia, under the rule of Slobodan Milosevic is

⁴ Steve Hanke is one of the world's leading authorities on exchange-rate regimes. He has played a prominent role in designing and implementing monetary reforms that have stopped excessive inflation in eight countries.

⁵ A sextillion has 21 zeroes.

third in the statistics. Germany under the Weimar Republic holds fourth position on the all time hyper-inflation list. See table 2.1 below, for the countries that are amongst the all time highest rates of hyper-inflation in recorded history.

Table 2.1: Countries with the highest inflation rates in history, from highest to lowest

Country	Month With Highest Inflation Rate	Highest Monthly Inflation Rate	Equivalent Daily Inflation Rate	Time Required For Prices to Double
Hungary	July 1946	$1.30 \times 10^{16} \%$	195%	15.6 hours
Zimbabwe	November 2008	79,600,000,000% ⁶	98.0%	24.7 hours
Yugoslavia	January 1994	313,000,000%	64.6%	1.4 days
Germany	October 1923	11,300%	17.1%	4.5 days

Source: Steve H. Hanke, 5 February, 2009

The last official inflation figure for Zimbabwe of 231 million percent for the month of July 2008 was released in August 2008. This figure was however dismissed by leading economic

⁶ Zimbabwe's highest monthly inflation rate of 79,600,000,000 translates to a year-on-year hyper-inflation of 89.7 sextillion per cent.

commentators in Zimbabwe such as John Robertson⁷, Tony Hawkins⁸ and Godfrey Kanyenze⁹ as a gross under-estimation. The CSO in Zimbabwe argued that it did not have reliable data on the prices of food and other basic commodities that varied widely as a result of the high levels of hyper-inflation, and this they argued was the reason they stopped releasing inflation figures from July 2008. The CSO only started providing inflation figures again in March 2009, after Zimbabwe had dollarised its economy. Dollarisation of the economy had the effect of wiping out hyper-inflation overnight, and the figures of inflation that were released between March 2009 and June 2009 were in the negative, implying there was deflation in Zimbabwe. The rates of inflation for the afore-mentioned months were -2.0 percent, -2.5 percent, -1.0 percent and -0.5 percent, respectively. Unlike the CSO, which claimed that it did not have the reliable data to generate accurate rates of hyper-inflation, Hanke overcame the problem by developing the Hanke Hyper-inflationary Index for Zimbabwe (HHIZ). This new index was derived from market-based price data. The life-span of most governments that have used printing presses to create hyper-inflation have been very short. One of the exceptions is Milosevic, who stayed in power for eight more years after Yugoslavia's hyper-inflation peaked in 1994. Milosevic only left power after mass protests and electoral defeat in the September 2001 elections. In Zimbabwe it is still an open question as to how long the ZANU (PF) regime that has presided over the country's hyper-inflation will last.

2.5 Survival Strategies and Coping Mechanisms

Workers in countries such as Germany that are examined in this dissertation, including those from Zimbabwe, have devised various survival strategies to cope with the devastating economic condition of hyper-inflation. The terms 'survival strategies', 'livelihood strategies' and 'coping mechanisms' are used interchangeably, the distinction between these terms having become blurred. The conceptual framework of survival strategies and coping mechanisms is used to explain how the working class in Harare responded to the Zimbabwean crisis. Survival strategy has been defined as 'a long term action to achieve a particular goal' (Sparr 1994: 2). This implies

⁷ Interview with John Robertson, an economic commentator on 8 February 2009.

⁸ Interview with Tony Hawkins, a leading academic at the University of Zimbabwe's Business School on 14 May 2009.

⁹ Interview with Godfrey Kanyenze, the Director of the Labour and Economic Development Research Institute of Zimbabwe (LEDRI), on 14 May 2009. LEDRI is an economic research arm of the ZCTU, and it was founded in September 2003.

that, at a household level, a family will come up with a strategic plan on how to ensure that it survives and/or even eradicate its economic problems. Lingam (2005: 16) argues that the term 'family or household survival strategy' is extensively used to refer to the deliberate social and economic tactics of the poor to sustain themselves. Lingam goes on to assert that while the term is much in use, researchers often qualify that they do not imply rationality, conscious choice or consensual events, even though these may also be present. The term strategy more often connotes a continuum of adjustments made by households in response to internal and external factors, to survive at the same level or attain social mobility (Lingam 2005: 16). These strategies abide by the internal power hierarchies that exist within the household, as well as the constraints posed by the larger context of class, race, caste, ethnicity and gender ideologies (Elson 1994).

Survival strategies in the global south are also associated with activities in the informal economy (De la Rocha 1991). The Informal sector refers to a broad range of activities that dominate the economy in many developing countries (Acosta 2005, De la Rocha 1991). Castells and Portes (1989:12) assert that it is often used to mean income generating activities that are not regulated by the state in a legal and social environment in which other similar activities are regulated. Informal activities are relationships that are outside the criminal economy, but fall in a continuum between legal and illegal activities. The products may be legal, but the process through which they are prepared or produced may not be fully legal. This, for example, might be a situation where businesses do not pay taxes to the government (Castells and Portes 1989: 12).

Hart (1970) first coined the term informal economy, to describe the activity of petty commodity traders in Ghana, working outside the formal labour market, who were largely self-employed. Hart's thesis was that individuals, previously described as marginal, were entrepreneurs in their own right. In 1972, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) proposed that the informal sector was not marginal, but could be profitable and efficient. The ILO (1972) went on to develop a widely used characterization of the informal economy that included ease of entry, small-scale enterprises, family ownership, and the use of labour intensive technology.

Rakowski (1994) has proposed two principles in the conceptualisation of the informal economy. Firstly, there is the structuralist approach, which has argued that informal employment is an integral part of the global economic system because it functions to suppress costs of labour. Instead of absorbing informal sector activities, as predicted in earlier studies (e.g ILO 1972), the formal sector relied on the informal as a way to increase competitiveness and profits (Beneria

and Roldan 1987, Castells and Portes 1989). Kudva (2006) posits that neo-Marxist and dependency theorists, who have linked informal employment to capital accumulation and restructuring within the global economy, have influenced the structuralist perspective.

The second approach known as the legalistic approach, is associated with the Peruvian economist, Hernando de Soto. Rather than stemming from the logic of capitalism, de Soto (1989, 2000) argued that informality is a response to excessive and inefficient government regulation. He stressed that informal workers find it impossible to comply with unreasonable bureaucracy, and that the sector would thrive through the strengthening of private property rights and reduced state intervention. This argument has provided a justification for the dismantling of regulatory barriers throughout Latin America in the 1980s and 1990s (Biles 2008). In practice however, the informal economy is characterised by self-employment, but also precarious wage employment, increasing casualisation of labour, and activities and processes that may not be fully legal or regulated (Beneria 2003).

Closely examining the growth of the informal sector in Ghana, Owusu (2001) argues that structural adjustment policies have created a favourable environment for intensification of Multiple Modes of Livelihood (MML) strategies among salaried employees. The author describes these as 'accumulation strategies', as opposed to survival strategies among the poor. The common MML activities were urban agriculture and trade. Owusu's study showed that the higher the income, the greater is the chance for MML. Generally, women could not participate in the MML because they were more pressed with household responsibilities (Owusu 2001). However, if one is to adopt Owusu's study in Zimbabwe, notably during the ESAP years, it is evident that there is a sharp contrast between Owusu's findings and the situation amongst the working class in Harare. Whereas MML activities such as urban agriculture and petty commodity trading largely excluded women in Ghana, in Harare, these activities were largely the preserve of wives and children of working class men in the 1990s when ESAP was implemented.

With the advent of independence in 1980, the informal economy in Zimbabwe was relatively small, accounting for less than 10 percent of the labour force (Mhone 1992). This was attributed to the various laws and by-laws that prohibited the free movement of people, especially from the rural to urban areas. At independence, the new government recognised this 'sector' and permitted the free movement of people but was ambivalent in terms of how to deal with informal activities in urban areas (Mhone 1994). Owing to the failure of the economy to

grow at sufficiently high levels and create adequate jobs, the share of informal economy employment grew from less than 10 percent of the labour force in 1982 to 20 percent by 1986/87 and 27 percent by 1991 and close to 40 percent by 1998 (Kanyenze 2007: 17). During the peak of the crisis formal sector employment accounted for only an estimated 7 percent of the labour force, according to the UNDP Report of 2008, with the remaining 93 percent being the non-formal sector (informal and communal). However, Operation *Murambatsvina*/Restore Order destroyed some livelihoods in the informal economy during 2005.

2.6 Agency of the Working Class

Giddens' (1984: 6) structuration theory is of great utility in explaining the various survival strategies that the working class in Harare devised, in the face of a harsh macro-economic climate. Giddens' structuration theory surveys a wide range of theories that begin with either the individual/agent or the society/structure and rejects both of these polar alternatives. Rather, Giddens (1984: 3) argues that the starting points needs to be 'recurrent social practices'. He argues that: 'The basic domain of the study of the social sciences, according to the theory of structuration, is neither the experience of the individual actor, nor the existence of any form of social totality, but social practices ordered across time and space' (Giddens 1984: 4). At its core, Giddens' structuration theory, with its focus on social practices is a theory of the relationship between agency and structure. The very heart of the theory of structuration is intended to illuminate the duality and dialectical interplay of agency and structure. Thus, agency and structure cannot be conceived as separate from one another. To put this into the Zimbabwean, German, Yugoslav and Argentine context of the working class living in an environment of hyper-inflation, the working class can be taken as active agents, who because of their agency, are able to devise various mechanisms to survive in a structure (economic environment) in which it may be difficult to survive.

In his theory of structuration, Giddens (1984) eschews extreme positions, arguing that although people are not entirely free to choose their own actions, and their knowledge is limited, they nonetheless are the agency which reproduces the social structure and leads to social change. Giddens' theory of structuration can be regarded as echoing a key aspect of Marx's (1984: 10) thinking which argues that, 'Men make their own history, but do not make it just as they please, they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves'. Rees (1998) and Luckas (1971)

assert that this statement emphasises a dynamic relationship between agency and structure. Zeilig (2005: 17) asserts that the individual is not displaced by this analysis into a rigid and determined structure, but is understood as part of a dialectical and historic process. Giddens' structuration theory therefore implies that people make society, but are at the same time constrained by it.

Giddens (1984: 4) defines agency as human action. Thus, to be human is to be an agent. Agents' knowledge of their society informs their action, which reproduces social structures, which in turn enforce and maintain the dynamics of action. Giddens (1984: 4) goes on to define structure as a form of domination which produces, and is an exercise of power, originating from the control of resources. In this instance, the structure of domination in this thesis is the state in Zimbabwe, which makes rules and is in control of state resources to enforce those rules. The notion of looking at structure in this sense is reinforced by Burns (1986: 13) who focuses on an array of social structures such as the political system and the economy. In the Zimbabwean context, the nature of the country's political system and economy had a huge bearing on many people, including the working class, which had to show certain ingenuity to survive the unfavourable structural constraints embedded in the country's politics and economy, between 1997 and 2008. In this dissertation, structure refers to the political system and economic environment that was prevailing in Zimbabwe between 1997 and 2008.

The agency of the working class to influence its destiny has been described in E.P Thompson's seminal work, *The Making of the English Working Class*. Giddens (1987) contends that Thompson places a significant emphasis upon the capability of the human agents (English working class) to actively shape and re-shape the conditions of their existence. Giddens (1987: 45) further adds that if there is a single Marxian theorem which dominates Thompson's historical studies, it is surely the aphorism that human beings 'make their own history'. This phraseology according to Giddens plainly informs both title and substance of Thompson's massive study of the development of the English working class. Giddens' theory of structuration has however come under criticism for placing too much primacy on agency, which in most cases does not change the structure. As a result, the structuration that Giddens suggests does not materialise in some cases because of the resilience of structure, even in the face of determined agency (Ritzer 1992).

2.7 Why the Working Class?

As has been discussed above, one of the reasons for focusing on the working class in this dissertation is because there is a gap in the Zimbabwean literature on studies that have been conducted on the working class, specifically its response to the economic meltdown that has affected the country since 1997. My choice of subject is also partly a political one. Whilst the impact of hyper-inflation on the broad working class and indeed the whole population as a whole is important, it was felt that more could be achieved by adopting a narrower focus. The particular focus selected will make it possible to shed light on an ongoing debate: Has the working class disintegrated to the extent that the MDC could not call for mass action to remove the regime led by Robert Mugabe? This is one of the reasons provided by some of the labour centre's leadership for the absence of revolts or uprisings in Zimbabwe, despite an unfavourable economic and political environment prevailing in the period 1997 to 2008 under scrutiny in this study.

Working class is a term used in academic sociology and in ordinary conversation to describe those employed in lower tier jobs, as measured by skill, education and compensation (Thompson and Hickey 2005). Marx's (2005) *Communist Manifesto* defined the working class as individuals who sell their labour power for wages and who do not own the means of production. He argued that they were responsible for creating the wealth of a society. He asserted that the working class physically craft furniture, build bridges, grow food and nurse children, but do not own the means of production (Marx 2005). The functionalist definition of working class is almost similar to that of Marxist definitions. Gilbert (1998) notes that from a functionalist perspective, identification of a person as a member of the working class is often based on the nature of the work performed (that is blue collar or white collar, with the former being working class), one's income, and the extent of formal education. However, functionalist studies of social class include other traits such as the basis for the person's access to the means of production, or amount of control that the person has over his/her work environment (Gilbert 1998). The main points of contention between the Marxists and Functionalists are over what causes an individual to be considered a member of the working class and on the causes for the troubles faced by the working class.

Two contemporary Marxists add nuances contained in definitions more fitting for the modern world. Callinicos (2006: 13) defines the working class as, 'those persons who are denied

direct access to the means of production and are therefore compelled to sell their labour-power to capital on terms that would lead to their exploitation'. Van der Linden (2006: 18) extends the definition as follows: 'The working class is constituted of every carrier of labour-power whose labour is sold or hired out to another person under economic or non-economic compulsion to the class of subaltern workers, regardless of whether the carrier of labour-power is him or herself selling or hiring it out and, regardless of whether the carrier, him-or herself, owns means of production'.

However, it should also be noted that defining the term 'working class' is not a simple a sociological task, and we are mindful of Thompson's (1980: 9) warning:

'...the notion of class entails the notion of historical relationship. Like any other relationship, it is a fluency which evades analysis if we attempt to stop it dead at any given moment and anatomize its structure. The finest-meshed sociological net cannot give us a pure specimen of class...'

A synthesis of the above scholars' views justifies a broad and fluid definition of the 'working class' that is appropriate to Zimbabwe during its decade of crisis. According to this understanding of working class, one must not only include traditional manual employees, but also groups like teachers, once thought of as middle class, whose salaries have collapsed and who are now highly unionised as well as white collar workers like bank tellers who are also unionised in Zimbabwe and are not high in the banking hierarchy, plus the dependents of all the above. Informal traders who once belonged to the ranks of the formal working class are also discussed. However, it is argued in the thesis that, arguably, in terms of their work, experience of exploitation and consciousness, these informal sector traders had stepped out of the working class albeit temporarily in most cases. Thus, the economic crisis in Zimbabwe that has been characterised by a high rate hyperinflation, calls for a re-definition of who the working class are, at least in the Zimbabwean context. However, this dissertation will focus on the core of the working class, employees in the formal sector, and their families. That is, it is not the 'poorest of the poor' who are the main subjects of study, but that part of the working class whose incomes and hence living standards have been dramatically undermined by hyper-inflation. It is these employed workers who have provided the main support for opposition to the ZANU (PF) regime.

2.8 Case Studies of Germany, Yugoslavia and Argentina

The chapter will now focus on case studies of strategies devised to survive hyper-inflation. The case studies are drawn from Germany, Yugoslavia and Argentina. Hungary, which has the highest recorded rate of hyper-inflation in history, is not covered because of the scarcity of available literature. Argentina, whose hyper-inflation was not as high as in Germany or Yugoslavia, was chosen because Argentina is a developing Latin American country perceived to have a great deal more in common with Zimbabwe, which is also a developing country, than the other examples. In the three cases of Germany, Argentina and Yugoslavia, I shall first describe the general dynamics and impact of hyper-inflation, and then assess the workers' survivalist, workerist and partyist responses to hyper-inflation.

2.8.1 German's Hyper-inflation, 1920-1923

This section of the discussion focuses on hyper-inflation in Germany, the first classical example of hyper-inflation in the 20th century. DeCarbonnel (2009) and Ferguson (2006) argue that the hyper-inflation that blighted Germany between 1920 and 1923 had its roots in World War I. Prices of basic commodities rose by 240 percent between 1914 and 1919 (Webb 1989). Dornbusch et al (1990) postulate that the Germans borrowed vast sums to fund World War I. When the supply of funds proved inadequate, the German central bank, the Reichsbank, simply lent itself money and printed new notes. Thus, the amount of Marks in circulation rose by 300 percent between 1914 and 1919, leading to hyper-inflation (deCarbonnel, 2009).

The new Social Democratic government of the Weimer Republic had great plans to improve the conditions of the poor in Germany. Improved education welfare, and more jobs were promised (deCarbonnel 2009). To finance this, the government borrowed money and printed more currency. Between 1920 and 1921, the supply of money increased by 50 percent and at this stage, a loaf of bread cost Two Marks (Protopapadakis 1983).

The shadow of German's defeat in World War I and the reparations demanded by the Allies hung over Germany throughout this period. Under the terms of the Versailles Treaty, following the end of the war, Germany was forced to sign a 'War Guilt Clause' and pay reparations for the damage Germany had done to the economies and infrastructure of the Allies (Ferguson 2006). In 1921, the Allies presented Germany with their demands for payment, a sum of 6.6 billion Pounds (Protopapadakis, 1983). Germany was already in financial trouble and the

only perceived solution was to print more money (Protopapadakis 1983). The impact of reparations on the German economy was catastrophic, at a time when social and political upheaval was widespread under Germany's new democratic constitution. Prices were already rising fast by the start of 1923, and when the government printed more money, increases became more rapid (deCarbonnel 2009). In the twelve months before January 1923, prices rose to more than 75 times their January 1922 levels. A loaf of bread now cost 450 Marks (Dornbursch *et al*, 1990). With rising debts and an increasingly worthless currency, the Germans stopped paying the reparation payments demanded by the allies. The response of the French and Belgian governments was to occupy the Ruhr industrial region in January 1923. They intended to get their reparations from the German factories and mines in the form of goods and raw materials. The impact on the German economy was devastating. With the loss of so much industrial production and income, the German economy faltered (Dornbursch *et al* 1990). By October 1923, the government was printing 120,000 trillion marks a day, yet the demand was eight times that of production (Protopapadakis 1983). The response of the government was to further increase production to 500,000 trillion marks. As money became increasingly worthless, so people stopped using it and began to barter for goods. The German government appeared to be on the verge of collapse, but made the situation even worse through the printing of more money.

Protopapadakis (1983) puts the German hyper-inflation into perspective by arguing that in 1920 a loaf of bread cost two marks, but by June 1923 when the hyper-inflation was in full flow, a loaf of bread cost 430,000,000,000 marks. Prices began to rise by the hour and Fergusson (2006) remarks that people sitting in bars or coffee shops found that their second drink would cost twice as much as their first. Workers were now being paid up to three times a day, and the wages would be collected in a wheelbarrow and taken down to the shops to be spent as quickly as possible before prices rose any further (Fergusson 2006). Dornbusch *et al* (1990) assert that shopkeepers found it almost impossible to make money. Unless they could spend their takings on new supplies immediately, they would be unable to re-stock their shops with goods. Goods became scarce and farmers refused to bring their produce to the towns as the money they received was worthless by the time they came to spend it. Those who were reliant on pensions suffered. The government failed to raise benefits fast enough to keep up with price rises and pensioners struggled to survive. People with investments in banks saw the value vanish overnight. Income that was generated became worthless. Tax receipts for the government

stopped, as people realised that they could reduce their taxes to virtually nothing if they waited a few months to pay. With money becoming increasingly worthless, the government lacked the incentive to collect taxes. By October 1923, just one percent of government expenditure was covered by taxes. To make up the shortfall, the government simply printed new notes to cover the remaining 99 percent of expenditure (Protopapadakis 1983).

Dornbusch *et al* (1990) posit that, with the German economy in disarray in October 1923, the government finally acted. A new centre-right government was established in August 1923, as a direct response to the hyper-inflation. The new government was led by Gustav Stresemann. The German government realised that it would be unable to defeat the French and Belgian invasion of the Ruhr and would have to accept the agreed reparations. Thus, reparation payments were restarted, and economic stability was re-established. In November, 1923, the German government called a halt to issuing new marks. A new currency, the Rentenmark, backed by land and property was created (Dornbusch *et al* 1990). One Rentenmark was exchangeable for one trillion old Marks, with a limit of 2.4 billion Rentenmarks being issued. The government also cut its expenditure, partly by retrenching around 700,000 workers (Protopapadakis 1983).

In April 1924, the Stresemann government brokered a deal with the United States government known as the Dawes Plan, a scheme initiated by Charles Dawes to help Germany pay off its enormous war debts (Dornbusch *et al* 1990). This reduced Germany's annual payments to more manageable levels, and arranged for the Germans to receive loans of 800 million gold marks from banks and businesses in the United States and Europe. In August, 1924, the Rentenmark was replaced with a new Reichsmark of equal value. The new currency had backing from gold and so inspired confidence. Taxes were raised and by 1925, the German government had a surplus (Protopapadakis 1983, Dornbusch *et al* 1990).

2.8.2 Argentina's Hyper-inflation, 1988-1989

The 1980s were a very volatile period for the Argentine economy, as hyper-inflation peaked at an annual rate of over 20,000 percent in 1989 (Manning 2002). This hyper-inflation imposed serious costs upon households and businesses (Cooper 2001). Some businesses closed their doors, posting signs stating that 'We have no prices', because they could not accurately predict and mark up prices quickly enough (Anderson 1999). Employees demanded frequent payment, and then quickly spent or quickly converted their wages. Both businesses and households

reduced currency holdings, and the US dollar served as the preferred medium of exchange and store of value (Cardoso 1992). Both domestic and foreign investment plunged and capital flight occurred. Sullivan argues that large government deficits, which occurred in the absence of investment, further encouraged inflation. Prices failed to serve as signals for resource allocation and therefore market forces could not reach a beneficial outcome. As a result, productivity decreased and GDP dropped by 4% in 1990 (Sullivan 2002). This hyper-inflationary crisis caused Alfonsín to resign in 1989, after widespread protests by the working class, notably in Buenos Aires. Ratliffe and Fontaine (1990) argue that Carlos Menem who replaced Alfonsín as the President of Argentina, was able to transform Argentina from a state-dominated protectionist economy to one committed to free market principles and open to trade. Most state enterprises were privatised, hyper-inflation was eliminated, and the economy was opened up to foreign trade and investment (Pastor and Wise 2001). Sullivan (2002) reveals that in 1991, under the direction of the minister of the economy, Domingo Cavallo, the Argentine government pegged its currency, the *peso*, to the U.S dollar and limited the printing of *pesos* to the extent that they were backed by U.S dollars, a policy that helped keep inflation in check.

2.8.3 Yugoslavia's hyper-inflation, 1993-1994

Petrovic, Bogetic and Vugosevic (1998) assert that the origins of the Yugoslav hyper-inflation go back to at least the end of 1990, when the elections held in all six republics of the former Yugoslavia indicated that the country was breaking up *de facto*. As the country disintegrated in 1991 and 1992, interregional trade collapsed, causing a severe downturn in the output of many industries (Bogetic *et al* 1994; Petrovic and Vugosevic, 1998). The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was left with much of the huge bureaucracy, including the police and the military, which had previously served a much larger country. The escalation of fighting in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina and the rapidly deteriorating regional security situation, led the authorities to postpone any orderly fiscal adjustment, particularly of expenditures (Petrovic, Bogetic and Vugosevic 1998).

In 1992, the United Nations imposed an international embargo on almost all commercial transactions with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, including foreign trade, financial transactions and transportation, and in April 1993, the embargo was broadened to all transactions and transportation except humanitarian aid. Consequently, a sharp decline in output, which was

driven largely by the disintegration of the country and the international embargo, and the ensuing extreme monetary and fiscal expansion, led to hyperinflation (Petrovic *et al* 1998).

Yugoslavia was in the throes of one of the worst spells of hyper-inflation in history in the 1990s under the rule of Slobodan Milosevic. During this time, the Yugoslav economy was destroyed, there was widespread corruption, organised crime, strained relations with neighbouring countries and a general reputation as one of the world's rogue nations. Hanke (2008) notes that Yugoslavia's hyper-inflation peaked in January 1994, when the month-on-month inflation rate reached 313,000,000 million per cent. Yugoslav hyper-inflation lasted for twenty four months. During this period, per capita income plunged by more than 50 percent and ordinary people were forced to deplete their foreign currency earnings (Hanke 2008).

Watkins (1997) argues that by 1992 the Yugoslav government had used up all of its own hard currency reserves and went on to loot the hard currency savings of its private citizens. It did this by imposing more and more difficult restrictions on private citizens' access to their foreign currency savings in government banks.

The Milosevic regime operated a network of stores at which goods were supposed to be available at artificially low prices. In practice, these stores seldom had anything to sell and goods were only available at free markets where the prices were far above the officially determined prices (Lyon 1996). Government fuel stations were eventually closed between 1993 and 1995 and fuel was only available from roadside dealers whose operation consisted of a parked car with a plastic can of gasoline. Most car owners gave up driving and relied upon public transportation. However, the Belgrade transit authority (GSP) did not have the funds necessary to keep its fleet of 1200 buses operating. Instead it ran fewer than 500 buses. These buses were overcrowded and the ticket collectors could not get aboard to collect fares. So the GSP could not collect fares even though it was desperately short of funds. Delivery trucks, ambulances, fire trucks and garbage trucks were also short of fuel. The government announced that fuel would not be sold to farmers for harvests and planting.

Despite the government's desperate printing of money it still did not have the funds to keep the infrastructure operational. Pot holes developed in the streets, elevators stopped functioning, and construction projects were closed down. The unemployment rate exceeded 30 percent. The government tried to counter the inflation by imposing price controls. But when inflation persisted, the government controls made prices so ridiculously low that producers

simply stopped producing.

2.8.4 Workers' Survivalist Responses to Hyper-inflation in Germany, Argentina and Yugoslavia

As the hyper-inflation increased in Germany, the people began to invest in goods like houses, antiques, jewelry and even minor items like soap and hairpins (deCarbonnel 2009). Petty thievery also became a common way of coping. Copper pipes and brass armatures were stolen and fuel was siphoned from people's cars. People also bought items which they did not necessarily require and bartered them for goods which they needed. The moral standards of Berlin plunged, as prostitutes of both sexes filled and roamed the streets. Thus, different types of responses to the crisis were witnessed as the Germans grappled with the hyper-inflation.

Argentina is one good case where people, notably the working class, managed to devise different forms of survival strategies during this difficult economic period in the region. Argentina was on the throes of an hyper-inflationary situation in the 1980s and 1990s, peaking at 20,266 percent in March 1990. This forced people in Argentina to devise survival strategies (Wayland 2003). During the economic crisis in Argentina, most working class families forced every family member to join the labour market and child labor increased drastically during the period. Carmen (2002) notes that recycling of goods and the use of substitutes became a popular way of coping with the economic meltdown. Gas was replaced by gas decanters, coal or firewood and beef by soy. Carmen (2002) further postulates that people began to buy in bulk, others switched to cheaper brands, and began to walk more or use bicycles or horses. Vices such as prostitution and violent crime also increased during this phase, as the youth in particular sought to find ways of survival in an untenable economic environment where jobs had become scarce. The Argentine situation demonstrates that people are active agents who will devise coping and survival strategies when faced with economic difficulties.

Carmen (2002) argues that in the 1980s and 1990s, three out of every five people who were leaving Argentina were women. For most women who were emigrating, the destination was Europe, especially Spain, Italy and France. In Europe, the migrants worked as domestic workers, nurses, waitresses or retail workers. The women also worked as hostesses in casinos or other entertainment centers. Many women had extensive social networks. However, these women were able to send money back

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families. The International Labour Organization Report of 2006 affirms that the entry of women into the international labour markets is one of the most impressive responses to the deterioration of options in national labour markets. This phenomenon represents a strategy of family survival according to the International Labour Organization and this strategy enabled many families in Argentina in the 1980s and 1990s to survive the economic recession which the country was experiencing.

Keay (2001) contends that during Yugoslavia's economic recession, people developed coping mechanisms that included relying on remittances from relatives living abroad, savings and, in particular, the black market. It is Keay's contention that although Yugoslavia's black market enabled many people to survive, it was dogged by rampant corruption and criminality. The black market system diverted tax revenues, scared away foreign investment and turned almost everybody into a small-time hustler (Keay 2001). Almost everyone in Yugoslavia was relying on the black market for survival because nearly all goods were finding their way there as legitimate goods were simply too expensive. The Yugoslavian, together with the Argentinian case study shows that people are active agents who will in some cases come up with coping mechanisms and survival strategies when faced with economic difficulties like hyper-inflation.

2.8.5 Workers' Collective Responses to Hyper-inflation in Germany, Argentina and Yugoslavia

This section of the discussion focuses on the political responses to hyper-inflation by the working class in Germany, Argentina and Yugoslavia. These collective responses by the workers suggested a sense of class consciousness among some of the ranks of the working class. In Germany during the years of hyper-inflation, workers showed capacity for collective action and organised riots borne out of frustration caused by the rapid decline of their real incomes. Dornbusch *et al* (1990) reveal that there were riots in Berlin and other German cities, and some other workers organised parties to go to the countryside and steal farmers' produce out of the ground. Trade unions also bargained hard with employers for regular wage increases, but these failed to keep pace with rising prices. At first, workers thought they were bargaining well, but this feeling soon disappeared as they struggled to support their families (deCarbonnel 2009). Dornbusch *et al* (1990) assert that when the German economy crashed again during the 1929 Great Depression, the workers decided to switch their allegiance to the Communist Party and to

Hitler's Nazi party. Dornbusch *et al* (1990) suspect that the workers no longer believed that the politicians who had led them into two economic disasters in the space of ten years were capable of effectively managing the country.

The General Confederation of Labour (Argentina) (CGT) was quite effective in arousing worker consciousness amongst the working class in cities like Buenos Aires and Rosario, as hyper-inflation wreaked havoc in Argentina in 1988 and 1989. During Alfonsín's rule, when hyperinflation began in Argentina, the CGT launched 13 general strikes which were carried out to express dismay at the economic crisis Argentina was facing. In 1989, with hyper-inflation corroding the economy, the CGT introduced a 26 point programme to support Menem in his bid for the Presidency. Thus, the working class in Argentina was able to embark on a collective response that was political in nature, which led to success in ousting the regime that had presided over Argentina's hyper-inflation.

In Yugoslavia, the economic crisis led to the disintegration of the country, as the states Slovenia and Croatia broke away to become independent countries (Hartmann 1999). These are actions that were being led by the workers in these states. In Yugoslavia, the economy was deeply troubled by the 1980s. Unemployment was dangerously high and persistent. Regional inequalities remained the norm. On a per-capita basis, Slovenia's income by the late 1980s was at least twice the average for Yugoslavia as a whole, Croatia's more than a quarter greater, and Serbia's roughly equal to the average. But Montenegro's was only 74 percent of Yugoslavia's average, Bosnia-Herzegovina's 68 percent, Macedonia's 63 percent, and Kosovo's 27 percent (Herman and Peterson, 2009: 8). What is more, Yugoslavia borrowed abroad heavily in the 1970s, and it accumulated a large external debt that stood at \$19.7 billion in 1989 (Hartmann 1995: 51). With hyperinflation spiking upward to more than 1,000 percent that same year, Yugoslavia was pressured by the IMF to undertake a classic 'shock therapy' program that threatened the solidarity of its population.

Economic decline was accompanied by diminished confidence in the federal system and the rise of separatist challenges. But as Woodward (1995: 370, 384) notes, taking the lead 'were not the unemployed but the employed who feared unemployment' and property owners who feared 'that they would lose value and status'. It was in the two wealthiest republics of the northwest, Slovenia and Croatia, but Slovenia in particular, that the drive toward autonomy took the most pronounced anti-federal form. Herman and Peterson (2009) posit that although less

than 30 percent of Yugoslavia's population lived in Slovenia and Croatia, they accounted for half of federal tax revenues—before they stopped paying it. They openly resented these obligations. Longing for closer ties with Western Europe, they revolted.

Malapanis (2000: 6) reveals that in a telephone interview on 12 October 2000, with Branislav Canak, the President of the trade union federation *Nezavisnot* (Independence), he was informed by Canak on the central role that the workers had played in the 5 October revolt as well as the strikes and other street actions that had compelled Milosevic to leave office, after having been defeated by Kostunica in the 2000 elections. The trade union leader went on to explain that what had motivated the workers, was the fact that Milosevic's regime had pauperised the working class severely during Yugoslavia's period of hyper-inflation in 1993 and 1994. Canak (quoted in Malapanis 2000) added:

In addition to joining in the call for the October 5 General strike, *Nezavisnot* helped organize other walkouts in the first week of October, demanding Milosevic step down. We organized strikes in the copper industry, where Milosevic was securing cash for years before.

Malapanis (2000) narrates that *Nezavisnot* members also took effective action in the vegetable oil industry. While workers at these factories received very low pay, managers organised in the 1990s during Yugoslavia's struggle with hyper-inflation to divert most of the production to the black market, where company officials and middlemen made a profit from exorbitant prices. As part of the organised rebellion, workers' guards formed in these factories to stop this diversion of products, which many had expected to intensify as Milosevic and his cronies began to see the end of their reign.

2.8.6 Conclusions from the Cases

The three cases of Germany, Argentina and Yugoslavia have shown some of the survivalist, workerist and partyist responses that sections of the working class may resort to in the face of hyper-inflation. The main survivalist responses included strategies as diverse as moonlighting, engaging in speculative trading on the 'black market', migrating to other countries, cutting back on eating habits and taking part in vices and criminal activities such as prostitution and theft.

The workerist responses mostly included union-led workers' protests in all the three cases. Partyism was also exercised by the workers in all three cases as the working class allegiance generally shifted towards the Communist Party in Germany. In Argentina, the

workers' overwhelming support for Carlos Menem, helped oust President Alfonsín who had presided over Argentina's hyper-inflation. Partyism was also exercised by the workers in Yugoslavia, as the workers' support for Kostunica in 2001, helped oust Milosevic from power. A potent political response against Milosevic, who had presided over Yugoslavia's hyper-inflation, was delayed because of the repressive nature of his regime.

The three cases reveal the devastating effects of hyper-inflation which include many social ills, which Henry Hazlitt (2002: 18) succinctly proposed include, '...malinvestment, waste, a wanton re-distribution of wealth and income, the growth of speculation and gambling, immorality, corruption, disillusionment and social resentment...and, eventual collapse.

The responses to hyper-inflation in the three cases above are important because they can be juxtaposed against the Zimbabwean working class' own responses to hyper-inflation. The different responses that can be discerned in the Zimbabwean case can then be added to the array of possible responses to hyper-inflation. This would be an addition to the already existing literature on possible responses to hyper-inflation by the working class.

2.9 Coping Mechanisms of Zimbabweans in the Face of an Economic Crisis

Numerous studies on the coping mechanisms of the working class in the formal sector and also workers in the informal economy were conducted in the 1990s when Zimbabwe went through the effects of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP). Even though Zimbabwe was not yet under the throes of hyper-inflation, the survival mechanisms displayed by the working class during this era of economic difficulty do provide useful pointers on how workers might cope with an economic crisis.

In studies conducted by Lloyd Sachikonye, Veronica Brand, Rodreck Mupedziswa, Perpetua Gumbo and Leon Bijlmakers in the 1990s during the phase of ESAP in Zimbabwe, the general trend discerned from these researches was of a working class that was on the verge of destitution. Bijlmakers *et al* (1993) reported that in Chitungwiza, a predominantly working class residential area, 39 percent of households surveyed had no savings, could not save, did not participate in savings societies and had made no major expenditures other than school fees in the previous year.

A marked decline in consumption patterns was also reported by Sachikonye, Brand,

Mupedziswa, Gumbo and Bijlmakers. Amongst informal sector worker households in Mbare, a working class township in Harare, a majority in 1992 were reported to have eaten three meals a day but by 1993, a majority ate only two meals per day. Almost half of Sachikonye's sample lived in households which could no longer buy bread or meat at the end of each month. Bijlmakers *et al*'s survey in Chitungwiza showed a considerable decline, even in those reporting that they could afford corn-meal, Zimbabwe's staple crop.

Gibbon (1995: 23) argues that there was a marked differentiation in income between different sections of the working class in Zimbabwe during the phase of ESAP. He goes on to state that at the very top of the social pyramid were state-employed professional workers, namely teachers and nurses. These workers had the highest earning power, were universally accorded high status and were rarely, if ever, engaged in moonlighting activities. The studies on the effects of ESAP on the working class and informal sector traders revealed that it was women who appeared to be almost always responsible for extending household income sources. In Sachikonye's study, only 32 percent of his overwhelmingly male sample of retrenched engaged in informal sector activities.

In as much as the above studies reveal the effects and responses of the working class households in and around Harare to the structural adjustment programme, they predate the period when the working class faced new challenges of hyper-inflation and a political crisis in the 2000s. The fact that under hyper-inflation, almost every working class household was involved in moonlighting after reeling from the income eroding effects of hyper-inflation, in contrast to the limited activities of hustling witnessed under ESAP, points to the strong need for new studies on the working class. This is the contribution that this study can make to already existing literature.

Unlike the ESAP era when teachers and nurses were near the top of the social pyramid, their fortunes changed for the worse in a dramatic way during the phase of hyper-inflation, as their incomes plummeted. Teachers became some of the lowest paid workers. This resulted in what has been characterised as a mass exodus of teachers and nurses, as they deserted their professions and joined the multitude of Zimbabweans in the diaspora or joined the burgeoning Zimbabwean informal sector. Thus, the hyper-inflation and political crisis experienced by the working class had different dynamics to the effects of ESAP. This creates a lacuna in the literature which this dissertation attempts to fill.

Gaidzanwa (1999) looked at migrant Zimbabwean nurses and doctors in the era of structural adjustment. Her study was written up in 1997/98 in the context of an episode of industrial action by medical workers employed in the Zimbabwean public health sector. Gaidzanwa's research delved into the problems afflicting the health sector from the point of view of the medical professionals who chose to migrate from Zimbabwe in response to the deteriorating workplace situation that they faced in the 1990s. This situation was in part a product of the implementation of market-based orthodox economic reforms by the government. Gaidzanwa's research also focuses on the issues of social provisioning and the networks that people mobilise under conditions of economic stricture. There is a gendered dimension in Gaidzanwa's study on the health professionals in Zimbabwe during the era of ESAP. This derives from the fact that in Zimbabwe, nursing is predominantly a female profession, while doctors are predominantly male. The nurses studied by Gaidzanwa mainly migrated to Botswana while the doctors mostly migrated to South Africa. Gaidzanwa explained this gendered pattern of migration by arguing that in South Africa, there was a shortage of doctors and also relative ease of entry for professionals which the historical-colonial ties between South Africa and Zimbabwe permitted. This presumably encouraged Zimbabwean doctors to go to South Africa, while in Botswana, there was a shortage of experienced and specialised nurses, causing nurses to emigrate there instead.

Muzvidziwa (2005) and Ndlela (2006)'s studies on cross-border traders focused almost solely on female cross-border traders as this activity, just as the informal sector in general, was almost exclusively the preserve of women before the peak of the Zimbabwean crisis. Hyper-inflation and the political crisis turned this situation on its head, as more men began to join the ranks of the informal sector traders. This was largely caused by the speculative nature of this sector, which reaped huge profits for its participants. Thus, the accuracy of studies conducted on the ranks of the working class during the 1990s was rapidly overtaken by events, largely as a result of hyper-inflation. This is one of the issues that this study aims to address.

In the 2000s, most of the studies that have been conducted in Zimbabwe during its phase of high inflation and eventual hyper-inflation focused on informal sector workers, or on one particular type of response or survival strategy. For instance, Bracking and Sachikonye (2006) focus only on the importance of remittances as a livelihood strategy in the urban households of Harare and Bulawayo. Bracking and Sachikonye discovered in their urban survey that about 50

percent of households were getting periodic remittances from relatives in the diaspora. They also discovered that it was the more educated who were more likely to receive financial assistance from relatives outside the country. They attributed this to the fact that the more educated people are likely to have close relatives who are also educated and more likely to be able to attain work in foreign countries.

During the early stages of gathering data for this thesis in 2008, studies on livelihood strategies in the wake of the political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe in the 2000s were also being undertaken by Jeremy Jones and Hamadziripi Tamukamoyo, who had undertaken PhDs focusing on how informal traders in the country were coping with Zimbabwe's hyper-inflationary environment. In his study, Jones seeks to understand the effects of hyper-inflation and economic decline on young men in Chitungwiza, Zimbabwe, a working class township just outside Harare. Jones examines the development of a new logic of everyday economic action, what he terms the *kukiya-kiya* economy in post 2000 Zimbabwe. In local parlance, *kukiya-kiya* refers to multiple forms of 'making do' that are in some instances extra-legal. *Kukiya-kiya* has also been referred to colloquially as *kujingirisa* by people who take part in informal sector activities. Jones further argues that straight actions carried out in accordance with enduring and jointly-held rules and morals have given way to 'zig-zag' actions seen to be limited to a particular time and place, and directed to individual survival. *Kukiya-kiya* according to Jones suggests cleverness, dodging and the exploitation of whatever resources are at hand, all with the intention of achieving self-sustenance. Jones argues that since 2000, the 'real economy' of Zimbabweans turned into a *kukiya-kiya* economy. Jones contends that the *kukiya-kiya* activities that took place in Zimbabwe's informal sector during the peak of the crisis had far reaching repercussions on ethics and the morality of the Zimbabwean people in general, as the culture of surviving through means that were not straight appeared to have taken root in the country.

Another close study to this thesis, which is also a PhD thesis by Philani Moyo and was completed in October 2009 investigates and analyses livelihood strategies employed by the urban poor in an endeavor to bridge household food gaps under conditions of national food security and macro-economic meltdown. Questions about the effectiveness, viability, and sustainability of strategies employed are addressed. The role and capacity of the state in addressing the food crisis is also considered. Moyo assesses the effectiveness of the state's policies. State policies, laws and 'politics of the stomach' are also looked at, and Moyo debates whether they have been

a constraint to people's livelihood strategies. Moyo however focuses on the urban poor in Bulawayo and the majority of his subjects are unemployed people. In contrast, this thesis focuses on the working class people of Harare. The effectiveness of urban agriculture, rural-urban linkages and food remittances from Botswana and South Africa as livelihood strategies for the poor is addressed by Moyo. A shortcoming of Moyo and Jones' studies is that they make *a priori* judgements that survival strategies are the only responses that Zimbabweans came up with in the face of the hyper-inflation and political crisis that Zimbabwe faced in the 2000s. Thus, they adopted a methodological bias towards the household, obscuring what happens at work and at the level of politics. The contribution to the literature that this study makes is a focus on responses that involve an intertwining of ones that are workerist and partyist, as well as survivalist in nature.

2.10 Array of Possibilities under Hyper-inflation

To re-iterate, the case studies discussed in this chapter reveal a discernable pattern on the responses that the working class can adopt, to try to cope with an hyper-inflationary environment. Firstly, there are coping mechanisms that can be practiced at an individual or household level (survivalist responses) that portray different individuals' agency in the face of a threat to livelihood such as in the case of hyper-inflation. Secondly, there are responses that the working class can engage in that are collective in nature. These might be union-led workerist responses that involve militant action such as strikes, or they maybe partyist responses that involve supporting and voting for a particular political party. Workers can organise around their trade unions and embark upon collective struggles like strikes and demonstrations that can bring down a government that would have precipitated a catastrophe like hyper-inflation. The struggles can also take the form of being directly involved in the political sphere and forming a workers' party or overtly supporting a party that is sympathetic to the concerns of the working class. For the above to occur however, a strong sense of class consciousness or worker consciousness and worker mobilisation is required, as has been argued elsewhere in this chapter. The main concern of this dissertation is the responses of the working class in Harare to hyper-inflation that were survivalist, workerist and partyist in nature, and determine whether the coping mechanisms in which people engaged, were synonymous with responses from other workers in those countries that have gone through spells of hyper-inflation. If there are any discrepancies within the array of

possibilities that can be engaged in, then these have to be added to the range of possibilities that workers can adopt in the face of hyper-inflation and this will be a contribution to the already existing literature on hyper-inflation. See below table 2.2, which has the array of possibilities that have been pursued by workers in Germany, Yugoslavia and Argentina, in the face of hyper-inflation.

Table 2.2: Array of possibilities normally employed during periods of hyper-inflation by workers

Strategies normally employed at the individual and household level

Informal sector activities (synonymous with black market activities and speculative activities among other activities).

Moonlighting.

Migration (linked to remittances).

Child labour.

Cutting back on consumptive patterns (notably eating habits).

Resorting to criminal activities, for instance stealing, and other vices like prostitution to earn a living.



Collective Responses

Collective action, eg. strikes, demonstrations.

Actively taking part in politics (voting in huge numbers or forming a political party).

2.11 Conclusion

The main issue investigated in this dissertation is the response of the working class in Harare to the high levels of inflation, which later ballooned to hyper-inflation, and afflicted Zimbabwe between 1997 and 2008. The working class in Harare is the main focus of the study, since there is a gap in Zimbabwean literature on the working class during Zimbabwe's turbulent decade (1997-2008) of a political crisis and hyper-inflation. Most of the studies conducted during Zimbabwe's economic meltdown have mainly focused on people employed in the informal sector, since this is where most people were earning their livelihoods. The main study thus far, touching on some of the responses of the working class in Zimbabwe to the economic crisis, is Philani Moyo's PhD thesis which looks at issues of food security amongst people in Bulawayo. Moyo's thesis only focuses on one aspect, in the response of people in Bulawayo to the food crisis, which is one of the many facets of the Zimbabwean crisis that was evident, and a consequence of the economic decline in Zimbabwe. This thesis focuses on a broad range of responses or coping mechanisms that have been employed by the working class in Harare in order to survive what started as high inflation but subsequently swelled to hyper-inflation. This is done from three vantage points: looking at collective or workplace responses; focusing on individual or household responses; and looking at the crisis from the point of view of key informants in the trade unions. Thus, by looking at the broad range of coping mechanisms that can be found and employed by the working class from the array of possibilities, in a country that was besieged by hyper-inflation, this dissertation will be meeting a need for further research to be done in this domain. The working class in Harare has been chosen as the subject of focus, partly because there has been an ongoing debate and wonder, in the broader discourse on the crisis in Zimbabwe as to why the working class, which is the main support base of the MDC, was not mobilised by the MDC to embark on mass action in the face of unsustainable hyper-inflation

and electoral fraud. Can this be attributed to the disintegration of the working class at different levels? Or is this due to increased repression from the ZANU (PF) regime? These are some of the questions that this thesis will grapple with, in the hope that the findings and conclusions will make a useful contribution towards the debate on Zimbabwe's economic and political crisis that was marked by an historically high rate of hyper-inflation.



CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

3.1 Introduction

This dissertation aims to understand how Harare's working class has responded to Zimbabwe's hyper-inflation and related political crisis. A qualitative methodology was adopted, as this was more likely to produce rich description and explanatory data. The aim of this study is not that of providing a conclusive general statement about Harare's working class during the period of crisis. This might never be possible, given the heterogenous nature of this class. Rather, I was interested in delineating as best as I could, the range of responses that existed and were possible, how these changed over time, and how they varied from one sector and one household to another. On the basis of this elaboration, I endeavored to make sense of how different kinds of responses fitted together and how they related to hyper-inflation as well as the political crisis. The aim is to expand our general knowledge of working class responses to hyper-inflation and our specific understanding of Zimbabwe during the critical first decade of the twenty-first century. To address the research question, the study was conducted from three vantage points, each contributing a new level of analysis.

Different kinds of data enabled me to assess the response of the working class. First, in order to obtain a better understanding of the political, economic and social context, and broader dynamics of the crisis and its impact on workers, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 15 leading activists. These included trade unionists, leaders of civil society organisations and academics.¹⁰ These interviews were supplemented by government and other statistics, press reports and other documents, such as bulletins that were released by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) detailing hardships the workers were facing. This vantage point allowed me to analyse the Zimbabwean crisis from the point of view of trade union leaders and civil society activists. It also enabled me to assess the extent of trade union organisation and mobilisation during the period in question.

¹⁰ Purposive sampling was used to select the leading trade unionists, civil society leaders and academics. Six leading trade union leaders, four civil society leaders from different organizations and five leading academics on labour issues were interviewed.

Secondly, the study was conducted from the vantage point of the workplace interviews. This was done in order to establish whether there were any microscopic workerist responses to hyper-inflation and the political crisis that were unseen through the wide-angle lens of union mobilisation. Finally, the study was conducted from the vantage point of household interviews. This was done to find out about the survivalist responses adopted by the working class at the individual and household level.

Limiting the study to Harare made it logistically easier to conduct the study in terms of accommodation, transport and language issues. In addition, Harare is Zimbabwe's capital and it is the country's largest and most politically important city. The seat of government and the headquarters of the major political parties are found in Harare. The data collection process for this dissertation took place from January 2008 to June 2009. In 2009, I went to Zimbabwe on three different occasions to find out how conditions under the Government of National Unity (GNU) were faring, and to obtain the views of key informants and workers about the GNU. The visits during the GNU era also allowed me to reflect on the research I had conducted during the peak of the Zimbabwean crisis. The visits highlighted that 2008 was the end of the peak of the crisis. The year 2009 in the period of the GNU confirmed that the dollarisation era was an appropriate finishing stage of the dissertation.

Workers in four different sectors of formal employment were chosen i.e teaching, banking, manufacturing and catering. The primary school teachers were chosen because according the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) statistics, teachers were amongst the lowest paid workers in formal employment during the peak of Zimbabwe's economic crisis. The bank tellers were selected because, even though their job descriptions and qualifications implied that they belonged to the working class, their sector's monthly incomes according to the ZCTU statistics amongst its affiliates consistently showed banking to be the most rewarding sector. Manufacturing workers (artisans) were chosen due to the fact that before the economic crisis set in, this sector was the greatest contributor to Zimbabwe's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), (at least in those years that agriculture was not the biggest contributor). The catering industry was chosen because food consumption or the level of business that restaurants and take-away shops experience can serve as a measure of available disposable income. Finally, informal forex dealers were chosen because, even though the primary aim of the research was to focus on workers in formal employment, I came across many informal forex traders who had previously

been in formal employment. Most of these forex dealers had been artisans and teachers and I decided to interview them in order to investigate their comparative experiences in both sectors of employment.

3.2 Research Methods Employed

3.2.1 Unstructured and Structured Interviews

Both unstructured and semi-structured interviews were used during the workplace and household research. The unstructured interview is a spontaneous conversation, and not a set of questions asked in a pre-determined manner (Herman and Bentley 1993). Even though the interviews were unstructured, they had a focus on different aspects of the working class' survival strategies. The unstructured interviews enabled me to obtain rich narratives and to return to earlier subjects that I had not explored at the time they were mentioned, allowing me to ask more about topics that required clarification. Contrary to the structured interviews, however, the unstructured interviews do not allow for preparation. In some cases, both the interviewer and interviewee might in the course of the conversation find it difficult to express some of the important elements of their knowledge. Some of the data that one might get from unstructured interviews might also be unrelated to the subject, and so the researcher must conduct a thorough filtering process. Consequently, as a result of some of the problems I was facing with unstructured interviews, I adopted a semi-structured approach.

Semi-structured interviews brought forth foreseen information and also the open-ended questions that are a part of semi-structured interviews also elicited unexpected, but useful types of information. The semi-structured interviews included asking questions, listening, expressing interest and recording what the respondents have said (Neumann 2002). One of the greatest utilities of the semi-structured interview is that it allows flexibility, ensuring both interviewee and researcher, a certain 'autonomy' to discuss subjects deemed relevant and appropriate (Neumann 2002).

However, the semi-structured interview has certain pitfalls associated with it. There is always the danger of influencing the outcome of the interview. Even though the flexibility inherent in semi-structured interviews permits a greater probing of the subject, it also allows the interview to be manipulated (Neumann 2002). Making preparations before the interview has been identified as a method of avoiding these problems (Becker 1970, cited in Zeilig 2005).

3.2.2 Key Informant and Background Interviews

Key informants, notably trade union leaders and civil society activists were interviewed in order to get their views on hyper-inflation and the political crisis that blighted Zimbabwe between 1997 and 2008. The 'expert' information provided by the key informants was helpful, especially in clarifying issues that were not adequately interrogated in the literature that covered the period of the crisis. In addition, four background interviews were conducted with factory managers.

3.2.3 Workplace Interviews

16 workers in each of the four sectors of formal employment that are examined in the thesis were interviewed individually in the workplace interviews, thus, 64 workplace interviews in total were conducted. My samples from the four different sectors included 50 percent men and 50 percent women, in order to have a balanced gender view on the responses of the workers to the Zimbabwean crisis. Purposive sampling was used to identify the suitable respondents for the study. Ten foreign currency dealers who used to be in working class formal employment were also interviewed.¹¹ These forex dealers were operating from the Roadport and Copacabana bus terminis in downtown Harare. These foreign currency dealers were interviewed in order to assess their perceptions of both formal and informal employment in Zimbabwe during the decade of crisis. These forex dealers were also interviewed with the aim of gauging their levels of worker consciousness or lack thereof, and to find out whether they were prepared to join forces with sections of the working class that were still in formal employment to protest against the Zimbabwe crisis.

Individual and group interviews were conducted with artisans in the manufacturing sector. These artisans were chosen from two large factories in the Graniteside and Willowvale industrial areas. One of the limitations of this research was that the manufacturing sector is too huge, and during the peak of the sector, it was an important component of the Zimbabwean economy and contributed significantly to the numbers of the Harare working class. Thus, focusing on artisans alone did not do justice to the sector, but given the research time constraints, and the need to cover other sectors of the economy including conducting household interviews, it

¹¹ I was able to gain the confidence of the illegal foreign currency dealers who were operating at the Roadport and Copacabana bus terminis, by frequently exchanging my foreign currency, in return for Zimbabwean dollars with the same forex dealers who would mostly be operating in groups.

was judged best to focus on the artisans' experiences alone. Any future research in the manufacturing sector might have to factor in other general workers. Primary school teachers were interviewed in the townships of Glen View, Highfields and Mufakose and also the middle-class suburb of Hatfield. Bank tellers and catering workers were interviewed in the Central Business District (CBD) of Harare during their tea and lunch breaks.¹² The teachers, catering workers and bank tellers were interviewed individually and I initially chose my samples purposively, based on who I thought would be appropriate for the study. However, the procedure of snowballing was later adopted in all the sectors covered in the research.

Group interviews were only conducted with the manufacturing workers in the factories because the artisans normally worked in groups and most of them ate lunch together in the staff canteens where these group interviews were conducted. Thus, the work organisation of the artisans in the factories made it easy and convenient to interview people in groups, unlike in the other sectors that were looked at in the study. In the group interviews, whilst the researcher aimed for a typical focus group with perhaps eight people, in practice, it was necessary to be flexible, allowing circumstances to determine precise numbers, composition, length of interviews and venue. In the factory situations, the manager's permission was always obtained, but managers were not present in the interviews, while their support probably contributed to discussions that were open and honest. Interviews were conducted in social settings such as the workers' canteens, which provided a 'safe' environment where workers felt freer to express opinions during a period when the state was often feared. These interviews were particularly useful for discussions of poverty and mobilisation. The problem with the group interviews I had with the the artisans is that some individuals were dominating these group interviews, whilst others were quiet and hardly uttered a word, despite efforts to encourage them to contribute to the discussions.

The workplace interviews were not always easy and, at times, they were fraught with a number of impediments. The manufacturing interviews in the factories were the least difficult because the artisans felt 'safe' talking to someone referred to them by their work superiors. With the other workers - from teaching, banking and catering - discussions were more challenging, because most of them were interviewed individually, and not always within the workplace

¹²Four bank workers per bank, from four different banking institutions were interviewed. Two of the banks were indigenous banks and the other two were foreign owned banks. 16 catering workers from five different restaurants were interviewed.

setting. To make it easier for these workers to share their thoughts candidly, I had to use the snowballing method, which made interviews more comfortable and open. However, some of the workers became non-committal and uneasy when I asked them questions that were of a political nature. This was understandable, given the nature of Zimbabwe's politics, dominated by the spectre of violence, notably towards supporters of opposition parties. The widespread presence of state intelligence agents in many urban areas, and the fact that 2008, when I conducted fieldwork, was an election year, compounded the difficulty of gaining access to opinions.

3.2.4 House-hold Interviews

I conducted 25 household interviews, i.e home-based interviews with workers (some of the workers had been interviewed in the workplace interviews), their spouses and in some cases their children. These interviews were conducted in the working class townships of Highfields, Mufakose, Glen View, Mbare, Dzivarasekwa and Glen Norah. Interviews were also conducted with workers living in the middle-class suburb of Hatfield, where I was residing during the course of the fieldwork. Whilst the full range of my concerns were raised, I was particularly interested in obtaining family histories for the decade of crisis. These interviews enabled me to assess how families have, in practice, experienced and responded to the crisis. Questions around survival strategies such as pay, working conditions, household circumstances, the role of remittances, family organisation and social capital were broached. Purposive sampling and snowballing were used to access the 25 households.

Purposive sampling was used to access the household families that were interviewed, since some of the members of the households had been interviewed in previous workplace interviews. This was done because it helped in making sense of the relationship between workplace and household responses. It was also a means of introduction to families who would be otherwise cautious during the violent June 2008 Presidential run-off election. Snowball sampling was later used to access some further households. Research participants were briefed on the purpose and objectives of the study before being asked whether they wanted to participate or not in the study. I also made it clear that they were free to withdraw at any stage of the research process. None of my interviewees withdrew. If anything, the bulk of them appeared to be keen to be part of the research after I had briefed them on its concerns. Respondents were also told that no material or monetary benefits would accrue to them personally as a result of

participating in the study. The promise of confidentiality was made. There were no real names or addresses written on the interview schedules. Instead, pseudonyms were used and they are the ones that appear in the thesis.

The snowball method had its own problems which it presented. The biggest problem was of bias, as most of the households I was referred to in some instances had a similar household organisation or relied on almost analogous survival strategies as those of workers who were making the referrals.

The household interviews initially progressed smoothly, but from May 2008, with the defeat of Robert Mugabe in the first round of the Presidential election in March 2008, widespread violence increased. This continued until the Presidential run-off election held on 27 June 2008. Thus, from May until August 2008, I was unable to access the townships of Harare, because of the violence that characterised the Presidential run-off election. There was the possibility of physical violence befalling me, or even the respondents, depending on the interpretation of my interaction with the respondents by those who were instigating the violence. I had to improvise in order to gain access to some of the workers in the townships. I made use of telephone interviews using the snowballing method, to establish contact with some of the workers in Harare's townships during the period, and took note of their narratives of the unrest that was taking place in the townships. The fact that 2008 was an election year proved to be the biggest challenge I encountered in the course of the research.

3.2.5 Observations

The observation method was used in the study and it proved to be quite helpful in seeing directly how members of the urban working class and how others who had left formal employment for the informal sector were earning their livelihoods. Through my observations, I was able to see activities such as foreign currency dealing and petty commodity trading in the informal sector in places such as Mbare's *Mupedzanhamo* market, Roadport (World Bank) and Copacabana near the CBD of Harare, where the foreign currency dealers operated. The spectacle of seeing the foreign currency dealers really left a lasting impression, as each time I visited Roadport it would be a hive of activity, as forex dealers would move around, oblivious of the presence of the police, who used to also maintain a sizeable presence at the bus terminus. In return for the bribe the police required, the forex dealers with bundles of money and others with parked cars with trunk-

loads of money were given the liberty to make 'fortunes'.

Observation involves looking and listening with specificity. This is what observation in Sociology involves (Langley *et al* 1988). The type of observation that I used was direct observation. I used direct observation because I was trying to observe people's day to day coping mechanisms in an unobtrusive way and in the process attempting to limit bias, which is prone to happen under participant observation. Observations also permitted me to study people in their 'natural setting', without influencing their behaviour. Most of my observation is implicit in my analysis, a factor that helped rule out certain possibilities, rather than draw them in. This is part of the implicit process of sociological enquiry, of consciously considering what people are doing and attempting to analyse behavior that might be interesting.

3.2.6 Documentary Evidence

Primary sources of data that included newspaper reports, government statistics, union documents and reports from the IMF and UNDP were used to trace and assess the extent of Zimbabwe's economic implosion. The problem with documentary evidence is that it can be unreliable. A case in point was the different inflation statistics of Zimbabwe that were released by the government's CSO and academic institutions such as CATO institute which is based at the Johns Hopkins University. The CATO institute's inflation figures were always higher than the inflation figures that were published by the Zimbabwean government during the peak of hyper-inflation in 2008.¹³ Key informants who include economists such as Kanyenze, Robertson and Bloch however contend that the government's inflation figures were most likely manipulated to give the impression that the economic decline that was occurring in Zimbabwe was not as catastrophic as may otherwise have been suspected.¹⁴ The validity of newspapers such as the *Herald* and the *Daily News* was approached critically because both newspapers were widely understood as partisan, with the former having traditionally been aligned with the government, and the latter more sympathetic to the MDC.

¹³ The Cato Institute's inflationary figures on Zimbabwe during the decade of crisis were derived from the Hanke Hyper-Inflationary Index for Zimbabwe (HHIZ). This new index was derived from market-based price data.

¹⁴ Godfrey Kanyenze, John Robertson and Eric Bloch were interviewed on a number of occasions during the course of the research, and they consistently were of the opinion that the inflation figures that were being published by the CSO were a gross underestimate of the real inflation figures.

3.3 Ethical and Related Issues Encountered in the Field

Any study that involves human beings raises ethical concerns. Anonymity of the respondents in the study was observed as pseudonyms were used in place of real names. The only exception were the key informant interviewees - the leading activists - who agreed to have their real names to be used in the thesis. Chance responses that added richness to the dissertation were obtained from commercial sex workers in Johannesburg, South Africa and children of some of the working class respondents in the study. Ethical issues were observed by providing the commercial sex workers with anonymity and requesting for permission from the parents of the children, to conduct interviews on those children that were assisting their parents to augment family income. While it is not always possible to make a distinction between what is ethically right and wrong in the course of the research, every researcher should follow some guiding research principles (Muzvidziwa 2004). While acknowledging that every research situation poses ethical dilemmas for researchers, the problems confronting those studying their own societies, like researching the working class in Harare, are multiple as expounded below.

3.3.1 Honesty and Participation in the Fieldwork Arena

Contrary to Schrijvers' (1991: 178) assertions that, 'We are not required to love those we study, or even give them our unqualified approval', as a researcher doing fieldwork in my home city of Harare, participation in the project was premised on empathy for the respondents. This is also a view that is shared by Muzvidziwa (2004) who asserts that this should be part of the ethical requirements for any social scientist engaged in research at home or anywhere else. Muzvidziwa (2004) further adds that true research ethics should rest on the principle that one should behave as if one were to remain in the community for a long term period as its full-time member.

Honesty in one's actions affects how one builds relationships with research participants. Doing fieldwork close to home made me realise the merits of Mayer's assertion that fieldwork entails, 'the balanced reciprocity of relationships and information sharing (quoted by Mascarenhas-Keys 1987: 186). I interacted with some of the interviewees as friends, but the poverty that I saw in some of the households really touched me and even led me to question whether my intrusion was ethical and appropriate. Some of the interview sessions really left me quite emotional and bitter at the politicians who were partly to blame for the pauperisation of the working class in Zimbabwe. There were times when I felt obliged to give small gifts to

participants who faced difficulties in providing food for their families. This made me feel that as a researcher, one should have sufficient resources to participate in gift exchange transactions. At times, I was offered a humble meal but, as a general principle, I politely turned the offers down. Sometimes, I asked for a glass of water when I was thirsty, but I also did this in order to create feelings of mutual acceptance, without much cost to my respondents. I considered my interference in my respondents' lives as already too much of a cost. In general, I agree with Adjibolosoo (2000:3) that a researcher should possess positive Human Factor (HF) attributes like loyalty, responsibility, motivation, honesty, wisdom, vision, commitment, creativity and trustworthiness.

3.3.2 Friendship in the Research Process

Friendship with one's respondents can occur, especially if one is in the field over a long period of time. However, friendship creates obligations and expectations. It is inevitable that a researcher engaged in fieldwork over a long period will be regarded as a friend, and even in turn develop friendship networks with the interviewees (Muzvidziwa 2004). During the course of my fieldwork, I became good friends with some of the respondents, but I always tried to follow the rule that first and foremost, I was a researcher who had ethical obligations to follow and therefore was not supposed to become too personally involved with the respondents. Consequently, even though I was regarded as a friend by some of the respondents, I nonetheless still tried to keep some measured distance during the interviews, in order to avoid being compromised ethically during the research process.

3.3.3 Disengagement from the Field Setting

Smith (1990) argues that it is important to disengage from the field in a proper manner, and not to just disappear without bidding proper farewell and thanking the respondents. I managed to bid farewell to most of my respondents who took part in the workplace and household interviews. However, some of the forex dealers were nowhere to be found when I completed my fieldwork in June 2009, because the Zimbabwean economy became dollarised in February 2009, and so this development forced most forex dealers out of business, except the very determined ones who had started dealing in cross-rates between the US\$ and the South African Rand.

3.4 Conclusion

This study focuses on the response of the working class in Harare to hyper-inflation and the related political crisis. Thus, the agency (both individual and collective) that was employed by some sections of the working class in the face of a hostile structure, which was in the form of a repressive political system and an unsustainable economic climate plagued by hyper-inflation, was investigated using the qualitative methodology.

In review, the research was conducted from three vantage points. These vantage points were: Looking at the Zimbabwe crisis through the lens of key informants; focusing on workplace responses, and finally, assessing the working class households' strategies to deal with the crisis. These different vantage points were important in eliciting the full repertoire of responses that were employed by some sections of the working class during the decade of crisis.

The period when the fieldwork was conducted, that is 2008, was a very difficult phase in the history of Zimbabwe. It was an election year and the violence associated with the 2008 elections at times made it difficult for me to access some of my respondents. In some cases, I had to improvise in order to ensure the safety of my respondents and my own safety as well. For instance, during the height of the violence in the townships, I had to conduct telephone interviews with some of the workers staying in the townships. Trust was also important. Thus, following individuals from their workplaces to their homes and snowballing worked well, as just knocking on people's doors would have elicited suspicion.

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CHAPTER 4

HARARE'S AFRICAN WORKING CLASS, 1890-1997

4.1 Introduction

The dissertation focuses on the interplay of the social forces, political conflicts and economic decay during the period from 1997-2008. But this can only be understood within the context of the development of our primary subject, Harare's working class. Its size, composition, organisations, self-awareness, capacity to mobilise against the government, and its limitations, were the product of its history. Rapidly rising inflation and increasing levels of repression marked a break with the past, but there were also important continuities that serve to contextualise post-1997 events and dynamics.

The chapter outlines the history of the African working class in Harare from the time of colonisation, 1890, until 1997 when Zimbabwe's economy begins to implode. It considers transformations in the character of the working class and changes in levels of organisation and mobilisation. It addresses these concerns through periods. These are 1890-1945, from colonisation until the end of the Second World War; 1945-1980, an era that included dramatic changes in the nature of the working class and the struggle for liberation and 1980-1997, from independence until the start of the economic meltdown.

It suggests some parallels between responses to economic difficulties faced during the colonial era, and those adopted in the 2000s. The chapter also argues that the working class has a history of losing momentum in struggles that it initiates. This was true of the period after 1948, when the middle-class intelligentsia took over the leadership of a struggle that had aroused a strong sense of class and and nationalistic consciousness amongst the working class. The pattern was repeated following a high level of working class militancy in 1996 and 1997, with the middle-class intelligentsia and some sections of business claiming leadership in the struggle against the ZANU (PF) government. That is, increasing 'objective' difficulties, associated with a declining economy, were accompanied by a 'subjective' waning of influence within the anti-government forces.

4.2 Harare's Working Class: 1890-1945

4.2.1 The Nature of the Early Working Class in Southern Rhodesia

Tsuneo Yoshikuni's (1999) work on the urban history of Southern Rhodesia, especially Salisbury (Harare), has sought to grasp with the growth of African urban society in the early part of the colonial period. Yoshikuni notes that the earliest constituents of the African working class in cities like Harare between 1890 and the 1930s were predominantly blacks from Nyasaland (Malawi) and Northern Rhodesia (Zambia). Yoshikuni shows that the working class in Salisbury was largely composed of international migrant labour, because the option of a livelihood on the land was still available to most Africans in Southern Rhodesia, especially in Mashonaland.¹⁵ Raftopoulos (1997) further demonstrates that African politics in the towns tended to be dominated by migrants from Nyasaland, Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique) and Northern Rhodesia. The combination of strong links to the land, and the numerical domination of workers from outside Southern Rhodesia, resulted in Shona workers having a marginal input into events in Salisbury during the early years (Raftopoulos 1997: XV). Yoshikuni (1999) adds:

The town's lingua franca was *ChiNyanja*¹⁶, not *ChiShona*. Dance, music and other forms of recreational culture had a strong Northern flavor; and the formalized mutual aid associations which mushroomed after World War I were almost exclusively the products of foreign workers.

The statistics below capture the low proportion of local Rhodesian Africans employed as wage labour in the pre-1945 period.

¹⁵ There was more resistance to becoming wage labour in Mashonaland than in Matabeleland. This was because better soils and generally good rainfall meant that it was possible to rely on agriculture for subsistence and the payment of taxes.

¹⁶ *ChiNyanja* is a language that is mostly spoken in Malawi.

Table 4.1 The African Population Employed in the Money Economy in the Pre-1945 Period in Southern Rhodesia

Year	Total Number of People Employed in the Money Economy (Including Whites and African Migrant Labour)	Percentage of People Employed in the Money Economy in Southern Rhodesia	Rhodesian Africans
1921	140.000	13	48.000
1945	377.000	17	180.000

Source: Rhodesian Central Statistical Office, 1972

Table 4.2 Ratio of Foreign African Labour Employed in the Money Economy Amongst Blacks in the Pre-1945 Period in Southern Rhodesia

Year	Percent
1903	75
1921	66
1945	52

Source: Rhodesian Central Statistical Office, 1972

4.2.2 Responses of the Black Working Class to the Economic Hardships it faced in the Pre-1945 Period

Racial segregation and the exploitation that the African working class experienced in the towns, mines and farms before 1945, resulted in the black working class devising various strategies to try to ease its suffering. The black working class in the pre-1945 period assumed a semi-proletarian outlook and this was a consequence of the low wages that these workers were earning (Arrighi 1967: 46). The reproduction of the African working class during this period was difficult because most men working in the towns and mines retained their ties with the land in the rural areas and the land acted as their form of 'pension', which ensured that they would continue to be able to sustain themselves and their families, after they had retired from work in the towns and mines which were paying them miserly wages (Arrighi 1946: 46). The semi-proletarian nature of the early African working class can arguably be equated with the working class during the decade of crisis, which remained in formal employment but engaged in a number of informal sector activities to ensure its survival.

Class struggle in the exploitative labour market assumed distinctive features. Phimister and Van Onselen (1997) contend that to a very large degree, these were not shaped by the compound system alone, but also by the exigencies of the regional economic system, as well as the totality of men's social existence also influenced the different ways in which labourers attempted to 'work the system'. Although compounds produced servile and obedient black workers, they also equipped miners with quite a different set of skills. Black workers learnt to confront exploitation in the shadows, where their techniques of resistance were similar to those once used by the slaves in Southern States of the United States (Phimister and Van Onselen 1997: 5). Forms of resistance by the black working class included loafing, deliberate wastefulness, slowdowns, feigned illness, self inflicted injuries and abuse of livestock and equipment that belonged to the settler whites (Ranger 1970, Van Onselen 1976). Desertions were also used as a form of resistance (Van Onselen 1976). By collectively deserting, black workers in many instances collectively rejected poor working conditions as well as forced labour (*chibaro*). In even more cases, desertion was 'systematically and consciously' practiced by labourers determined 'to reach a market where their labour would fetch the highest price' (Phimister and Van Onselen 1997: 6). Workers who knew that the gold mines of the Transvaal paid the best wages obtainable in Southern Africa developed several tactics for avoiding the snares set by the

state and capital to halt the persistent movement of migrant labour towards the Rand (Phimister and Van Onselen 1997: 6).

Strike action was used by the black working class to protest mostly against poor wages on the mines. Industrial action was not, however, only resorted to in order to clamour for better wages, but it was also used as a weapon to complain against the general exploitation the black working class was experiencing on the mines. The major strikes that were witnessed before 1945 on the mines were the Wankie Colliery mine strikes of 1912, 1919 and 1921 (Phimister 1988). There was also the 1927 Shamva strike in which 3,500 workers took part (Phimister and Van Onselen 1997). Even though the strike actions of the early black working class did not succeed because of the might of the forces ranged against them, the African working class did however display in these early years its capacity for resistance.

Phimister and Van Onselen (1997) contend that the living and working conditions for the majority of the black working class were desperate and this meant that they turned to loans as a means of survival, or theft, beer brewing and other quasi-illegal activities. The above methods of survival ironically were being witnessed amongst the working class many years later, during Zimbabwe's period of economic crisis, namely the years 1997 to 2008. Some strategically situated workers managed to make ends meet through a barter system known in Shona as *tswete*. Goods stolen by day from factories and shops were nightly exchanged in various locations 'black markets' (Phimister and Van Onselen 1997: 51). Others took up the illegal and highly risky business of brewing *skokiaan/ Chikokiana*¹⁷, sales of which could augment their income by as much as 12 shillings to 15 shillings per month. None of these survival strategies or makeshift tactics provided any lasting solution to the many problems confronted by workers in their daily struggle to survive. At best, they generated uncertain sources of additional income for a fraction of the black working class (Phimister and Van Onselen 1997: 52). What is of significance, however, is the fact that the livelihood strategies employed by the African working class were replicated in the same fashion by the latter day working class, during Zimbabwe's economic meltdown, the only difference being that these survivalist strategies were being practiced at a grander scale because of the extreme nature of the crisis.

¹⁷ *Skokiaan/Chikokiana* is a highly intoxicating type of beer that is home made, and is mostly consumed by some of the members of the working class in locations and on the mines.

4.2.3 Early forms of Worker Organisation and Mobilisation

Just after the end of the First World War, the black working class in Salisbury began to form various mutual aid societies and organisations. Phimister and Van Onselen (1997: 6) explain the emergence of the first African societies of the working class:

For several years prior to the outbreak of the First World War, black workers had met on an informal and social basis, weekend compound dances, 'big dinners' and 'tea meetings', each with their own distinctive roots-formed a base from which other activities and organizations could grow.

It was during the First World War that these activities crystallised into more organised forms as mutual aid societies like burial societies. Phimister and Van Onselen (1997) posit that there are probably three main reasons why this needed to happen. First there was the dramatic rise in the cost of living during the war and the continued decline in African wages. Van Onselen and Phimister state that it is possible that at no other time were black workers in more desperate need of brotherly assistance, when prices rose dramatically and real wages fell. The second possible reason for the emergence of mutual aid societies is that 1918 saw the greatest disaster that ever befell black miners in the compounds- the death of seven percent of all black workers during the Spanish influenza epidemic of that year (Phimister and Van Onselen 1997: 6). The third reason is the fact that the war years saw the mushrooming of organised voluntary action amongst a settler community anxious to make a contribution to Britain and the Empire in the hour of crisis.

Sickness, destitution and death, were of primary concern to most of the associations. Phimister and Van Onselen (1997: 8) elaborate:

From a fund composed of entrance fees and monthly half-crown contributions, the Port Herald Burial Society offered workers daily sick pay of two shillings. Under the 'ticket system', whereby the worker did not receive pay if he did not work, this was an important form of health insurance. The Cam and Motor branch of the Nyasaland Burial Society, likewise made payment to workers who had fallen ill or those who, because of the loss of a limb, could no longer sell their services to the mine owners. On the miserable payments received from mine-owners, many sick or injured workers could not even afford the journey home, and in these cases the Mozambique Native Association came to the rescue by providing a train fare. All of these associations, whether called burial societies or not, also took explicit interest in the question of funeral expenses.

The compound associations however, never quite managed to fulfill their promise, and never achieved the strength that allowed for uninterrupted permanent service to black miners (Phimister 1988). Firstly, the leaders of some of these associations were culpable of stealing the

monetary contributions of their members. Secondly, there were restraints placed on the associations by the way of functioning of the mining industry itself. In an exploitative system, there was a high degree of labour turnover, as workers constantly attempted to find marginally better employment; so the absence of steady contributions over a protracted period of time made it exceptionally difficult for an association to build a large fund - a most necessary basis for any successful insurance scheme (Phimister and Van Onselen 1997: 9). Thirdly, and most significantly, the compound associations failed because the mine-owners did not pay black workers wages which allowed for the luxury of an insurance scheme (Phimister 1988, Phimister and Van Onselen 1997). For the majority of the miners, the immediate and pressing demands for food and clothing took precedence over the concerns of the future. It was only amongst the slightly better paid workers that the mutual aid societies ever stood a chance of achieving 'take-off' (Phimister and Van Onselen 1997: 9). It should be noted, however, that even though the early societies of African workers were not all that successful and lacked the staying power, they nevertheless played a significant role in acting as the logical precursors of the trade union movement amongst the African working class and offered a base for the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU), the first serious trade union body for the African working class in the late 1920s. Thus, these pre-1945 African societies displayed the first signs of 'workerism' amongst the ranks of the African working class. The early societies were also crucial in creating social cohesion and support amongst the African workers who were working under difficult and exploitative conditions, especially on the mines.

4.2.4 The Industrial and Commercial Workers Union

The Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) was first formed in South Africa by the Malawian migrant, Clements Kadalie. The ICU in South Africa became the pivotal voice for African economic and political protest in the early years of the 1920s. Phimister and Van Onselen (1997) argue that it was the South African ICU which served as the model and inspiration for workers in the then Southern Rhodesia. By the late 1920s, black workers in Rhodesia had good reason to look for any inspiration that they could find. Real wages in the compounds had been declining for over a quarter of a century and a growing army of proletarians, drawn from over a large area of central Africa, were being forced to sell their labour at rates even lower than those offered to the ridiculed 'slaves' on *Chibaro* contract (Arrighi 1967,

Phimister 1988, Ranger 1970, Phimister and Van Onselen 1997). It is against this background that the ICU was formed in 1928 by 'Sergeant' Masotsha Ndhlovu. Prior to forming the ICU, Masotsha Ndhlovu had worked in South Africa for ten years and must have had ample opportunity for close scrutiny of Kadalie's ICU. The first executive of the ICU comprised early trade unionists such as John Mphamba, Job Dumbutshena and Masotsha Ndhlovu himself who was elected secretary general. The ICU was headquartered in Bulawayo but sought to make inroads to the capital Salisbury. Phimister and Van Onselen (1997) contend that, in practice, the ICU's main activity was to remain confined to the Bulawayo location, in spite of vigorous attempts to expand to other industrial centres in the colony. Although the ICU's organisational success was limited, its significance was that for the first time Africans in colonial Zimbabwe were systematically being offered an organisation and ideology that consciously tailored itself to the needs of the black workers. The ICU's ideology was aimed at giving black workers clearer insight into the nature of power and the class structure in a colonial economy. John Mphamba, for example, aimed to raise the consciousness of his audience by narrating how the 'white men' owned the means of production and consequently, the opportunity to accumulate capital. 'He (the white man) can make money with machinery, he gets money out of the ground, he makes paper and turns it into money. The white man does not want to give the native money'.¹⁸ Masotsha Ndhlovu articulated to his audience how their class position had changed through proletarianisation: 'We native people do not depend on crops anymore, but we remain in town and earn wages- we are the workers in mines and farms and railways'.¹⁹ The link between class and race in the colonial context was also not lost to Masotsha Ndhlovu, who mobilized ICU followers accordingly: 'As people of Africa, we find that we are all in one class. We are all suffering and we are all paid less because we are black'.²⁰

The ICU was however not very successful in its bid to become a national labour union that would act as a rallying point for the African working class during these years of racial segregation when black labour was severely exploited within the workplace. During the late 1920s and 1930s, when the ICU was in existence, it never achieved anything concrete for the mass of black miners and agricultural workers, wage labour that was employed in the two major sectors of the Rhodesian economy at that time. The ICU also did not espouse an ideology

¹⁸ John Mphamba, quoted by Phimister and Van Onselen, in B. Raftopoulos and I. Phimister, *Keep on Knocking*.

¹⁹ Masotsha Ndhlovu, quoted by Phimister and Van Onselen, in B. Raftopoulos and I. Phimister, *Keep on Knocking*.

²⁰ Ibid.

capable of arousing large-scale support. Phimister and Van Onselen (1997: 28) go to the extent of exposing the ICU's impotence by asserting that, 'such industrial action as did occur in colonial Zimbabwe between 1900 and 1933, did so without the ideological trimmings or organization of movements such as the ICU'. The absence of class consciousness amongst the African working class in the context of pre-World War II Southern Rhodesia, is an indictment on the ICU and how it failed to mobilize the African working class into a militant class-based unit that could challenge the oppressive and exploitative form of white settler capitalism. This has been attributed to the operation of class suppression which, as Phimister and Van Onselen (1979) have suggested in their analysis of the Bulawayo 'faction fights', meant that the aggressions and frustrations generated by colonial exploitation were channeled into internecine violence and other regressive forms of behavior. Parry (1999: 78) points out that class suppression, as generally expressed, was the result of three interconnected factors. Firstly, in structural terms, predominantly migrant forces, oscillating between wage labour and the peasant /subsistence rural sectors were, by definition, precluded from perceiving and thus acting on their position within a particular set of productive relations. Secondly, already disadvantaged by their inability to consolidate and assert themselves at a single point of production, migrants faced obfuscation on an ideological level by 'ethnicity' and racial prejudice which further diverted their attention away from a recognition of common interests, and from organising around such interests. Finally, the emergence of class as a basis for organisation was hampered by the efforts of the state and employers to prevent the formation of class alliances for the promotion of collective interests.

Parry (1999), however, is of the opinion that external factors to the ICU itself, as espoused by Phimister and Van Onselen's class suppression theory, only partially explain the failure of the ICU. Thus, class suppression on its own according to Parry does not explain the whole story. Parry (1999) contends that inherent weaknesses within the ICU precluded it from organizing the African working class into a class conscious constituency that could improve its wages, working conditions and general living conditions in Salisbury. Parry goes on to argue that the central problem of the ICU stemmed from its failure to define its constituency and to involve this constituency in decision-making and action. Parry alludes to three groups that the ICU faced in the late 1920s and early 1930s which had definable class interests: the tiny petty bourgeoisie who operated independent businesses as builders, tailors, hawkers etc.; the 'permanent working

class' who were relatively sure of their continued employment in the urban areas; and the majority of workers and work seekers who were in the town for pressing economic reasons but had no intention of staying there permanently. The ICU's appeal was directed to the first two groups, while the third was virtually ignored.

Parry fortifies his argument on the internal weaknesses of the ICU by asserting that the position of the ICU as an elite and *de facto* representative of the aspirant petty-bourgeoisie, precluded any real congruency of interests between it and the vast majority of the urban population whose economic experience consisted of periods of unskilled labour interspersed with periods of unemployment. This according to Parry was reflected particularly by the ideological and cultural conflict between the ICU and most of the black population. The ICU clearly appreciated the reactionary nature of 'ethnicity' and the way in which it was used by the colonial state to discourage black uniformed action, but as a petty-bourgeoisie protest movement it was unable to provide a sustained ideological alternative centred on working class interests.

However, external factors were also to blame for the ignominious demise of the ICU. Amongst the exogenous factors that contributed to the difficulties that the ICU faced, is the poverty of most workers which ensured that, like the mutual aid societies on the compounds, it was starved of funds. The better paid and more conservative workers – those whom Masotsha Ndhlovu sarcastically referred to as 'good boys', held back their support from the ICU. The more promising and energetic black workers made their way to South Africa and this left the ICU with the poorest, most miserable and oppressed workers of all (Phimister and Van Onselen 1997: 25). The police also made life very difficult for the ICU, by arranging informers from within the ranks of the national executive committee of the ICU. The other leaders of the ICU were frequently questioned and generally intimidated. The ICU may have failed to capture the imagination and support of the majority of the African working class in Rhodesia (with the exception of Bulawayo), but it acted as a forerunner and set the platform for labour centres like the Southern Rhodesian Trade Union Congress (SRTUC) in the 1950s, which had a national outlook to it, and was now being run by trade union leaders who were based in Salisbury. It must also be noted that from the time the African working class first emerged in Rhodesia, up to the 1950s, efforts to organise the black workers largely centred around the African working class in Bulawayo, rather than Salisbury, the capital city. This is because the former was the industrial and commercial capital of Rhodesia during this period. The working class in Salisbury only

stopped playing second fiddle to their Bulawayo counterparts, when tertiary and secondary sectors of the economy like transport and communication and, the manufacturing sector boomed after the end of the Second World War in the capital.

4.3 The Changing Nature of Harare's Working Class: 1945-1980

The period 1945-1980 was an important phase in the development of the working class in Southern Rhodesia. The period after the end of the Second World War saw an explosion of urban industry, notably secondary industries like manufacturing in the capital of Southern Rhodesia, Salisbury. There was also the fast growth of the urban population, and with this the massive problems that came with unplanned urbanisation. This period witnessed the African working class changing in its composition from being largely migrant dominated, to being predominantly indigenous in its nature by the mid 1950s onwards (Raftopoulos 1997, 2003). Tables 4.3 and 4.4 below capture this new development.

Table 4.3 The African Population Employed in the Money Economy in the Post-1945 Period

Year	Total Number of People Employed in the Money Economy (Including Whites and African Migrant Labour)	Percentage of People Employed in the Money Economy in Southern Rhodesia	Rhodesian Africans
1945	377.000	17	180.000
1961	613.000	19	336.000
1974	933.000	16	700.000

Source: Rhodesian Central Statistical Office, 1977.

Table 4.4 Ratio of Foreign African Labour Employed in the Money Economy in the Post-1945 Period

Year	Percent
1945	52
1961	45
1974	25

Source: Rhodesian Central Statistical Office, 1977.

The change in the nature of the composition of the working class in Salisbury occurred as a consequence of the local Africans (mostly Shonas) joining the ranks of the working class. The major factor precipitating this change in the outlook of the working class was the promulgation of the Compulsory Native Labour Act in 1943, which compelled every able-bodied African to join the labour market. The growth witnessed in Rhodesia's secondary industries like manufacturing, communication and transport, prompted white capitalists to provide better wages to African labour, as an incentive that would bring about labour stability in these sectors (Arrighi 1967, Raftopoulos 1997, 2003). The resultant consequence of improved living wages was that it became more attractive and lucrative for Shonas to join the labour market, as compared to surviving from selling produce from their land. Thus, from the mid 1940s onwards, the working class in Salisbury began to change in its outlook, as more local Africans began to join the labour market, and in the process began to supplant the dominance of migrant wage labour from Rhodesia's northern neighbours, Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia (Raftopoulos 1997, 2003). The rapid growth of secondary and tertiary industries, which had become the leading sectors of the Rhodesian economy, created a need for greater labour stabilisation. These sectors required a labour force with certain skills, which though simple, could not be imparted under conditions of high turnover. Arrighi (1967: 216) explains further:

The creation of a stabilized wage-labour force which would not periodically move to and from the peasant sector required among other things, a level of African wages and living conditions in the capitalist sector that would provide Africans with some security, not

only during their working life, but also during their old age, and above all, that would enable them to support their families outside the peasant sector. That is to say, 'stabilised labour' commanded a premium determined by the difference between the cost of the means of subsistence of single men during their working life in wage employment, and the cost of the means of subsistence of the worker's family over his 'life cycle'. Large enterprises, especially those in secondary and tertiary industries – which could introduce labour- saving methods of productivity began to find it profitable to pay the above mentioned premium because higher wages were more than compensated by the higher productivity of a stabilized labour force.

It was in those sectors in which stabilisation mattered most (manufacturing, transport and communication) that after 1945, most of the increase in real wages was concentrated as table 4.5 illustrates. It is against this backdrop that there was a shift in the character of the African working class in Salisbury after the end of the Second World War. Phimister and Raftopoulos (2000: 294), however, caution against exaggerating the pace and size of secondary manufacturing growth in this period, pointing out that the industrialisation that occurred at this time was 'limited in scale', with the country boasting only '382 industrial establishments by 1965'.

Table 4.5 (a) Africans in Wage Employment (thousands) and (b) Average Annual Real Earnings of Africans in Wage Employment, 1954 – 1962 (Pounds)

	1954	1956	1958	1960	1962	Average rate of growth 1954-62 (%)
Agriculture	a) 218.0 b) 48	228.0 52	230.0 57	240.0 59	243.9 61	3.1
Domestic Service	a) 76.1 b) 71	85.4 81	90.9 88	94.1 94	95.2 102	4.6
Mining and Quarrying	a) 62.4 b) 83	60.9 97	57.1 106	52.3 115	44.1 124	5.1
Transport and Communications	a) 12.1 b) 94	13.7 114	15.1 148	16.0 166	16.6 209	10.5
Manufacturing	a) 62.5 b) 65	70.0 81	72.4 108	75.0 125	73.4 164	10.8
All Sectors	a) 555.0 b) 64	602.0 75	628.0 88	640.0 94	616.0 109	6.9

Source: The Southern Rhodesian Digest of Statistics, 1966

4.3.1 Working Class Organisation and Mobilisation: 1945-1980

The rapid urbanisation that took place from 1945 onwards brought with it problems that included a housing shortage, insufficient social services, unemployment and increasing repressive control of Africans in the urban areas (Raftopoulos 1997:55). In response, African workers organised themselves into trade unions and carried out the first countrywide strikes in the history of the colony, namely the 1945 railway strike and the 1948 General strike. These events have come to represent landmarks in the history of Zimbabwe's labour movement (Lunn 1999, Raftopoulos 1997). The years 1945 to 1948 therefore witnessed huge importance being attached to workerism as a response to the hardships African workers faced in wage employment.

4.3.2 The 1945 Railway Strike

The railway strike broke out on 20 October 1945 when over 2,000 black railway workers went on strike. Phimister (1988) points out that the immediate cause of the strike was the unilateral and unexpected introduction of a new system of overtime pay which marginally helped most workers but penalised a minority who were earning more than the three pounds per month. Many of the latter were organised in the recently established Rhodesia Railways African Employees' Association (RRAEA). When the RRAEA delegates attempted to discuss the question of overtime with the General Manager, they were turned away with the remark that even 'if they waited six months, they would not be seen'(quoted in Raftopoulos 1997: 54) The RRAEA found a very receptive audience amongst unskilled labourers and a strike was called. Starting from Bulawayo, the strike quickly spread along the railway system and across the Zambezi, to include Kabwe and the Copperbelt, as well as other towns in Southern Rhodesia. Phimister (1988) argues that since some 8,000 men were eventually involved and that the scale of the action made the paying-off of the strikers, or invocation of the Master and Servant Act, potentially self-destructive. The railways management was left with no real option but negotiation, and in the first week of November, the strike was ended by the promise of a commission of enquiry into workers' grievances (Barnes 1995, Raftopulos 1997). The commission recommended an increased minimum starting wage. Despite the limited extent of concessions that the strike won in the short term, its broader implications and consequences were enormous because the strike proved that if workers were organised, with unions fighting for workers' rights, they could win their battles.

The 1945 railway strike helped to partly inspire the 1948 General Strike and the formation of the Southern Rhodesian Trade Union Congress (SRTUC), in 1954, because the African working class realised that if it was united, it could take on white capital and win some concessions that would improve their working and living conditions. An elated Jasper Savanhu (quoted in Raftopoulos 1997: 55) described the Railway strike thus:

The Railway Strike has proved that Africans have been born... Africans realize as never before that united they stand and divided they fall... We have found ourselves faced by a ruthless foe-exploitation and legalized oppression by the white man for his, and his children's luxury... The days when a white man could exploit us at will are gone, and gone forever.

Savanhu's exultation was somewhat premature because the African working class was still faced with political and legal hurdles that would perpetuate the exploitation of the black working class until independence in 1980. For instance, the white settlers implemented policies to protect whites from competition and to keep African workers in low-grade unskilled jobs. Such policies included passing the Industrial and Conciliation Act in 1934, amended in 1937, which protected white workers against competition from blacks for skilled jobs. Section 4 of the ICA excluded Africans from the definition of an employee and, as a result, from wage bargaining and skilled trades because only 'employees' were allowed to become involved in collective bargaining and to become apprentices. Thus, most workers then continued to fall under the Master and Servants Ordinance 1901 (No.5) (Raftopoulos 1997:56). The Industrial Conciliation Act was further amended in 1959 to formally recognise African trade unions, but it presented real problems to trade union development. Even though the amended ICA allowed the existence of 'multiracial' unions, it gave more power to the vote of the skilled white unionists than to black workers. The Act did not allow general trade unions, only skilled-based ones, thus excluding the bulk of the African working class that was not skilled at that time. The Act also excluded agricultural and domestic workers, who continued to fall under the Master and Servants Act of 1901. This again excluded a large section of the African working class.

Despite the limited extent of the concessions won by the strike as has already been argued, the 1945 Railway strike was significant in that it signalled the determination of the African working class to improve its lot through organised collective action (workerism). Lunn (1999) and Mlambo (2009) also argue that the strike had a 'demonstration effect', showing the potential power of organised workers. Consequently, Raftopoulos (1997) and Mlambo (2009) observe that in the immediate aftermath of the railway strike, new workers' organisations were

established. These were: the Federation of Bulawayo African Workers' Union (FBAWU) under Jasper Savanhu, the African Workers' Voice Association (the Voice), led by Benjamin Burombo and the Salisbury-based Reformed Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (RICU), led by Charles Mzingeli. The period between the 1945 strike and the next major strike in 1948 was, therefore, one of African organisational ferment, as these unions sought to address a wide array of issues and build a broad coalition that would cut across class (Mlambo 2009, Scarnecchia 1999). For instance, the Voice represented both urban and rural constituencies and campaigned for, among other issues, annual paid vacations, advancement into skilled positions, overtime wages and sick leave (Mlambo 2009). At the same time, the Voice opposed the conservation measures imposed by the colonial authorities in the rural areas (West 2002).

4.3.3 The 1948 General Strike

Raftopoulos (1997: 63) contends that by 1948, the year of the General Strike, conditions for urban workers had worsened even further. The cost of food increased by 21 percent between July and December 1947, a situation which was worsened by the drought of that year, making it difficult for urban workers to rely on the assistance of their families in the rural areas. Moreover, both the colonial state and the employers continued to ignore the urgent need for a proper industrial relations machinery (Raftopoulos 1997: 64). Mkushi Khumalo, a Bulawayo-based trade unionist (quoted in Raftopoulos 1997: 64) explains how the strike broke out:

The main cause of the strike was poor pay. Secondly, there were no regulations governing workers' conditions of service. Every worker in every factory was subjected to the whims of whoever employed that person. There were no general regulations that took into account the black workers' plight... we were governed by the Master and Servants Act. When our demands were not met, we organized a two day strike which was very successful.

The negotiation of a favourable award for railway workers in January 1948- establishing a basic starting wage of 35 shillings per month served as an incentive for other groups of workers to demand better wages. On 6 April 1948, a joint meeting of the Rhodesia Federal Chamber of Commerce and the municipality decided to establish a basic wage of 30 shillings a month in urban areas and 25 shillings a month in rural areas, plus accommodation and rations, (Raftopoulos 1997: 64). Workers in Bulawayo responded angrily to the offer which was published in the Bulawayo Chronicle on 7 April. The following day, a mass meeting of about 6,000 Africans was convened by the Federation at which, according to the CID report, 'the

majority were in favour of going on strike'. The workers were persuaded to await the outcome of a meeting which had been called for 10 July by the Southern Rhodesian African National Congress, (SRANC), the Federation of Bulawayo African Workers Union (FBAWU) and RICU to try to unite the Congress and the workers' organisations. The suggestion from these organisations was that workers should delay their strike action to give the government more time to establish Labour Boards, and that waiting until July would also allow them to make better preparations for the strike. When this advice was given at another mass meeting on 13 April the workers once again responded angrily. In the words of the CID report (quoted in Raftopoulos 1997: 65):

At the meeting the mob...refused to listen to the leaders, and finally broke up in disorder (with) everybody shouting: 'Strike! Strike!' The mob then dispersed.

The following morning groups of picketers stopped workers from leaving the locations in Bulawayo, while others went to the towns and industrial areas to persuade workers to join the strike. By 10:30 am on 14 April, the majority of workers in Bulawayo had joined the strike, (Raftopoulos 1997: 66). On 15 April, Benjamin Burombo²¹, having been promised by the government that a Labour Board would be established to investigate workers' grievances, instead informed a mass meeting in Bulawayo that the government had agreed to a wage increase of five pounds per month for single workers and seven pounds ten shillings per month for married men. The statement was untrue, but it persuaded workers to go back to work the following day (Raftopoulos 1997: 67). The 1948 General Strike took place not only in Bulawayo, but also in Salisbury, and all the other smaller towns in Southern Rhodesia, making it the biggest strike in Zimbabwe during the colonial era. There has been much debate, however, about how the strike was actually organised. The conclusion of the CID was that there was no central body organising the strike. However, Bhebe (1989) believes that Burombo and the African Voice were secretly directing the strike in Bulawayo. Others however question the role of Burombo. For instance Mkushi Khumalo who was involved in the strike and was once the President of the National African Federation of Unions (NAFU) argues that Burombo was not an employee, but actually a businessman who was just an opportunist, who took the opportunity presented by the strike to increase his sales of bread and drinks at his kiosk. The business incentive according to Khumalo

²¹ Benjamin Burombo was the founder and President of the British African National Voice Association which was based in Bulawayo and the Matabeleland provinces. The Association was a trade union organisation with political overtones.

was the reason why Burombo initially urged workers to join the strike. Lunn (1999: 79) argues that more research has to be conducted on the meaning and organization of the 1948 General Strike, and he suggests that oral history may be able to provide some insights into questions for which there are no archival sources.

Warhurst cited in Mlambo (2009) and Gwisai (2002) argue that the seeds of the working class' failure to sustain leadership of a movement it had started were sown in 1948. Gwisai goes on to contend that, whilst the General strike offered a major threat to the Rhodesian state, the absence of revolutionary leadership to provide direction led the working class to look to the African middle-class for leadership. The observations by Warhurst and Gwisai have some substance, as the same scenario would replicate itself many years later, as this chapter shall argue under the section of trade unionism in the post-colonial era. This is the period when the working class under the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), led the wave of strikes and riots in the mid to late 1990s, due to the economic decline and misplaced policies the Mugabe regime was following. The disillusionment of the working class culminated in the ZCTU General Council passing the resolution to form a political party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) that would challenge ZANU PF. The absence of a very bold and revolutionary leadership in the ZCTU, however, resulted in the MDC leadership being dominated by the middle class intelligentsia, whose neo-liberal agenda still dominates the MDC's policies, notably on the economic front.

4.3.4 Trade Unionism and Nationalism

As has been mentioned earlier, the formation of trade unions was slower in Salisbury than in Bulawayo. This was largely because the latter in the early years of colonialism, was the commercial and industrial hub of Southern Rhodesia and had more African workers than did Harare. The Reformed Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (RICU) was the first major trade union body to be formed in the post-second world war period in Salisbury. The trade union was formed by Charles Mzingeli, whose aim was to revive the now defunct ICU of the late 1920s and early 1930s. Raftopoulos (1997: 62) argues that the RICU covered a wide range of activities above and beyond trade union activities. Reuben Jamela, a leading trade unionist in the 1950s and 1960s (quoted in Raftopoulos 1997: 62) explains:

It was not a trade union gathering; it was just a mass organization, and apparently that is how Mzingeli wanted it. A mass organization, and at the same time calling it a trade union.

Lawrence Vambe (quoted in Raftopoulos 1997: 63), who was a prominent journalist of the time recalls:

Mzingeli was a popular trade union leader in Harare. Although his organization was a trade union movement, it covered everything. Whatever needed to be looked at in Harare was addressed by the same organization. He called meetings and led protests against the city council, against Native Commissioners and against government. All the grievances that the black people had, Mzingeli channeled them through RICU to fight for the rights of the black people.

The RICU was able to transcend almost every aspect of life that affected Salisbury's burgeoning African working class after 1945, until the mid-1950s. In 1946, the first major campaign launched by the RICU was against the Native (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act (1946), which placed further controls on Africans in urban areas. Apart from this, Mzingeli and the union campaigned over many issues, including the recognition of trade unions, the problem of African businessmen and women, the rights of women in the city, the sale of liquor to Africans, the housing crisis and participation in local government (Raftopoulos 1997: 63). The RICU however faded into oblivion in the mid 1950s when the RICU's role as the leading trade union body in Salisbury was taken over by the trade union Federation, the Southern Rhodesian Trade Union Congress (SRTUC). On the political front, the Salisbury City Youth League became the leading voice in articulating the political grievances of the working class in Salisbury. Thus by 1955, RICU and its leader Charles Mzingeli were slowly beginning to lose influence.

The NLHA of 1951, which partly caused a wave of rural indigenous Africans to flock to Salisbury in the 1950s, resulted in the grievances of the African peasants to impinge upon the urban scene. Yoshikuni (1999: 122) contends that, with peasant resistance and racial consciousness now mounting throughout the country, the issue of fusing all these developments into one anti-colonial front became a crucial agenda for urban politicians. Yoshikuni (1999) further argues that when viewed from this angle, the RICU was merely a parochial force. The union was preoccupied with the concerns of the 'underdogs' in town, and its promoters had, as a rule, little affiliation with rural Mashonaland (Raftopoulos 2003, Scarnnerchia 1992, Yoshikuni 1999). The leadership vacuum was felt by 1955, and it was filled by a new immigrant group mostly from the rural areas. Equipped with such resources as indigenous connections, numerical

strength and education in some cases, the group successfully challenged the dominance of the RICU in Salisbury and formed a new movement, the Salisbury National Youth League, which was established in 1955 (Nyagumbo 1980, Scarnnechia 1992, Yoshikuni 1999). Scarnnechia notes that the new movement drew strength, particularly from residents' movements in Mabvuku and Highfields, and a workplace based trade-union movement which was beginning in Salisbury. In 1957, the Salisbury City Youth League played a key role in amalgamating various political groupings into one nationalist organisation, the new African National Congress. (Nyagumbo 1980). The Congress soon prevailed within the urban-industrial movements of Salisbury, thus starting a new chapter in the capital's history - the indigenisation of urban politics (Yoshikuni 1999: 123).

The African workers decided to arrange one labour centre, which would speak with one voice of the African workers, in their bid to secure better working conditions from white capital. This resulted in the formation of the Southern Rhodesian Trade Union Congress (SRTUC) in January 1954. The Congress at its formation largely consisted of Bulawayo trade unions because Mzingeli, who was the leader of the trade unions in Harare, did not want to place the RICU under any other body nor did he want to cede his control of the RICU. The first President of the SRTUC was Joshua Nkomo, the Vice President was Reuben Jamela and the secretary general was Grey Bango. Nkomo did not continue for long in the post of president, as he left trade unionism for full-time politics. Jamela, who was based in Harare, then became the president, and formed a branch of the congress in Salisbury.

The activities of the SRTUC became increasingly intertwined with the activities of African political parties, as the nationalist movement began to take root in Southern Rhodesia in the late 1950s. The two were closely linked because the African nationalist leaders who were leading the political parties like the African National Congress (ANC), The National Democratic Party (NDP) and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) were former trade unionists, for instance, Joshua Nkomo, J.Z Moyo and George Nyandoro. Thus, sometimes, the SRTUC and the African political parties worked hand in glove, and the political parties even used the SRTUC offices in some cases. Reuben Jamela did not approve of the close ties between the SRTUC and the nationalist movement and this caused him to be unpopular with the political leaders (Raftopoulos 1997).

By the end of 1961, there were concerted efforts to remove Jamela as President of the

SRTUC because of his ambivalence towards the NDP. These efforts were supported by the political leaders. Jamela was accused of not properly accounting for the SRTUC funds, since donations from organisations like the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) went into Jamela's personal account, instead of the Congress' account. Jamela was also accused of sabotaging planned strike action in late 1961, when he advised workers against striking and soon after went away on a trip to the United States. This proved to be the final straw and a break-away from the SRTUC was led by Josiah Maluleke, the SRTUC's secretary general in 1962. Maluleke formed a splinter trade union congress, which became known as the Southern Rhodesian African Trade Union Congress (SRATUC) or the African Trade Union Congress (ATUC). The formation of Maluleke's new trade union centre confirmed the increasing subordination of the trade union activities to nationalist politics (Raftopoulos 1995, 1997). ATUC maintained strong ties with the nationalist movement and when a split occurred within ZAPU in 1963, with the formation of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), ATUC placed its weight behind ZANU (Raftopoulos, 1997). With ATUC supporting ZANU, another trade union federation, the Zimbabwe African Congress of Unions (ZACU) was formed, which was sympathetic to ZAPU. When ZACU was banned in 1965, after the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) occurred, those African trade unionists who were sympathetic towards ZAPU formed another trade union federation, the National African Federation of Unions (NAFU).

Thus until 1980, the African trade union movement was hopelessly divided, and its divisions mostly mirrored the divisions that existed within the broader nationalist movement (Raftopoulos 1997, Clarke 1974, Schiphorst 2001, Gwisai 2002). The emergence of political parties like the NDP, (PF) ZAPU and ZANU (PF) in the early 1960s, which were led by the middle-class intelligentsia, effectively meant that the working class was no longer in charge of the movement it had started through the 1948 General strike, to fight exploitation in the workplace and general racial discrimination that Africans experienced in their daily lives at the hands of white settlers.

Requiring scrutiny are the events of the 1950s and 1960s that led to the working class, mainly under the leadership of the SRTUC, losing the initiative of fighting the minority white regime to the African intelligentsia. As Mlambo (2009) and Mothibe (1996) assert, contrary to what Warhurst and Gwisai suggest, the working class only became subordinated to the African

intellectuals in the struggle against white domination in the 1960s and not immediately after 1948. Mothibe (1996) contends that up to the start of the armed struggle in the 1960s, organised labour was not subordinated to petit bourgeoisie nationalism, but was rather an integral part of the nationalist upsurge. Mothibe (1996) goes on to add that the marginalisation of the trade union movement only occurred later, with the birth of the armed struggle when the confrontation between the colonial state and African nationalism shifted from urban to rural areas.

The split in the nationalist movement between ZAPU and ZANU took its toll on the remnants of the political trade unions. Trade unions in the 1970s ceased to be real trade unions but instead became the labour wings of the guerrilla movement. The decline in working class struggle is shown by the decrease in the number of strikes. The number of strikes by the working class declined from 138 in 1965 to only 19 in 1971 (Government of Zimbabwe 1984). Given such a state of affairs and also the severe repression of the Smith regime, the working class had become disempowered and to all intents and purposes, irrelevant to the struggle that it had initiated.

The ICFTU was also blamed for fanning divisions within the African trade union movement through providing funds to separate trade unions instead of channeling funds through trade union centres. The ICFTU however argued that the trade union federations were too political and would not disburse these funds fairly to their affiliate unions, (Raftopoulos 1997). Consequently, by 1980, the African working class still suffered under the yoke of repressive colonial labour legislation, like the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1959 and, in the case of agricultural and domestic workers, the Master and Servant Act of 1901. The African working class was also hopelessly divided along political lines, but this is because the labour federations that were supposed to champion the interests of the workers were totally divided along broader nationalist politics.

The 1945 to 1980 period is an important and eventful phase in the history of the African working class in Salisbury, because this is the period when a large number of locals joined the labour market and gradually surpassed the number of migrant labourers from countries like Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique, at least by the mid-1950s onwards. The period also witnessed Harare's working class gradually taking the leadership role from Bulawayo, in terms of labour organisation and mobilisation of workers to engage in forms of industrial action, in cases where workers had grievances. This was evident from the 1960s onwards, as trade union federations

began to operate from Salisbury instead of Bulawayo. So, working class leadership was now being provided by working class leaders based in Salisbury, like Reuben Jamela and Josiah Maluleke. A fusion between the rural grievances and the urban exploitation of the African working class and the general racism that was being witnessed in the urban areas led to the formation of nationalist movement, which was initially led by working class leaders, but was eventually taken over by the middle-class African intelligentsia.

4.4 Harare's Working Class in the Post-Colonial Era: 1980-1997

4.4.1 State of the Labour Movement in the First Five Years of Independence

When independence was won in 1980, the labour movement was fragile, at odds and had played no significant part in the discussions over the transition to majority rule at Lancaster House in 1979 (Raftopoulos 2001, Sachikonye 1997). This was largely because of the problems that have been outlined earlier, which the African labour movement faced during the colonial era, namely the divisions of workers along broader nationalist party lines, and because of repressive pieces of labour legislation like the Industrial Conciliation Act, and the Master and Servant Act. As labour prepared to face the new Zimbabwean state, there was no united labour federation. Instead, there were six labour centres with negligible labour constituencies, and little legitimacy in the eyes of the new ruling party, ZANU (PF) (Wood 1988). The inaugural congress of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) was held in February 1981, and the first leaders elected were mostly ZANU (PF) in political orientation (Sachikonye 1997, Schiphorst 2001). The first President of the ZCTU was Alfred Makwarimba and the first Secretary General was Albert Mugabe, a half-brother of the then Prime Minister, Robert Mugabe. In taking the lead in the establishment of the ZCTU, the government sought to influence the direction of future labour demands in a manner that accorded with defined 'national interests'. However, there existed the danger of the government 'slipping into a form of state paternalism' which unions increasingly questioned from the mid 1980s onwards (Raftopoulos 2001, Sachikonye 1997, Schiphorst 2001).

The partial character of the proletarianisation process needs to be assessed if one is to understand the levels of worker consciousness amongst the working class, particularly in the first years of Zimbabwe becoming a post-colonial state. Sachikonye (1995: 133) is of the opinion that the migrant labour system, upon which commercial agriculture, mining and the domestic service sector drew during the greater part of the colonial period, was not completely demolished at

independence. The movement of migrant workers between capitalist industry and peasant agricultural sector contributed to ambiguity and ambivalence in worker consciousness (Sachikonye 1995: 133). Wood (1987) extends this assessment by asserting that in practical terms, severe urban poverty improved only slightly by the retention of close family links with even poorer subsistence peasant farmers, undermined the financial base of any permanent organisational effort. Consequently, the colonial legacy of the migrant labour system and the semi-proletarianisation which resulted for a significant proportion of the Zimbabwean working class, needs to be taken into account when evaluating the labour movement's capacity for self-assertion and autonomy in the context of the first few years of independence.

In the first few years of independence, the ZANU (PF) government advocated socialism. Socialist rhetoric was constantly infused into government statements concerning social redistribution and economic reconstruction. This rhetoric created the impression that the government was committed to the betterment of the working class and underprivileged sections of society (Raftopoulos 2001, Sachikonye 1997). Consequently, the broad trade union movement extended general uncritical support to the government. However, the movement became increasingly impatient with the government for its failure to implement socialist policies. Indeed, by the mid-1980s, once it had become clear that the ZANU (PF) government would not introduce socialism, trade union leaders like Jeffrey Mutandare became disillusioned. By the mid-1980s the country saw the end of the 'honeymoon' period between unions and the state.

4.4.2 The Legal and Institutional Framework that Governed Labour Relations in Post-Independent Zimbabwe.

Soon after independence, strikes erupted in various sectors of the economy. Between 1980 and 1982, a working class struggle took hold with a force that was last observed in the 1948 General strike. There were an estimated 200 strikes covering almost every sector of the economy (Astrow 1983, Sachikonye 1986, Tengende 1994). The main demand was for higher wages in response to the attacks on workers under the Rhodesian state from the mid 1970s onwards. Gwisai (2002) contends that there were, however, other issues like racism and the cumbersome and anti-working class dispute settlement machinery. The strike completely by-passed the old unions, with new institutions, the enterprise-based 'workers committees', emerging spontaneously to lead the strikes (Gwisai 2002, Tengende 1994). Gwisai (2002: 9) argues that the strikes, together

with the spontaneous peasant invasions of white commercial farms that also occurred at the time, forced the new black government to introduce the most far-reaching reforms since the 1930s, significantly expanding the benefits of state capitalism to the black masses in areas such as education, health, employment laws and agrarian reform. Thus, in the education sector, the number of primary schools doubled, whilst secondary school enrolment jumped from 66,000 in 1979 to nearly 150,000 by 1981 (Saunders 2000, Tengende 1994). In the health sector, an extensive primary health care system was set up, which by 1990 had resulted in a reduction of infant mortality rates by 16 percent, whilst nearly 18,000 peasant families were resettled in the first three years. The Minimum Wages Act and the Employment Act repealed some of the most obnoxious and racist of the colonial employment laws and guaranteed a national minimum wage which saw real wages rise in 1980-81 to their highest level ever (Saunders 2000).

Even though positive state intervention took place in the labour relations arena, in the wake of the strikes, ZANU PF politicians did not hesitate to wield state machinery to quell industrial action and to warn unions not to cause consternation. Expressing extreme views on striking teachers and nurses in October 1981, Robert Mugabe, the Prime Minister was quoted as remarking in (The Herald, October 1981):

If by choosing to strike they want to blackmail the government, then the government has no sympathy for their cause and will not hesitate to take drastic steps as punishment for their unjustifiable negligence of duty and disloyalty to the state... we would rather start from scratch than make do with irresponsible nurses and teachers.

There was a congruence of perspectives between the labour movement leadership of Alfred Makwarimba and Albert Mugabe and the state on the diagnosis of the labour relations crisis of 1980-82. The feeble influence of the labour movement leadership and the fact that the leadership was working hand in glove with the state was confirmed in the response of the then ZCTU secretary general, Albert Mugabe, who admitted that the widespread strikes of 1980-82 were organised spontaneously, outside its ambit. Mugabe revealed his support for the stance of the state and capital when he remarked:

Strikes do more harm than good. We don't need to retard economic progress by arranging strikes... There are some bad eggs in the union movement. The minister talks from a position of knowledge. There are some people in the movement who go out looking for difficulties, and try to be difficult. We will watch them closely and discourage striking as much as we can.²²

²² Albert Mugabe, the first secretary general of the ZCTU.

Given the stance of the ZCTU leadership towards the 1980-82 strikes, one can only conclude that the labour centre's leadership was the principal vehicle for the de-radicalisation of working class struggle, whose major expression became plant-based industrial action.

In 1985, a new Labour Relations Act (LRA) was passed, superseding the colonial Industrial Conciliation Act. While the new act broadened the scope of labour relations management, and advanced the right of workers to join unions and workers committees, it severely restricted the right to strike and, as in the colonial period, concentrated power in the hands of the Minister of Labour (Madhuku 1997, 2001; Raftopoulos 2001; Sachikonye 1993, 1997). Moreover, due to organisational weakness during this period and the attitude of the government towards it, the labour movement played no substantive role in drafting the legislation (Madhuku 1997).

In summary, it is evident that the first five years of independence witnessed considerable state intervention in labour relations, with a visible bias in the direction of the immediate interests of the capitalist class. The spirited, if fragmented, struggles of the working class at the work-place were undermined by the tacit pact between the state, capital and the labour movement leadership to create stability in labour relations through the repression of strikes (Sachikonye 1995, Schiphorst 2001, Tengende 1994). The regulation of this labour regime was supported through the creation of workers' committees at work-places and this facilitated communication between management and workers without strengthening the organisational presence of the trade union. The co-option of the ZCTU leadership however, rested on shaky ground. There was no popular support in the various unions for the co-opted leadership. Sachikonye (1995) argues that as the ideological orientation of the ruling party became clearer, notwithstanding their strident socialist rhetoric, there was a groundswell of opposition both to government economic and social policy and to the self-serving ZCTU leadership.

4.4.3 The ZCTU Emerges From the Shadow of the State: 1987 Onwards

Given the problems of legitimacy faced by the state-imposed leadership of the ZCTU between 1981 and 1987, and the corrupt practices that accompanied this lack of accountability towards the broader membership, a renewed leadership struggle emerged in the labour centre in 1987-1988 (Raftopoulos 2001, Schiphorst 2001). In 1988, a substantively new leadership emerged in the ZCTU, which initiated a restructuring programme in the labour centre, resulting in growth in

labour affiliates and a stabilisation of membership in the period that followed. Significantly, a new secretary general, Morgan Tsvangirai, was appointed. He was to make a decisive impact on Zimbabwean politics in the late 1990s and 2000s. Through its revitalised structures, the ZCTU concentrated its campaign on a number of areas, including wider tripartite consultations on the Labour Relations Act; pressure to distance the state from the collective bargaining process; a demand for more clarity and commitment on the government's stated socialist programme; and a critical posture towards the state's move towards economic liberalisation in the late 1980s. In 1989, the ZCTU developed a strong anti-capitalist critique of the government's investment code, which had signalled the state's move towards the implementation of a structural adjustment programme (Raftopoulos 2001: 7). The ZCTU (1989) warned that the 'moral from history' was that 'the wealth and resources of a people are acquired by positive seizure in the same manner as our political independence was won'.

For a brief period between 1988 and 1992, there was a radical leftward shift in key sections of the labour bureaucracy. This reflected tensions created by the regime's adoption of free market policies, including neo-liberal amendments to the Labour Relations Act that allowed for easier dismissal of workers (Gwisai 2002). Tengende (1994) noted that the 1991 May Day celebrations were organised under the themes and banners, 'Employers liberated, workers sacrificed' and 'Are we going to make 1991 the Year of the World Bank storm?' The labour movement's leadership developed growing ties with radicalising university students, hundreds of whom attended the May Day rallies. When the University of Zimbabwe (UZ) was closed in October 1989, with the arrest of student leaders in the wake of the Willowgate scandal, the ZCTU secretary-general, Morgan Tsvangirai, denounced the closure in stern terms and was himself detained. In the 1990 elections, the growing autonomy of the ZCTU was demonstrated by its refusal to endorse ZANU (PF), and many workers tacitly supported a new breakaway party, the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM), led by the former Secretary-General of ZANU (PF), Edgar Tekere. Gwisai (2002) argues that the ZCTU's leftward shift only lasted until 1992. He goes on to argue that, with the global demise of Stalinism and the growing influence of western reformist trade unions and non governmental organisations, the labour leadership returned to its previous reformist positions, calling for a 'social contract' that involved the state, capital and labour in the implementation of the IMF sponsored Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP). This new ideological position of the labour leadership, aiming to offset the

worst effects of structural adjustment rather than opposing the adjustment outright, was captured in the ZCTU's '*Beyond ESAP*' (1996) document. The term 'comrade' was replaced with the more 'politically correct' terms of 'brother' and 'sister'.

4.4.4 Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP)

From the mid 1980s, government economic policy began to change, coinciding with a shift in the ideology of the ruling ZANU (PF) Party (Sachikonye 1997). Socialism was more or less abandoned, and new policies were reflected in the adoption of ESAP in 1990. The ESAP programme was one of economic reform based on market principles, with the broad objective of stimulating growth based on higher productivity and competitiveness. It aimed to bring to an end the sluggish growth of 2.7 percent per year between 1980 and 1989. In its place, there would be faster economic growth and higher employment levels, and the annual growth target of the first phase of ESAP was put at five percent (Sachikonye 1993, 1995). The main elements of ESAP were trade liberalisation; fiscal and monetary policy reforms; public enterprise reforms; budget deficit reduction; deregulation of investment; pay and price controls; cost-recovery measures in social services; ending of subsidies, and, finally; retrenchments in both the public and private sectors (Sachikonye 1997). Raftopoulos (2001: 8) explains that in tandem with the above reforms, the Zimbabwean government introduced the Labour Relations Amendment Act in 1992, which set out to deregulate labour relations in line with ESAP. The legislation placed constraints on union power at the shopfloor, while at the same time ensuring that the Ministry of Labour retained wide-ranging powers over collective bargaining and the industrial relations process. The effects of ESAP on the working class were largely devastating. Firstly, retrenchments in both the public and private sectors were substantial. By 1995, an estimated 50,000 permanent workers had been laid off, a considerable number of unrecorded contract and casual workers also lost their jobs, and the promised expansion in employment did not occur to make up for these losses (Sachikonye 1997: 121). The sectors worst affected were textiles, clothing, engineering, transport and retailing. A second major effect of ESAP was the erosion of living standards due to a shrinking of incomes. Incomes simply failed to keep pace with the deregulated prices of goods and services. Inflation also became a problem as table 4.6 shows, and the average wage increases could not keep pace with the rate of inflation that was already beginning to give the Zimbabwean government problems.

Table 4.6 Wages, inflation and Employment Growth 1981 –1994 (%)

Period	Average Wage Increase	Inflation Rate	Employment Growth	GDP Growth
1981	23.5	14.9	2.8	9.7
1982	Freeze	15.6	0.8	1.5
1983	Freeze	25.5	-1.2	-3.6
1984	5.0	9.6	0.3	2.3
1985	10.0	9.7	1.8	7.4
1986	8.0	14.7	2.5	2.1
1987	Freeze	9.5	0.5	-0.5
1988	10.0	7.8	5.5	7.2
1989	12.0	14.2	3.2	4.5
1990	15.0	17.3	1.1	1.9
1991	18.0	20.0	3.0	3.6
1992	13.0	48.0	-2.6	-8.0
1993	15.0	36.0	2.4	5.0
1994	12.0	20.8	-	-

Source: Nduna, (quoted in Sachikonye 1997)

Kanyenze (2000) aptly captures the indicators of decline in the living standards of the working class, which included: real wages declining from an index of 122 in 1982 to 67 in 1994; the share of wages in the gross national income falling from 54 percent in 1987 to 39 percent in 1997, (while profits increased from 47 percent to 63 percent during the same period); the poverty assessment study carried out by the government in 1995 found that 61 percent of Zimbabwean households lived in poverty; employment growth declined from an annual average of 2.4 percent during 1985-1990 to 1.55 percent in the period 1991-1997. Price increases of basic commodities such as maize-meal, bread, beef and milk were substantial in the period 1992-93, causing a wave of 'bread demonstrations' by consumers. In general, consumption patterns were negatively affected by ESAP, and the consequences for the health of workers and their families was negative (Sachikonye 1997: 121).

4.4.5 Working Class Households' Survivalist Responses to the Effects of ESAP

Migration and the 'feminization of labour' are observed to be major survivalist strategies by households in periods of crisis (De la Rocha 1991). Kanji (1994) vividly describes women's work in Harare and seasonal migration from urban to rural areas as contributing labour towards family land in the rural areas. This 'reverse migration' to villages was an important support

structure in the consumptive patterns of the working class in urban areas like Harare because working class households could thereby obtain food from their land in the rural areas. On the other hand, wives of working class men increasingly took part in informal labour market in activities like petty commodity trading in vegetables and other items like sugar, cooking oil, salt and cigarettes (Kanji 1994). This feminisation of the labour market was important in augmenting the incomes of working class families during ESAP.

Cross-border trading as a form of coping with the pauperising effects of ESAP became common amongst working class families. But as was observed by Muzvidziwa (2005), in his study of cross-border women traders in the city of Masvingo, cross-border trading was mainly a preserve of women who would buy goods that were in short supply in Zimbabwe from South Africa, reselling them in Zimbabwe.

Among the most significant fallouts of economic restructuring which have implications to health and well-being are the intensification of women's work, deterioration in the quality of life and reduced budgets for food and consumption patterns among the poor (Lingam 2005: 12). Kanji (1994) records changes that occurred in consumption patterns with reduction in meat and luxury food items among the working poor in Harare. Studies on the effects of ESAP on the working class in Harare by Gibbon (1995), Sachikonye (1995) and Bijlmakers *et al.* (1998) portray a picture of a working class for the most part on the verge of destitution. Bijlmakers *et al.* report that in Chitungwiza, an area in which most households had a male formal sector worker present, 39 per cent of households had no savings, could not save, did not participate in savings societies and had made no major expenditures (other than school fees) in the previous year. Important changes in consumption patterns were reported in these studies. Amongst working class households in Mbare, a majority in 1992 ate three meals a day; by 1993, a majority ate only two; 80 per cent of households reported changes in diet, 68 per cent ate less meat and 59 per cent less bread (Gibbon 1995: 22). Around half of Sachikonye's sample amongst the working class in Chitungwiza lived in households which could no longer buy bread or meat at the end of each month. Bijlmakers *et al.*'s survey shows a considerable decline even in those saying they could afford maize-meal, the staple food for the poor.

In terms of children's education and whether ESAP had given rise to child labour, papers by Kanji (1994), Mupedziswa and Gumbo (1998) point out that even though child-labour was found in some cases, it was not widespread because families continued to spend on children's

education. The Harare study by Mupedziswa and Gumbo (1998) in 1992, 1993 and 1995 observed that school drop-out rates had declined over the years, and this was explained as the perseverance of low-income families to ensure their children's education. This was in sharp contrast to the child labour that was witnessed amongst many working class families during the peak of the recent Zimbabwean crisis in 2008, when many working class children did not go to school because of the industrial action by the teachers in 2008 as well as due to the failure of some families to pay their children's school fees, as chapters 7 and 8 in the thesis reveal.

The employees who fared best during ESAP years were the state employed professionals. Gibbon (1995: 23) writes, 'At the very top of the social pyramid were state employed professional workers - teachers, nurses and so on. These had the highest earning power, were universally accorded high status and rarely, if ever, could be engaged in sideline activities'. Despite faring better than workers in other sectors of the economy, the state employed professionals like doctors and nurses were also feeling the pinch of the ESAP and quite a number were already migrating from Zimbabwe from the mid 1990s onwards because of the erosion of income under ESAP. Gaidzanwa (1999: 8) reports that from the mid 1990s, there were signs that quite a sizeable number of doctors and nurses were migrating to South Africa and Botswana respectively. The economic crisis of the 2000s that was marked by hyper-inflation during its peak was in stark contrast to the effects of ESAP. This is because the state-employed professionals like teachers who had fared better than workers from other sectors during ESAP became the worst affected workers by hyper-inflation, and this led to a severe depletion in numbers of state teachers and nurses as they abandoned their professions for informal sector activities or joined the diaspora.

4.4.6 Workerist Responses to the Adverse Effects of ESAP

Workerist responses at the organisational level and national level acquired significant currency and were used effectively by the workers in the 1990s as a response to the unfavourable effects of ESAP. This section of the thesis contends that the 1990s marked the peak of effective and militant workerist responses in the history of Zimbabwe's working class. A notable response of unions and their members to the adverse effects of ESAP was the increased importance attached to collective bargaining. Unions placed a great deal of emphasis on collective bargaining in the various sectors of the economy, and they bargained harder than before (Sachikonye 1997: 121).

Sachikonye goes on to contend that the results suggested that collective bargaining generally represented a gain for workers in terms of skills and experience. Sachikonye (1997) adds, however, that even though the awards made in collective bargaining agreements were not disappointing, they generally did not represent real increases in wages. Due to the inflation caused partly by price deregulation between 1990 and 1995, real wages in fact stagnated or declined.

Strikes were also used by workers to force business and the state to improve wages. It was against this economic background that industrial conflict, mainly in the form of strikes, broke out repeatedly between 1992 and 1995. Most of the strikes resulted from a deadlock over wage negotiations, and the largest strikes involved railway workers in 1992, bank workers in 1993 and 1994, and postal and telecommunications workers in 1992 and 1994. Other strikes organised during the period involved non-academic university workers, and those in transport, construction, clothing and textiles (Sachikonye 1997: 122).

4.4.7 The Public Service Strike of 1996

For three weeks in August 1996, thousands of government workers went on a nationwide general strike in protest against poor working conditions. The strike was started spontaneously by nurses and doctors. After tough and tense negotiations, the strike ended with the striking workers receiving a significant pay increase, bonuses, re-instatement of 7,000 strikers who had been fired by the government, and promises of a new harmonised labour act that would cover all workers and give recognition to the public sector unions. However, health sector workers, especially nurses, were unhappy with the compromise and resumed the strike in November 1996, continuing until February 1997 (Gwisai 2002). Now isolated, they were ultimately defeated, but not before they had inspired masses of workers in the private sector, including forcing the ZCTU to call for a general strike in solidarity (*The Socialist Worker*, September 1996). The civil service strike of 1996 over erosion of real income as a result of ESAP was a watershed, shattering the social partnership paradigm of the early 1990s. In so doing it drew on a history of militant protest seen in the protests of 1948 and 1980-82.

A significant element of the strike was its scale. According to Saunders (2000), the most strike-prone year since 1982 had been 1995, when there were 20,000 striking workers. This was completely overshadowed in 1996, when more than 235,000 workers joined strikes. Gwisai

(2002) observes that, just as with the 1948 General strike, the key driving force were the mass meetings of thousands of workers, notably those held in Harare's Africa Unity Square. Such meetings radicalised the workers, leading to increasingly political demands such as cutting the size of government, providing adequate resources in hospitals and enacting a new, harmonised labour law.

The meetings made the leaders accountable and became organising platforms from which flying pickets were sent daily to government offices to persuade those who had returned to work to re-join the strike. The 1996 strike was also significant in that, for the first time, a radical rank and file emerged to become the *de facto* leadership of the movement, drawing up a radical programme and uniting all workers. There was an eleven-person strike committee, the United Civil Servants Negotiating Committee, that was elected on the second day of the strike from militants amongst the strikers, who included doctors and nurses. The government was forced to negotiate with the strike committee, although in the end, the official leaders worked their way back in, striking a compromise that eventually ended the strike (Gwisai 2002: 14). The 1996 civil service strike that was led by Harare workers was a decisive and significant response to the gradual pauperisation of the working class in Zimbabwe. The workers had risen up across their respective industries to successfully challenge the state. The strike signaled the emergence of the working class as the leading agent of political and democratic transformation in Zimbabwe. The 1996 strike was also a rehearsal for the upcoming economic struggle.

4.4.8 The 1997 Strikes

The year 1997 witnessed the largest number of strikes and demonstrations in the history of Zimbabwe (Saunders 2000). Workers, students and even previously marginalised war veterans came out in protest against the massive fall in their living standards which had resulted from continuing economic crisis, accelerated by the economic reforms of the early 1990s. Saunders (2000), Gwisai (2002) and Zeilig (2005) claim that every sector of the economy suffered as recalcitrant employers, used to years of docile unions, initially refused to budge, but then relented. Unlike the 1980-81 strikes, the 1997 strikes were industry-wide, involving the unions in industries such as construction, catering, clothing and even the agriculture sector. In 1997, there were 55 recorded strikes by the ZCTU, involving over 1,000,000 workers (Saunders 2000).

The working class strikes of 1997 inspired other sections of society to revolt. Students in

tertiary institutions staged the first ever nationwide demonstrations under the leadership of the Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU) (Zeilig 2005). Landless peasants and war veterans invaded white farms, and for the first time resisted efforts by the police and government to evict them. Also inspired by the struggles erupting around them were the hitherto marginalised and now destitute former guerrillas, who, too, started demonstrations demanding pensions and denouncing corruption in government. They too were brutally suppressed initially, but they became key in de-legitimising the post-colonial ruling class (Gwisai 2002). Mugabe and his ZANU (PF) party finally capitulated to the demands of the war veterans, after initial resistance, and granted each war veteran a lump sum of Z\$ 50,000 in addition to a monthly pension of Z\$ 2,000. This decision was enacted by the printing of money, since no funds had been budgeted for the war veterans. The printing of money had an enormously damaging effect on the Zimbabwean economy, contributing to the worst devaluation since independence (the Zimbabwean dollar lost 75% of its value on 14 November 1997, a day that has come to be known as 'Black Friday'). This marked the beginning of Zimbabwe's major economic problems that are the subject of subsequent chapters.

The government decided to levy the workers five percent of their monthly income, in order to pay for the war veterans' compensation. The ZCTU demanded that the levy should be dropped, otherwise a general strike would be called. The state dropped the levy, but the ZCTU went ahead with its call for a general strike on 9 December 1997, to protest against other existing levies, and a general lack of transparency in the state's budgetary decisions. A section of the ZCTU leadership led by Morgan Tsvangirai realised that unless they abandoned their class collaborationist strategy (as what eventually happened under ESAP, when the ZCTU decided to go along with ESAP as espoused in its policy document '*Beyond ESAP*' in 1996) and embrace the revolts, they too would be swept aside by the rising tide (*The Socialist Worker*, February 1998). After nationwide ZCTU meetings and labour forums, at which demand for action was overwhelming, the labour leaders called for a two-day national strike, starting on 9 December 1997. *The Socialist Worker* of February 1998 reported:

The strike became the largest and most successful strike since independence and probably since the national strikes of 1948. Almost all businesses and workplaces shut, involving more than one million workers, management, informal sector entrepreneurs and civil servants. In most cities, there were large demonstrations supported by a broad range of civic and professional organizations.

When the police violently stopped workers from assembling at Africa Unity Square, now the traditional assembly point of striking workers, riots ensued (Saunders 2000, *The Socialist Worker*, February 1998). Saunders (2000) and Gwisai (2002) believe that the ZCTU leaders were fearful, and called off the strike, stating that the action would resume in January when workers returned to work from the annual Christmas holiday.

As the political and economic crisis deepened, the working class had grown immensely in militancy and consciousness. Gwisai (2002) believes that the militancy that was emerging reflected the rise of the young and educated post-1980 workers who had suffered the most from the neo-liberal agenda through casualised low-paying jobs. Gwisai (2002) goes on to assert that such workers were probably inspired by working class struggles like the civil service strike of 1996. These workers enthusiastically supported the ZCTU stay-aways and increasingly coalesced around the workers' committees, turning them into radicalised organisational instruments against the state and business.

The 1996-97 revolts were also significant in their impact on the ruling ZANU PF political elite. One of the most entrenched and violent ruling elites in Africa was forced to retreat before the power of the working class led revolts. The ZANU PF government was forced to conduct a partial economic and ideological retreat from ESAP. Instead, ideologically, the ZANU PF regime adopted an increasingly anti-imperialist and racist rhetoric centred on the land issue, and with the support of the late war veterans leader Chenjerai Hunzvi, threatened to acquire the largest ever number of farms for resettlement. However, Mugabe faced resistance to this leftward lurch from local and international capital. Subsequently, in October 1999, the IMF and the World Bank suspended loans to Zimbabwe, which in turn accelerated the economic crisis and inflation (Saunders 2000). 1997 thus is a significant year in the history of the working class in Zimbabwe because it marks the period when Zimbabwe's economic problems began in earnest. 1997 also ended in dramatic fashion, with the largest and most successful general strike in Zimbabwe's history. This strike was spearheaded by workers. The strike also marked the first time in post-independent Zimbabwe, when a cross-section of the society which included capital, farmers, intellectuals and students, led by the workers, began to work in concert. This unity in the cross-section of Zimbabwean society emerged in a bid to address the issues of governance that seemed to have led to the economic malaise the country was facing.

4.5 Conclusion

The chapter has shown that Zimbabwe's African working class has gone through many hardships in its history, since colonial times. The nature of the working class in Harare during the colonial era changed at different junctures. The first workers were the transnational labour migrants from neighbouring countries such as Malawi and Zambia. Gradually, after the end of the Second World War, the working class in Harare became more local in its outlook due to the legislation that compelled blacks to work in urban areas and also because of the NLHA of 1951, which made access to land for blacks more precarious. Class consciousness amongst the black working class took time to emerge because of the temporary nature of the working class.

The chapter highlighted the fact that the working class has always employed a wide range of responses to the hardships that it has encountered in its history. The pre-1945 working class mainly relied on survivalist strategies that involved maintaining strong rural-urban ties, in order to gain access to food and to also augment income through farming in the rural areas. The semi-proletarian nature of the working class during this period made this option viable. Pilfering at the workplace and supplementing income through activities such as illicit beer brewing were also common. During this period, the African working class' voice was marginalised and muted and therefore responses containing an element of workerism were absent. However, occasional strikes occurred, as happened in Wankie and Shamva in the 1920s.

The era between 1945 and 1980 witnessed a broader range of responses to working class hardships. The episode between 1945 and 1948 was the peak of workerist responses, as two major strikes were witnessed during this period. Workers became more organised in their struggle against white capital, as a number of trade unions were formed in the 1940s and 1950s. The African working class in the 1950s also resorted to partyism for the first time. However, these flirtations with partyism were shortlived, as the African middle-class intelligentsia later took over the leadership of the African liberation movements in the early 1960s.

Continuities of at first survivalism and later workerism were witnessed amongst the ranks of the working class in the post-colonial era in the 1990s, mainly as a response to the effects of ESAP. Workerism reached its zenith in the history of the African working class between 1996 and 1997. However, as later chapters in the dissertation shall reveal, partyism was later adopted by the working class, as workerism receded, while the crisis worsened. The continuities, shifts,

and unevenness in the responses of the different sections of the working class to the crisis from 1997 to 2008 shall be articulated in subsequent chapters.



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CHAPTER 5

HYPER-INFLATION AND THE POLITICAL CRISIS, 1997-2008

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of the chapter is to outline key economic, political and social aspects of Zimbabwe's crisis. This will establish the context for analysing the experiences of the working class, which are described in Chapters 6 to 8. The chapter maintains that the economic crisis that Zimbabwe went through in the 2000s that was characterised by high levels of inflation and hyper-inflation cannot be separated from the political crisis. The devastating spell of hyper-inflation that Zimbabwe went through was a result of misguided political decisions. The chapter also makes the claim that the partial disintegration of the working class incapacitated the MDC, as the party was unable to call upon the working class, which had been the main support base of the party, to engage in mass action in the face of an economic implosion, electoral fraud and violence by the ZANU (PF) government.

This harsh reality was starkly revealed by the harmonised polls of 29 March 2008, which the MDC won. However, this electoral victory failed to culminate in the MDC gaining control of the government, as ZANU (PF) refused to concede defeat and instead unleashed unprecedented violence on the electorate in both the urban and rural areas. This led to Tsvangirai's withdrawal from the Presidential run-off election against Mugabe. In this chapter it is contended that, had the working class not partially disintegrated, the MDC in alliance with the working class would have been in a position to resist and challenge the ZANU (PF) government over its mismanagement of the economy and electoral fraud. The working class of 2008 was not the same militant working class as that of the previous decade.

5.2 Contours of the Economic Crisis

5.2.1 Economic Overview of Zimbabwe's Economic Performance, 1965-1997

The chapter begins by tracing Zimbabwe's economic situation from 1965, when the Unilateral Declaration of Independence was declared by Ian Smith, up to 1997, when Zimbabwe's economy began to implode. The UNDP (2008: 7) argues that, in response to the imposition of international sanctions against the Smith regime, the government assumed extensive interventionist powers, adopting inward looking and import substitution policies, designed to promote domestic manufacturing and achieve self-sufficiency in major consumer goods. Extensive intervention in the economy, mainly through elaborate controls on prices, wages, interest rates and in exchange rate markets became widespread. These factors, combined with the forced reinvestment of blocked profits, contributed to high growth rates during the period 1965 to 1973 (UNDP 2008: 7). This came to an end however after 1974, mainly due to the effects of the liberation struggle and the impact of a world-wide hike in oil prices, which inspired a global recession. Notwithstanding this post-1974 downturn in overall terms the UDI economy was well managed, albeit for the benefit of a racial minority, with stable prices, high savings and investment rates, and a slowly depreciating currency in real terms (Bond 2001, Sachikonye 1997, UNDP 2008).

At independence in 1980, Zimbabwe's new government maintained the macro-economic controls inherited from the Rhodesian government (Kanyenze 2008, Sachikonye 1997). Within the framework of a command economy, the government also introduced redistributive objectives that necessitated a large public sector, and increased government spending on health, education and other social welfare programmes throughout the 1980s. Kanyenze (2008: 8) argues that although the 1980s might be interpreted as a decade of success, particularly when judged by improvements in terms of social indicators, the downside was the high cost in terms of unsustainably high budget deficits, the harmful effects of which remained hidden behind a plethora of economy-wide controls. A combination of political, social and climatic conditions led to the boom in the Zimbabwean economy that was experienced in the early 1980s. Zimbabwe's immediate post-independence period was characterised by exceptionally high growth rates of 10.7 percent and 9.7 percent for 1980 and 1981, respectively (Sachikonye 1997: 103). The UNDP report of 2008 contends that this unprecedented economic boom can be explained by

three factors. The first of these was favourable growth conditions at the end of the liberation war, which included the lifting of economic sanctions, favourable world market conditions, and two exceptionally good rainfall seasons. Secondly, there was the pursuit of fiscally driven redistributive policies, which in turn stimulated overall demand in the economy. Lastly, there was the opening up of external markets. When these favourable growth factors began to weaken in the mid-1980s, the Zimbabwean economy was plunged into recession. This was sparked by two consecutive droughts (1982/1983 and 1984/1985), fuelling demand for Zimbabwe's exports in world markets, and the start of a decline in investment.²³

Sluggish performance in the Zimbabwean economy in the latter part of the 1980s led the government to embark on the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), which was sponsored by the Bretton-Woods institutions, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The key elements of ESAP which was introduced in 1991 were: trade liberalisation; fiscal and monetary policy reforms; public enterprise reforms; budget deficit reduction; deregulation of investment, labour and price controls and retrenchments in both public and private sectors. The ESAP years, 1991-1996, had a negative effect on the working class and Sachikonye (1997: 121) explains that, not only did real incomes of workers decline, but over 50,000 permanent workers were retrenched from formal employment by the end of 1995. Sachikonye goes on to assert that a considerable number of unrecorded contract and casual workers lost their jobs, and the promised expansion in employment did not occur to make up for these losses. By 1995, instead of the five percent Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate predicted by the World Bank and the IMF, an actual average rate of a mere 0.8 percent was achieved between 1991 to 1995 (UNDP 2008). In response to the devastating effects of ESAP on the working class, the ZCTU decided to come up with a policy advocacy document, *Beyond ESAP*. Bond (2001:32) argues that *Beyond ESAP* in fact codified many of the Mugabe regime's worst conceptual errors and policy recommendations. Its neo-liberal suggestions included: avoiding 'subsidisation and relief funds'; trimming the public sector; 'repealing any regulations ... that discriminate against non-formal sector activities or small – scale firms'; 'having the peasant captured by the market'; and 'close government collaboration with private business' on

²³ UNDP report of 2008 on the Zimbabwean economy. The report was compiled by leading Zimbabwean scholars and researchers.

industrial policy (ZCTU 1996). The ZCTU (1996:20) also posed a crucial limitation for future strategies, namely that:

There can be no return to pre-ESAP policies, partly because of the stranglehold that foreign creditors have on policy, through the substantial debt that has accumulated, paradoxically, because of the failure of the policy.

Bond goes on to argue that the document's concessionary language, was consistent with fruitless attempts to establish a broad 'social contract' that would, as Tsvangirai (cited in Sachikonye 1997:127) put it:

involve the three parties reaching a consensus where workers agree to restrain wage demands on the one hand, and employers agree to control price increases for commodities, invest surpluses to create more jobs and train workers on the other. For government, you would expect them to cut spending.

The successor programme to ESAP, the Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation, ZIMPREST (1996-2000) sought to continue the unfinished business of ESAP, but Kanyenze (2008) argues that ZIMPREST faltered because of reasons similar to those that impacted adversely on ESAP, namely the government's fiscal policy, which threw macro-economic fundamentals into disarray and resulted in high budget deficits, high inflation, low foreign exchange reserves, a weak balance of payments and overall low growth. Thus, by 1997, when Zimbabwe's economic crisis began in earnest, the Zimbabwean economy was already beginning to show signs of distress. Some sections of the working class were beginning to disintegrate physically with, in particular, workers in the textile and clothing sectors losing their jobs. This was a consequence of immense pressure from outside competition, mostly emanating from the Asian industries. This put a number of Zimbabwean textile firms like Cone Textiles and clothing firms out of business (Sachikonye 1995, 1997).

5.2.2 Zimbabwe's Economic Crisis, 1997-2000

The UNDP (2008) argues that the onset of the economic crisis in Zimbabwe can be traced to the so-called 'Black Friday' crash of the Zimbabwean dollar on 14 November 1997. This was precipitated by the government's unbudgeted payments of a Z\$ 50,000 gratuity and Z\$ 2,000 monthly pension to the country's war veterans. This meant that the government was forced to print Z\$ 4.5 billion, the equivalent to US\$ 450 million, to fund the expensive exercise. On 'Black Friday', the Zimbabwean dollar crashed by 75 percent in one day (Moore 2003). The gazetting

of the land bill, which gave the government the powers to seize 1471 farms by 2000, also caused uncertainty in the economy, as it threw property rights into disarray. The ZANU (PF) government would continue with this printing of money in the 2000s and this would fuel hyperinflation.

In 1998, the Zimbabwean government decided to participate in the conflict in the DRC, which further contributed to the ballooning fiscal deficit. Nest (2001: 470) contends that Zimbabwe went into the DRC war for three reasons. First, Mugabe wanted to assert himself as the premier leader of SADC and upstage Nelson Mandela who was in his last years in office, as the region's key statesman. Secondly, the SADC charter includes a collective security provision stating that, in the event of a member country being invaded, other members will come to its assistance. This rendered untenable suggestions that the DRC as a new member should not receive support. After all, SADC would be viewed as an ineffectual organisation if it could not protect its new members such as the DRC, which had joined in 1997. Mugabe wished both to preserve the integrity of SADC, and to demonstrate the importance of the organisation. Thirdly, Mugabe had lent Laurent Kabila several millions of dollars for his war effort against Mobutu. If Kabila lost power, there would be no possibility of this debt being re-paid. The DRC war was rumored to be costing in excess of over US\$1 million a day (Moore 2002).

5.2.3 The Violent 2000 Land Reform Programme

The chaotic and violent land reform programme of 2000 christened the '*third Chimurenga*' by ZANU (PF), resulted in a steep decline of commercial agriculture, and also caused economic sanctions to be placed on the Zimbabwean government by most western countries and the Bretton-Woods institutions. In Southern Africa, the historical 'land question' has centred on the forms and consequences of unjust expropriation of land by colonial states. In most cases, the best-endowed land was owned and occupied by the white farmers, while some of the indigenous people who had previously lived on it were evicted and assigned inferior land. The patterns of land allocation under colonial rule were thus defined in terms of conquest. Zimbabwe was no exception to this pattern. For instance, under the Land Apportionment Act of 1930, some 51 percent of land was reserved for white settlers who numbered about 50,000, 30 percent for African reserve areas, for about one million blacks, and the remainder for commercial companies and the colonial government (Moyo 2000; Palmer 1977, Scoones 2008). Against this

background, the principle elements of the land question were focused on historical injustice and inequity. Inevitably, the demands of the colonised and the dispossessed revolved around redress in the form of land redistribution and fairness in the form of equitable access to sufficient resources to make the land productive (Cousins 2003; Moyo 2000, 2002, 2004). These demands continued to be made after independence, because the pace of land reform was slow and the Land Acquisition Act of 1992 did not manage to revive the land reform programme in any meaningful way, as few farms were designated for redistribution (Andreasson 2006: 10; Dashwood 2000: 181, Moyo 2004). The focus on the land question was thus narrowed to recovery of land from white commercial farmers, for redistribution among communal farmers who were landless or lacked sufficient land and, to a smaller extent, to unemployed farm workers. Promoting access to land for the majority of the indigenous people was expected to create stability in land property rights (Moyo 1986, 2004; Presidential Land Review Committee 2003). The Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) that began in 2000 was therefore motivated by the need to redress Zimbabwe's inequitable land distribution. But it also appears that the Mugabe regime used the FTLRP to appease the war veterans, so that they would vote for ZANU (PF) and also campaign for the party in the rural areas, in the 2000 Parliamentary elections. The pace of repossession of the 1,471 farms that the war veterans had been promised by an act of parliament in 1997 had been slow, and this probably motivated the war veterans to commence occupation of farms (Moore 2002). The war veterans and other ZANU (PF) supporters began to do so, whilst the 2000 Parliamentary elections were marred by violence in the rural areas. It is widely believed that Mugabe engineered this because he had just lost the referendum on a new constitution in February 2000, and so there was the danger that this would translate into electoral defeat in the 2000 polls.

The FTLRP entailed a comprehensive redistribution of land that was accomplished by means of considerable chaos and violence (*jambanja*). Eleven million hectares of land changed hands within a three year period (2000-2003) making it the largest property transfer ever to occur in the region during peace time (Cousins 2003, Hammar, Raftopoulos & Jensen 2003, Sachikonye 2003). The economic sanctions placed on the Zimbabwean government by the West was a protest against the method used by the ZANU (PF) government to effect its land reform. The violent 2000 Parliamentary elections worsened the Zimbabwean government's relations with the West and resulted in the 2001 Zimbabwe Democracy and Recovery Act (ZIDERA) being

promulgated by the United States. The Act placed 'smart' or 'targeted' economic and travel sanctions on leading personalities in the Mugabe regime.

Hammar (2008: 29), Bafana (2008) and the UNDP (2008) contend that the overall effect of the farm invasions, evictions and resettlement - exacerbated by several droughts during the post-2000 period, and the ever-deepening economic crisis more generally - brought a dramatic decline in the agricultural sector, with an estimated 50-70 percent drop in production of the major crops and only 40 percent of land being utilised. *The Zimbabwean Independent* of 21 April 2006 revealed that commercial milk production dropped from 245 million litres in 1999 to 97 million litres in 2005. At the same time, both subsistence and surplus production in the communal lands and former resettlement areas declined (UNDP 2008). This agricultural decline was in stark contrast to Sam Moyo's arguments in 2000, when he maintained that Zimbabwe's land reform programme would not lead to a reduction in agricultural production. Responding to the Commercial Farmers Union (CFU) prediction that maize and cotton production would decline, Moyo countered that these predictions were controversial because small farmers already produced 65 percent of the national totals for cotton and maize. The drought that the country faced in the 2000s no doubt played some part in the decline of Zimbabwe's agricultural produce, but Moyo had not foreseen the primitive accumulation by the ZANU (PF) petty bourgeoisie who helped themselves to multiple farms (Andreasson 2006, Moore 2002, Rutherford 2003). This accumulation by the ZANU (PF) *chefs*, which was a way of sustaining ZANU (PF)'s neo-patrimonial networks, resulted in many of them becoming multiple farm owners under the commercial farming Model (A2) and tragically failing to fully utilise, even in some instances completely fail to produce on the farms which they had procured for themselves. This contributed to unprecedented levels of food shortages and hunger witnessed in both the urban and rural areas of Zimbabwe in the 2000s.

5.2.4 Worsening Economic Crisis in the 2000s

There is a debate among leading scholars who have been following the Zimbabwean crisis on the effects of sanctions on the economy, and the population at large. Mamdani (2009: 11) believes that sanctions have negatively affected the ordinary people and not only 'targeted' politicians. He argues that foreign direct investment dwindled to almost nothing in the 2000s, and that the Bretton-Woods institutions stopped providing Zimbabwe with balance of payments support in

1999. According to Mamdani (2009), this negatively affected everyday people. Gideon Gono, the Governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, wrote that the country's foreign exchange reserves had declined from \$ 830 million, representing three months' import cover by 2006.²⁴ Total foreign payments arrears increased from \$ 109 million at the end of 1999, to \$ 2.5 billion at the end of 2006. Foreign direct investment had shrunk from \$ 444.3 million in 1998 to \$ 50 million in 2006. Donor support, even to sectors vital to popular welfare, such as health and education, was at an all-time low. Danish support for the health sector, which amounted to \$ 29.7 million in 2000, was suspended. Swedish support for education was also suspended (Gono 2008).

Bond (2009) refutes Mamdani and Gono's postulations, and contends that it is a myth that the Zimbabwean economy imploded as a result of sanctions. Bond (2009) argues that Zimbabwe continued to receive humanitarian financial assistance from the West, and that, instead, it was ill-advised economic policies, such as the printing of money, that caused Zimbabwe to experience an economic meltdown. Bond (2009: 37) goes on to argue that in 2007, the last year for which full statistics exist, the West gave \$ 465 million to various Zimbabwean projects, representing 10 percent of the country's GDP, and at \$ 40 per person, this was a higher per capita amount for sub-Saharan African countries receiving aid (\$ 39), and more than twice as much as for Third World countries generally (\$ 17). Bond (2009: 37) further adds that the 2000s fall in imperialist donations to Zimbabwe, a drop of 50 percent by 2007 from average 1990s figures, can be blamed on various other factors: the upsurge in state repression, Mugabe's zigzagging away from neo-liberal economic policies, and a sense that Mugabe would lose to Tsvangirai in an election. Despite this, Bond asserts that during the 2000s, \$ 277 million flowed in each year, on average, hardly the 'shut door' that Mamdani (2009: 11) describes. Bond's arguments appear to be more plausible and are supported by Zimbabwean economists such as Kanyenze, who argues that Zimbabwe's economic crisis was caused by excess government expenditure, financed by the printing of money, in an economy with a real GDP that had been declining for nine years. Money-supply growth had been completely decoupled from economic growth, the inevitable result being continued and accelerating inflation (Interview with Kanyenze on 14 May 2009).

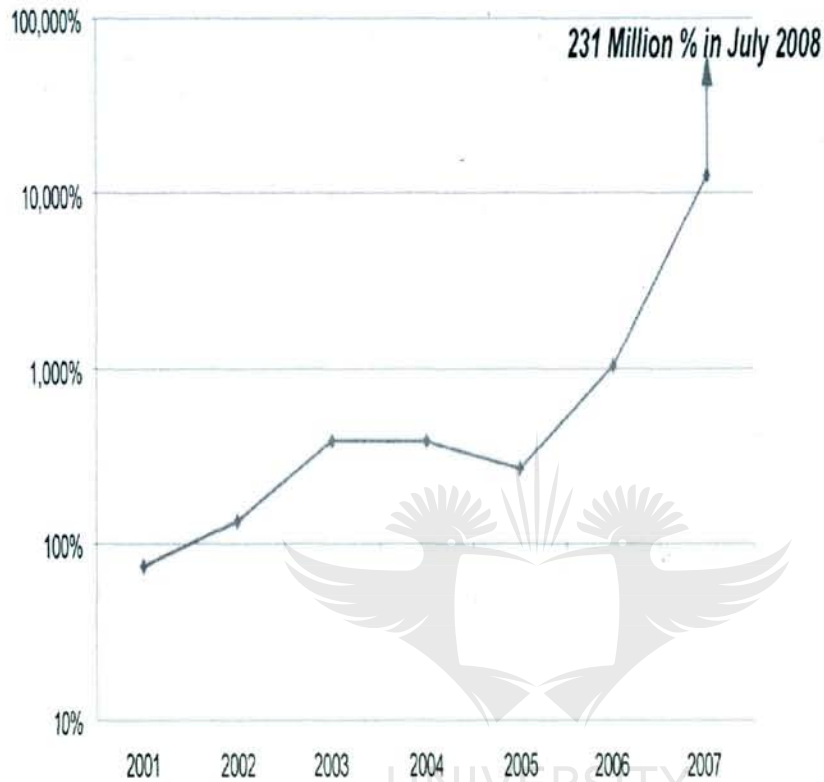
²⁴ Gideon Gono made these assertions in his 2008 book, *Zimbabwe's Casino Economy: Extraordinary Measures for Extraordinary Challenges*.

As Graph 1 below shows, inflationary pressures had built up from 1997, when it rose from 19 percent in that year to 56 percent by 2000, to over 1000 percent by 2006 and shooting to an astronomical 231 million percent by July 2008. Zimbabwe's inflation began to shoot up dramatically in early 2007. This is when hyper-inflation set in, with the month-on-month rate of inflation for February 2007 reaching 50 percent, which translated to a 12,875 percent year-on-year rate (Hanke 2009, UNDP 2008). Despite 231 million percent being an exceptionally high figure, leading economists in Zimbabwe like Hawkins and Kanyenze dispute this official figure and claim that the rate was higher still. Hanke (2008) who is based at the Cato Institute at Johns Hopkins University posits that Zimbabwe's year on year inflation peaked at a stupendous 89.7 sextillion percent in November 2008. This was the second highest rate of hyperinflation in recorded history. A sextillion has 21 zeroes. Robinson (2007: 8) explained the negative effects of hyperinflation on the various classes in society:

Hyperinflation is... notorious for concentrating incomes in the hands of the rich while impoverishing the poor, often making already highly unequal societies even more divided.

In the Zimbabwean situation, this undesirable process was magnified by high levels of patronage. Key resources in a highly distorted environment, such as cheap credit and foreign currency at the official rate, were allocated to selected individuals and groups, enabling them to amass enormous levels of wealth in a very short space of time. Those with political leverage borrowed heavily from the banks and then declined to pay, waiting for inflation to remove the burden of the original debt (Robinson 2007).

Graph 1 : Zimbabwe's CPI inflation, annual average, 2001–2007



Source: Central Statistical Office

Zimbabwe's other economic indicators reveal the severity of the situation, as table 5.1 shows. Average annual GDP growth, employment growth, and formal employment figures continued to plummet, most notably during the period of extreme crisis.

Table 5.1 Zimbabwe's Macro Economic Indicators, 1980-2006

Economic indicators	1980 – 1990	1991 - 2000	2001 - 2006
<i>Average annual GDP growth (%)</i>	4.30	0.90	-5.7
<i>Employment growth (%)</i>	1.90	0.40	-7.5
<i>End of year pop (millions)</i>	9.74	11.34	11.95
<i>Formal employment (% of pop)</i>	12.20	10.90	7.00

Source: Zimbabwe Central Statistical Office

Real wages of the working class have continued to fall during Zimbabwe's period of crisis. As Graph 2 below shows, real average earnings peaked in 1982, when wages were adjusted in line with the Poverty Datum Line, as recommended by the Riddell Commission.²⁵ However, following the adoption of a wage-restraint policy in 1983, real wages fell, a trend that was repeated during the period of ESAP (1991-1995), when there was the deregulation of wage setting and rising prices (UNDP 2008). A period of worker militancy resulted in an increase in real wages between 1995 and 2000.²⁶ But, by 2004, the year in which the CSO data on real wages ends, real average earnings were far lower than during the final years of UDI (1975-1979). The trend in the decline in real wages for the working class continued until 2008, and this is the reason why large numbers of workers left their jobs either to join the informal sector or look for jobs in other countries.

²⁵ The Riddell Commission was a Presidential Commission that was set up in 1981 in Zimbabwe, to make enquiries and recommendations on incomes, prices and conditions of work of employees.

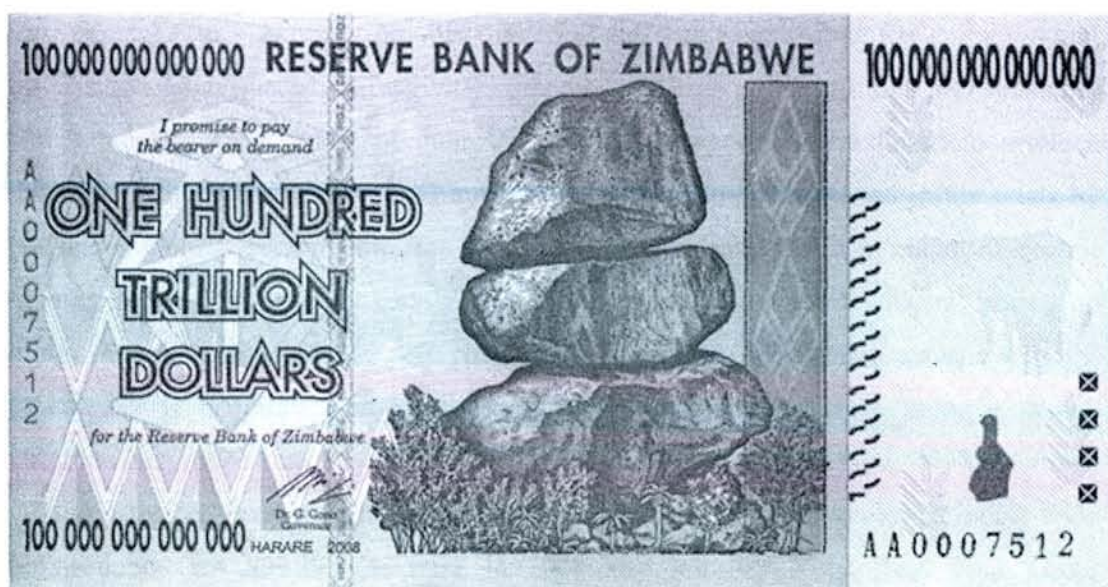
²⁶ There was a wave of strikes between 1995 and 2000 in Zimbabwe, in both the private and public sectors. The biggest strikes were by the civil servants in 1996 and 1997.

Graph 2 : Average real earnings index, 1975– 2004 (1990 = 100)



Source: Unpublished Central Statistical Office data

The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) was forced to revalue the Zimbabwean dollar, three times in a space of less than three years, because of rampant hyper-inflation in the country. In August 2006, in an operation called 'Sunrise I', the RBZ removed 3 zeroes from Zimbabwe's currency and promised to introduce a new currency in the near future. In August 2008, exactly two years after the first revaluation, the RBZ slashed a further 10 zeroes from Zimbabwe's currency, calling this 'Sunrise II'. Rampaging hyper-inflation forced the government to erase another 12 zeroes in early February 2009. This was 'Sunrise III'. Thus, a staggering 25 zeroes had been slashed from the Zimbabwean currency within a space of only three years. Hyper-inflation was simply unsustainable, and when the Zimbabwean dollar was officially shelved in March 2009, the highest single denomination was a 100 trillion dollar note. When the 100 trillion dollar note was introduced on 16 January 2009, it was worth the equivalent of US\$ 30 on the parallel market.



Zimbabwe's economy contracted by 14.1 percent in 2008, while public spending collapsed, pushing unemployment and poverty to 'catastrophic' levels (IMF 2009). The IMF Report claimed an estimated 14% fall in real GDP in the Zimbabwean economy in 2008, on top of the 40 percent cumulative decline during 2000-2007. The IMF went on to call for central bank reforms in Zimbabwe. As pressure on Reserve Bank Governor Gono grew with the collapse of Zimbabwe's economy, he blamed banks, the stock exchange, black market currency dealers and insurance companies for fuelling speculative activities that had resulted in the collapse of the economy. Gono insisted that he was taking instructions from his principal, President Mugabe, as he implemented policies that instigated the downfall of Zimbabwe's economy, (*The Zimbabwean*, 18 April 2009). The National Organising Secretary of the ZCTU, Michael Kandukutu, argued that, 'Gono was solely responsible for the dramatic collapse of the Zimbabwean dollar, by relentlessly printing money, as the country remained mired in disease, hunger and poverty. He printed money to the extent that Zimbabwe's rate of hyper-inflation at its peak was beyond calculation levels'.²⁷ Gono, however, told parliamentarians in March 2009, that extraordinary situations call for extraordinary measures. He went on to inform the MPs that he had engaged in non-traditional roles for a central bank because of declining capital flows, droughts, declining capacity utilisation, limited fiscal resources, political polarisation, sanctions and a failure to access balance of payments support (*The Zimbabwean*, 18 April 2009). The IMF Report of 2009,

²⁷ Interview with Michael Kandukutu on 30 April 2009.

however, dismisses Gono's explanation, insisting that he was responsible for compounding Zimbabwe's crisis through quasi-fiscal activities that saw the RBZ pump millions into financing newly resettled black farmers, most of them ZANU (PF) supporters who failed to produce enough food to feed the starving nation. The report goes on to implicate Gono in the crisis by alleging that under Gono's stewardship, the RBZ took on a myriad tasks unrelated to central banking, such as: buying government cars; supplying farm equipment and fertilisers; setting up and supplying 'People's Shops'²⁸ to sell cheap goods; setting up foreign currency shops; supplying medicines to hospitals; and all the more damning, buying tractors, ploughs, scotch carts and combine harvesters that were distributed by Mugabe during the March 2008 elections.

In addition to the 'People's Shops' which were selling Basic Commodities Supply Side Intervention products (BACOSSI), the RBZ in 2008 also introduced the Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) system of transacting, which was commonly referred to as 'burning money' by most people. The RTGS and BACOSSI sustained many people who were engaged in informal activities during Zimbabwe's crisis. The central bank of Zimbabwe introduced BACOSSI in June 2008. BACOSSI was meant to be a project that was designed to provide cheap loans for businesses, and in turn translate to cheap and available goods in shops. However, the acronym was now being corrupted to describe products that were being sold at ridiculously low prices, even below their market value by speculators who were bent on capturing the now scarce local currency. Speculators bought goods from manufacturers using electronic bank transfer and then received their goods upon confirmation of payment. Their business was not profit-driven, but focused on selling large volumes at extremely low prices so as to create access to scarce local currency. The cash was then used to buy US dollars on the parallel market, of which a fraction of what would have been purchased was exchanged for the local currency, using the RTGS which paid a premium at least ten times higher than the cash rate. This was termed *kupisa mari* in local Shona street lingo (burning money). This is how most informal traders and some workers survived hyper-inflation in Zimbabwe in the second half of 2008.

²⁸ People's shops were introduced by Gideon Gono in June 2008. These shops sold basic commodities at cheap prices. Commodities such as cooking oil, sugar, soap and mealie-meal were known as Basic Commodities Supply Side Intervention (BACOSSI). However, there were reports that most of these BACOSSI products were looted by top ZANU (PF) officials, who would resell these commodities at higher prices on the 'black market'.

5.2.5 Dollarisation of the Zimbabwean Economy

Zimbabwe's unsustainable economic situation forced the political foes, ZANU (PF) and the MDC formations to form a Government of National Unity (GNU) in February 2009, in order to stop the economic meltdown. One of the first measures that was implemented by the GNU in March 2009, was to allow the use of multiple currencies, notably the US dollar and the South African Rand. The Economic Planning Minister, Elton Mangoma, said on 20 April 2009 that Zimbabwe wanted to avoid a repeat of the practice of simply printing money, and so would not reintroduce the Zimbabwean dollar for at least another year. He went on to say that the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe had been printing money in the past few years to repay its debts and to pay subsidies to farmers and state owned companies, and it was this that had led to hyper-inflation (*The Worker*, May, 2009).

Bloch (2009) defines dollarisation as the substitution of a domestic currency by a more stable foreign currency. It does not necessarily imply that only one foreign currency is introduced or adopted. Many countries have adopted dual and/or multiple currency regimes, and Zimbabwe is one such example. The US dollar, the South African rand, the British pound sterling and the Botswana pula were all accepted as legal tender in Zimbabwe (Bloch 2009). Chitambara (2009) argues that dollarisation was predominantly a response to a loss of confidence in the local currency owing to severe bouts of macro-economic instability, notably hyperinflation, the currency crisis as well as high and volatile interest rates. Countries facing policy uncertainty may also adopt dollarisation. Chitambara further postulates that the currency crises in Latin America, and Central and Eastern Europe in the 1980s renewed interest in the debate on the merits and demerits of dollarization. Robertson (2009) notes that dollarization has been adopted in the past by countries like Argentina, Bolivia, Mexico, Peru, Yugoslavia, Russia, Georgia, Turkey, Mozambique and Zambia. Most of these countries dollarized their currencies because of the hyper-inflation scourge. Advocates of dollarization have argued that dollarisation results in the virtual and almost instant elimination of hyperinflation. Thus, most chronic high inflation countries like Argentina in the late 1980s and Yugoslavia in the mid 1990s successfully eliminated hyperinflation after the adoption of dollarisation (Chitambara 2009). Dollarisation also has the effects of leading to a reduction in exchange rate volatility, a lessening in the possibility of a currency crisis and capital flight. Currency risk is eliminated as there is no possibility of devaluation. Dollarisation also deprives a government of the right to print money to

finance fiscal deficits (Hanke 2008). Dollarisation, however, also has drawbacks. One cost of dollarisation is the loss of an important emblem of national identity and pride, the national currency. There may also be a loss of political autonomy and sovereignty as the dollarizing country may leverage its currency as a coercive tool to force the dollarised country to adopt certain policies that may not be in its interest (Hanke 2008).

The dollarisation of the Zimbabwean economy brought some semblance of macro-economic stability to the country, as hyper-inflation was reined in. The Central Statistical Office (CSO), emerged from its six months slumber in February 2009 (The CSO had last published Zimbabwe's rate of hyperinflation in July 2008), and announced that Zimbabwe's month on month inflation for February was -3.1 percent. Subsequent figures of inflation published by the CSO suggest that there was deflation in Zimbabwe, as prices of basic goods continued to decrease as most shops were now fully stocked, but also because most people did not have the foreign currency to buy basic goods, much less luxuries. The CSO reported that the rates of month on month inflation in March, April and May 2009 were, -3 percent, -1.5percent and -1 percent. This confirms that there was deflation in Zimbabwe just after the dollarization of the economy. All the civil servants were receiving a 'socialist' allowance of US \$100, regardless of position or qualifications. This led to members of the working class like teachers, who had disintegrated as a working class, to return to work, thus recomposing these sections of the working class that were dormant. The private sector was also paying its workers in forex, although most of the incomes that workers were getting were well below the poverty datum line that was pegged at \$ 454 for a family of six for the month of April by the Consumer Council of Zimbabwe (CCZ). In an interview with Japhet Moyo on 29 April 2009, the deputy secretary general of the ZCTU lamented the poor incomes that were given to workers in both the private and public sectors:

When the Prime Minister, Morgan Tsvangirai decided to join the GNU, he promised workers that they would be remunerated in foreign currency. This resulted in people who had quit their professions like nurses and teachers going back to work. However, the GNU is sitting on a time bomb if it does not increase the \$ 100 allowances that it is giving to civil servants. That money is simply not enough. It is well below the Poverty Datum Line. If these allowances, which are not even salaries are not reviewed as a matter of urgency, the ZCTU council will have no choice but to call for an indefinite general strike. This also includes the private sector. We are aware of the fact that most companies are giving their employees monthly salaries that are even below the US \$ 100 that the government is giving to civil servants. We are warning these companies to start

paying their workers decent wages and salaries, otherwise there is going to be a stand-still in industry after we call for the indefinite general strike which is looming.

The President of the Zimbabwe Teachers Association (ZIMTA), Tendai Chikowore, in an interview conducted on 2 May 2009 also echoed Japhet Moyo warning thus:

We have been taken for a ride for too long now and it is time we should act. The government failed dismally to honour its promise of giving us a substantial salary, now it's time to take action. In fact it was thoughtless for teachers to return to work in February without tangible assurances from the government for better salaries. Now we are stuck with the US\$100 monthly allowance and we are without pay. We are incapacitated and the only exit plan is to down tools.

The dollarisation of the economy contributed to the continued closure of the University of Zimbabwe (UZ) in the first half of 2008, because most students were unable to pay for their tuition fees in foreign currency. The vice-chancellor of the University of Zimbabwe, Professor Levi Nyagura, was quoted as having said that, if the tuition fee were to be paid by the 12,000 students enrolled at the UZ, that would help resuscitate the institution's crippled infrastructure and operations (*Sunday Mail* 3 May 2009). The President of the Association of the University Teachers Association (AUT) at the University of Zimbabwe, Government Phiri complained:

Since the dollarisation of the economy, the lecturers at the UZ have not been paid any money, because the institution is broke. That is the reason why we are on strike. We used to get financial assistance from the government, but it looks as if the government has forgotten to factor us in the US\$100 allowances that are being paid to all civil servants. The government appears to be paying too much attention to primary and secondary education and totally doing nothing to address the dire situation that is at the University of Zimbabwe. As academics, we risk becoming archaic and irrelevant, if the government does not chip in to address the rot and the miserly salaries that have bedeviled the UZ for the past number of years.²⁹

The dollarisation of the economy did not only affect the workers in the urban areas in a negative way, but also people in the rural areas. Actually, the latter were worse off because there was very little foreign currency circulating in rural areas. Most people in the rural areas resorted to barter trade if they wanted to purchase basic commodities like food. They usually bartered their grain, poultry, or even livestock like goats and cattle. Mugabe lamented the ruinous nature of dollarisation to the wealth of rural people, since they had to part with their wealth, like livestock if they wanted to buy anything. Mugabe went on to argue for the re-introduction of the Zimbabwean dollar, as the currency of the country (President Mugabe addressing the Central

²⁹ Interview with Government Phiri (Captain Dunga) on 30 April 2009, President of the AUT. Phiri was given the nickname Captain Dunga because he is a big fan of soccer and the former Brazilian soccer coach, Dunga.

Committee of the ZANU (PF) party on 25 June 2009). Mugabe's call for the re-introduction of the Zimbabwean dollar was both ill-advised and premature because the Zimbabwean dollar, if re-introduced then, would continue to suffer from the scourge of hyper-inflation because there was nothing to support it. Production in both the agricultural and industrial sectors was still low and the Zimbabwean dollar would continue to lose value, as it had in the past. Secondly, central bank reforms would have had to be put in place to ensure that the RBZ did not continue with its ruinous policies of printing money, which had been the major trigger of the hyperinflation Zimbabwe faced in the 2000s. Wellington Chibhebe, the Secretary General of the ZCTU, bemoaned the economic environment facing workers:

Just how bad the situation is in the economy is not hard to see. Banks are empty and there are no clients. You will only see one or two bank tellers on duty. Most factories are beginning to resume production, but the exporters are feeling the pinch, as costs rise and export customers feel the global recession. Prices are coming down, but cash is in short supply, and low incomes inhibit personal spending on everything, except the basics.³⁰

If the GNU failed to raise the US\$ 8.5 billion that was needed to kickstart the economy of Zimbabwe, then the country was headed for more disaster. In its Short-Term Emergency Recovery Programme (STERP), which came with the tagline, 'Getting Zimbabwe Moving Again', the inclusive government noted that it required significant funding to turn around the country's economy and steer it towards sustained growth. Western donors remained aloof, demanding that certain reforms be undertaken first, before they could provide any substantial financial backing to the GNU. In launching STERP, Tendai Biti, the Minister of Finance, indicated the potential for social upheaval if the international community refused to assist. He warned:

The inclusive government faces the challenges of collapse, decay, poverty and suffering of our people. We either wallow in the wish-wash of disempowering party politics, or we choose STERP and make a bold step away from the mundane. Indeed, Zimbabweans expect nothing less and should get nothing less.

This section has traced the contours of Zimbabwe's economic crisis by outlining the key events that led to the economy's implosion in the 2000s. It is the contention of this research that the economic crisis was tied to the political events that took place from 1997 onwards. The

³⁰ Interview with Wellington Chibhebe, Secretary General of the ZCTU on 30 April 2009.

following section will now focus on the major political events that occurred from 1997, and into the 2000s. These events had the effect of compounding the economic crisis.

5.3 Government, Opposition and Violence

5.3.1 The MDC's Trials and Tribulations: 1999-2008

The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) which was formed on 11 September 1999 is one party that has come close to wresting power from ZANU (PF) in the elections that have taken place between 2000 and 2008. It is widely held that had it not been for ZANU (PF)'s legendary use of violence, intimidation and forced removals in the 2000, 2002, 2005 and 2008 elections, the MDC would have assumed power. It was largely the efforts of the labour body, the ZCTU, which led to the formation of the MDC, because of the hardships workers were facing as a result of the Economic Structural Adjustment programme that had been implemented by the ZANU PF government in 1991. During the ESAP years, economic performance of Zimbabwe worsened. Moore (2001), Bond (1999) and Sachikonye (2001) argue that whereas annual economic growth averaged 5 percent in the non-drought years in the 1980s, in the 1990s, it averaged less than 2 percent. Gwisai (2002) notes that the export earnings declined by 10.7 percent in 1991, while the share of manufacturing in GDP declined by 14.2 percent, with more than 50,000 jobs lost in the formal sector. Real wages declined as the consumer price index rose exponentially. According to the Consumer Council of Zimbabwe (1995: 2), 'Prospects of getting the promised cake from ESAP are bleak as consumers continue to suffer severely from the so called temporary shocks of the programme which appear to be permanent.' Under this growing crisis, the middle-class and sections of the working class began to show discontent, evidenced by the increasing strikes and demonstrations by professional groups like teachers, nurses and doctors from the mid 1990s onwards.

Reflecting the growing consciousness of the working class, economic demands were soon complemented by increasing demands from many workers, especially at the labour forums for the ZCTU to take on the regime politically by leading the formation of a workers' party, as had happened in Zambia (Gwisai 2002). Gwisai goes on to argue that given its economist ancestry, this was initially opposed by the ZCTU leadership, but by the end of 1998, pressure not only from worker militants, but also from the increasingly radicalized and pauperized professional and intellectual middle-classes made them to reverse their stance. These classes, after years of

futile attempts to build viable opposition parties, now recognised the indispensable strategic importance of organised labour in any viable challenge against ZANU PF, although they were opposed to the idea of a labour party, preferring a 'broad-based party' which they could dominate (Gwisai 2002).

On 30 January 1998, the ZCTU held a special General Council meeting and one of the resolutions passed was that:

when workers cannot earn a living wage and decent working conditions through industrial action at the workplace, they will go beyond the shop-floor and bring their issues onto the national stage, thus politicizing the issues. When in addition the trade unions have been marginalized and cannot successfully address these issues through national reforms in a government that has abandoned the desire to engage in national politics, the only recourse is action at national level.³¹

In February 1999, the ZCTU stepped up its political campaign and facilitated a National Working People's Convention. Civic groups like the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) and the Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU), under the leadership of the late Learnmore Jongwe, Job Sikhala, Tafadzwa Musekiwa and Nelson Chamisa, also took part in the convention (Zeilig 2005). This was not the first time that the ZCTU was working in co-operation with students. The ZCTU had supported the University of Zimbabwe's demonstrations in 1989, which led to the arrest of Tsvangirai (Zeilig 2005). Representatives of business and the commercial farming community were also in attendance. The purpose of the Convention according to the ZCTU was to 'critically analyse issues through discussion based on the society's views and experiences and identify together how best to improve the current situation for the betterment of every Zimbabwean, regardless of political affiliation, race, tribe, colour or creed'. Following its inaugural meeting in February, the Convention met again, in May 1999 to deliberate on its national consultations, resulting in the ZCTU receiving a mandate to facilitate the formation of a political party. Raftopolous (2001) notes that in August 1999, the ZCTU held a special congress, and voted unanimously to facilitate this process, leading to the launch of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) on 11 September 1999. In the first executive of the MDC, labour leaders dominated the senior positions, occupying the posts of President (Morgan Tsvangirai), Vice President (Gibson Sibanda), Chairman (Isaac Matongo) and Deputy Secretary General (Gift Chimanihire) as well as several other positions in the executive.

³¹ ZCTU Special General Council Meeting that was held at Adelaide Acres on 30 January 1998.

This section of the discussion posits that the failure of the MDC to seize power during the period of Zimbabwe's worst economic crisis cannot only be blamed on ZANU (PF)'s use of violence, but also on the failure of leadership within the MDC, the inability to mobilise the working class, (the party's largest support base) and to refuse to accept ZANU (PF)'s rigging of elections. Questionable policies of the MDC have also in no small measure contributed to the party's failure to dislodge ZANU (PF) from power, despite an economic catastrophe that was marked by the second highest rate of hyper-inflation ever recorded in history.

Campbell (2008: 53) and Gwisai (2002: 19) note that there are three discernable groups that coalesced to form the MDC. The first and largest group is that of the workers, informal traders, the students, progressive women and progressive clergy. The second group is that of the middle-class intelligentsia, and consists of academics, lawyers, human rights activists and NGO elites. The third represents elements from capital, commercial farmers and settler forces. Campbell and Gwisai are firmly convinced that it is the presence of neo-liberal elements like Eddie Cross, the former leader of the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (CZI) and head of the MDC's economic department that hindered a clear position on the land question by the MDC. This caused the MDC to be outflanked on the left by Mugabe on the land issue leading Mugabe to win the 2000 elections on the back of support from the rural population. Of course, *jambanja* (violence) played a part in intimidating the rural masses, though some of them supported ZANU (PF) for having given them the land. This proved to be decisive in ZANU (PF)'s narrow victory in the 2000 elections.

Bond and Saunders (2005: 46) cement Campbell and Gwisai's observations by highlighting the ambiguities within the MDC just after its formation, asserting that on the one hand, Tsvangirai worked hard to build local structures. On the other, the MDC attracted funding and support from the black petit-bourgeoisie and white elites. This prominence of the neo-liberal forces within the MDC contributed in no small measure to the demobilisation (organisational disintegration) of the militant working class, as the *modus operandi* focused more on engaging Mugabe and ZANU (PF) in the electoral arena, rather than in the streets (Gwisai 2002, Bond and Saunders 2005, Campbell 2008).

The middle-class intelligentsia has also proved to be influential in determining the MDC policies. Most of the intelligentsia in the MDC came from the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), a pressure group that has been pushing for a people-driven constitution in Zimbabwe

since 1997. Influential NCA founder members like Brian Kagoro, Deprose Muchena, Tawanda Mutasah and Welshman Ncube were influential in propelling Morgan Tsvangirai to the chairmanship of the NCA, on the grounds that he was the trade union leader of the working class movement, which had conducted strikes and demonstrations that had severely shaken the ZANU (PF) regime to the core in the late 1990s. Some of these middle-class intelligentsia had a close connection with the German Social Democrats and Scandinavian foundations, and it is Gwisai's firm belief that it is this critical middle-class body from the NCA which negotiated the neo-liberal take-over of the rising workers' movement. Thus, Tsvangirai's nominal leadership of the NCA placed its middle-class leaders in a uniquely powerful position to take control of the political party that emerged under Tsvangirai's leadership. In its short lifespan, the MDC's leadership has been discernably influenced by the middle-class intelligentsia and business. This is evidenced by the fact that some of Morgan Tsvangirai's closest confidantes like Ian Makone and Jameson Timba were successful businessmen. These neo-liberals in the MDC were quite clear that recovery in Zimbabwe would be based on the massive inflow of capital from Europe and the United States. The balance of forces in the MDC made it abundantly clear that while the MDC represents a political opposition to the ZANU (PF) regime, it does not represent an opposition to capitalism in Zimbabwe. In many ways, the MDC represents a return to a junior partner-master relationship between the Zimbabwe capitalist class and international capital (Campbell 2008:54). The MDC's economic plan to rebuild the economy is based on the neo-liberal thinking of the IMF and World Bank. Such kinds of economic policies had devastating effects on the working class in the 1990s under ESAP.

Gwisai (2002: 19), a leading member of the leftist International Socialist Organisation who stood on an MDC ticket to win the Highfields parliamentary seat in the 2000 General elections argues that the relative ease with which the MDC was turned into a neo-liberal popular front lay in the historical and continuing weakness of the working class movement which can be traced back to the 1948 General strike, when the working class displayed signs of workers consciousness that challenged the white settler regime, only for the movement to be taken over by the educated African middle-class intelligentsia, and thus relegating the working class to mere spectators in the liberation struggle that brought about Zimbabwe's independence. Gwisai (2002) develops his argument further by asserting that whilst the 1997-1998 mass actions had rocked Mugabe and generated the first significant challenge to his rule in almost 20 years, they had not

developed into an independent rank-and-file movement that could challenge the stranglehold of a reformist labour bureaucracy. Under pressure from below, the central labour leadership had participated in and endorsed the mass actions, gaining significant moral authority in the process. The central labour leadership however remained prone to vacillation as displayed by its cancellation of the second day of the December 1997 strike, the biggest and most successful strike in the history of Zimbabwe. The ZCTU leadership threatened by the workers' growing radicalisation, and vulnerable to state repression, including the 1998 ban on strikes, and threats to ban the ZCTU, the workers' leaders sought to rein in the workers. From March 1998, they shifted their strategy from strike-based demonstrations to 'peaceful stayaways', in which workers were told to stay at home (Gwisai 2002). This reduced the relative militancy as well as impact of the action, individualised workers and made them vulnerable to intimidation. It also prevented the mass gatherings that had been the basis for pressure on the labour centre's leadership, thereby reducing its accountability.

In late 1998, the ZCTU leaders argued that militant stayaways were no longer useful, if not counter productive, as they enabled Mugabe to declare a state of emergency (Gwisai 2002). Instead, the ZCTU leaders argued that what was needed was a political party (partyism) to fight the 2000 elections. These partyist ideas appealed to many workers, and this partly accounts for the growth of reformist parliamentary illusions and the subsequent decline of militant worker struggles between 1999 until 2009 when this thesis was written. The tragedy of this turn of events, as is argued elsewhere in this thesis, is that worker consciousness and militancy receded rapidly in the decade when the Zimbabwean workers faced severe pauperisation as a result of hyper-inflation. This is the period when workers were supposed to protest as they did, between 1996 and 1998, to electoral fraud and violence that had been systematically happening since 2000. Thus, even when Mugabe and ZANU (PF) clearly lost the 2008 harmonised elections and took over a month to announce the presidential election results, the MDC and the ZCTU leadership could not rally on the workers to strike, because the working class had long been de-radicalised. Threats by the ZCTU leadership to call for civil disobedience never materialised. No action was called for, to force the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) to release the results, or to make ZANU (PF) concede electoral defeat. This de-radicalisation of the working class was ironically presided over by the ZCTU leadership in 1999.

The MDC suffered a setback in 2005 when a split occurred in its ranks. The strategic

dilemma of confronting a violent and authoritarian regime through peaceful means also resulted in a build-up of major tensions within the MDC. Issues of accountability, capacity, strategy, intra-party violence and ethnicity became zones of contestation, leading to a split in the party in 2005 (Raftopoulos 2006). The immediate cause given for the split was the decision to participate in a senate election called by ZANU (PF) for 2006. Raftopoulos (2006) is, however, of the opinion that the broader problems mentioned above were major factors, and continued to challenge the viability of the party after the division. In 2006, two MDC formations came into existence, one led by Morgan Tsvangirai and christened MDC-T, the 'T' standing for Tsvangirai and the other led by Arthur Mutambara and named MDC-M, the 'M' standing for Mutambara.

5.3.2 ZANU (PF) and its Politics of Displacement and Violence

ZANU (PF)'s politics is profoundly shaped by violence. This legacy of violence dates back to the days of the liberation struggle. In a biography of Mugabe by Martin Meredith, he quotes a radio broadcast in 1976 by Mugabe in Mozambique, where the latter summed up his view of electoral democracy as follows:

Our votes must go together with our guns. After all, any vote we shall have, shall have been the product of the gun. The gun which produces the vote should remain its security officer- its guarantor. The people's votes and the people's guns are always inseparable twins.

Meredith points out that Mugabe and his close supporters have consistently used extremes of violence to overcome many of the political challenges they have faced, not only during the liberation struggle, but since independence in 1980. Violence was used to demobilise (PF) ZAPU in the early 1980s during the Matabeleland Campaign. The violence that was meted on the region was conducted on the pre-text of rooting out dissident elements. However, in the process, some (PF) ZAPU officials were killed or imprisoned, and others had to flee the country. Alexander and Tendi (2008:5) argue that violence has motivated, divided and united each of Zimbabwe's political parties in distinctive ways, it has shaped their ability to mobilise their constituencies and their ideology, it has marked successive electoral contests and it has been used to transform the state. The ruling ZANU (PF)'s '*third Chimurenga*' launched in 2000 is rooted in a historical narrative of violence that links the uprisings against conquest in the 1890s to the liberation war of the 1970s and the battle to reclaim the nation's white-owned farmland in 2000. For those in opposition politics though, the violence of the '*third Chimurenga*' evokes a different lineage: the

extreme repression labelled *Gukurahundi*,³² that was launched against ZANU (PF)'s liberation era rival, ZAPU, in the 1980s, and the violence periodically directed at civic and political opponents of ZANU (PF) since then. The discussion will now look in more detail at three major waves of targeted displacement and violence that has occurred in Zimbabwe since 2000, when ZANU (PF) lost the constitutional referendum, and had to contend with major political opposition in the form of the MDC in elections that have been conducted since 2000. These acts of displacement and violence had the effects of giving Zimbabwe negative publicity and in the process deterred foreign investment, notably from the West (Robinson 2007). The violent land reform programme disturbed agricultural production, and this had negative effects on the Zimbabwean economy, which to a large degree was dependent on agricultural production and exports. Thus, acts of political violence contributed in creating the economic meltdown.

5.3.3 Farm Invasions from 2000 Onwards

The land invasions that began soon after the defeat of ZANU (PF) in the constitutional referendum in February 2000, and the radical FTLRP that followed displaced thousands of farm workers, commercial farmers and their families according to the General Agricultural and Plantation Workers' Union of Zimbabwe (GAPWUZ). The timing and form of these actions both after the referendum and a closely contested parliamentary election in June 2000, supports the argument that they were intended, at least in part, as retaliatory punishment for actual or assumed support for the opposition in the referendum, and as a deterrent against such support in future elections (Moore 2002, Hammar 2008, Alexander and Tendi 2008).

Notwithstanding the moral, political and economic need for effective land re-distribution in Zimbabwe, partisan politics ensured that this was by no means a universally inclusive or even-handed project. The Zimbabwe Community Development Trust (ZCDT, 2003) notes that of those ordinary citizens allocated land under the FTLRP, actual or perceived opposition supporters were largely excluded from receiving small-holder (A1) plots, including the majority of the farm workers, a high proportion being of Malawian and Mozambican descent. Hammar (2008:29) postulates that, not only were the foreigners generically accused of supporting white farmers and the opposition, but in addition, a xenophobic discourse that referred to unwanted 'foreigners' came into play in the violence and evictions that were undertaken.

³² *Gukurahundi* refers to the first rains during the rainy season, that wash away the chaff.

The violent 2000 FTLRP or '*Third Chimurenga*' did not only result in the decline of agricultural production and the displacement of farm owners and farm workers, but it also ensured that ZANU (PF) was able to win the 2000 General elections by a narrow margin, as well as the 2002 Presidential elections, as ZANU (PF) managed to take most votes in the rural areas and commercial farms that had been cordoned off from the opposition and declared no-go areas for the MDC party. These rural votes proved to be decisive in ensuring that ZANU (PF) clung on to power, despite its increasing unpopularity amongst the working class in the towns and cities. The results of the 2000 election, which the opposition MDC nearly won, were due to a protest vote against the manner in which the constitution – making process had been carried out by the government, as well as an angry protest against the performance of the government and the state of the national economy (Kagoro 2004: 249).

5.3.4 Operation *Murambatsvina* of 2005

The second form of major displacement conducted by ZANU (PF) conducted by means of brute force was Operation *Murambatsvina* (Operation Remove Trash) which began in late May 2005 but continued well into 2006. The operation was a highly militarised nationwide exercise of mass displacement affecting all urban areas. During the operation, close to 750,000 people were estimated to have lost homes and/or livelihoods directly, often being forced to destroy their own properties by hand, with an estimated 2.4 million people affected in total (Tibaijuka Report 2005, Sachikonye 2006). Operation *Murambatsvina* was officially presented as a campaign to 'drive out the filth' in the urban areas. Street vendors, tuck-shop owners and small business operators, including many with licences, were accused of operating illegally, stealing foreign currency from the state, creating health hazards, or generating crime and violence (Hammar 2008:30). Similarly, people's self-built homes in high-density townships, some of which had been occupied for decades, were suddenly de-legalised in a reversal of the *de facto* acceptance of such structures by the state since independence, as well as subsequent to structural adjustment in 1990 (Hammar 2008, Sachikonye 2006).

As with the farm invasions, despite official discourse, in practice *Murambatsvina* involved a more complex and politically partisan agenda. Critics of the operation viewed the campaign as combining political retribution against opposition supporters in the cities – which were the hub of key opposition constituencies – with a pre-emptive strike against growing urban

discontent in a time of extreme economic hardship, for which many held the government culpable (Sachikonye 2006). The operation induced unprecedented scales of poverty for the working class, homelessness and vulnerability with both immediate and long term effects. However, Bratton and Masunungure (2006) note that despite the constant physical and economic knocks, the urban working class and informal traders demonstrated significant agency, expressed through the great adaptability and resilience displayed by the aforementioned groups in the face of severe economic hardship. A discussion on the agency of the working class in Harare during Zimbabwe's economic meltdown is presented in chapters six and seven of this thesis. Thus, through Operation Murambatsvina, ZANU (PF) was continuing with its culture of resorting to violence in order to intimidate the population and to retain power, amidst a growing economic crisis and fears of an uprising from an increasingly beleaguered urban working class.

5.3.5 Electoral Violence in 2008

Before discussing the violence that was witnessed prior to the Presidential run-off election, it is necessary to discuss the violence that occurred in the year preceding the watershed 2008 elections, because this points to the fact that violence was consistently used by ZANU (PF) to intimidate its opponents. In 2007, a systematic attack on the MDC leadership and structures in Harare, overwhelmingly focused on the MDC-T faction and reinforced divisions within the opposition, as the Mutambara faction of the MDC was not targeted. Both MDC formations conducted campaigns in preparation for the 2008 harmonised elections in early 2007, while civic groups organised protests around economic and human rights issues. ZANU (PF)'s response to this renewed activism was to target political and civic leaders. The most notorious incident occurred on 11 March 2007, when a prayer meeting called by the Save Zimbabwe Campaign, a coalition of civic organisations and both MDCs, was brutally broken up by the riot police.

Morgan Tsvangirai and other leaders like the NCA chairperson Lovemore Madhuku, Grace Kwinjeh and Sekai Holland were viciously beaten before and after being taken into police custody. Tsvangirai's stronghold in Harare was subsequently subjected to a campaign of abductions, torture and police intimidation. In one incident, the MDC's Information and Publicity Secretary Nelson Chamisa was savagely assaulted by unknown assailants at the Harare International Airport while on his way to Brussels. Mutambara and his supporters received less attention, a difference Mugabe justified on the grounds that Tsvangirai 'did not know how to

behave', in contrast to Mutambara (Solidarity Peace Trust 2007). Nyarota (2008) argues that this was coded language for a broader discourse which painted Tsvangirai, the trade unionist, as uneducated and unworthy of the company of men with university degrees, a tactic that dates back to the days of Zimbabwe's liberation struggle, notably in ZANU (PF), whose leadership was full of highly educated intellectuals. For Mugabe, Tsvangirai's ambitions were hollow, because they were 'not clothed in any greater understanding and intellectual appreciation' (Tendi 2008: 28).

The use of violence following the 11 March attacks on the opposition and civic leaders was restrained by the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The then South African President, Thabo Mbeki was tasked to lead negotiations between ZANU (PF) and the MDC formations. These negotiations produced some changes to the electoral arrangements before they were broken off due to Mugabe's unilateral decision to fix election dates in January 2008. Critical repressive and electoral laws were amended, allowing important openings in the political sphere and importantly requiring the public posting of results outside each polling station, an innovation that permitted the opposition to track and publicise the results as they came out (Solidarity Peace Trust 2008). The MDC formations were also allowed into the rural areas, with a freedom they had never enjoyed since the formation of the MDC in 1999. This proved to be decisive as it led to ZANU PF's defeat in the 29 March 2008 harmonised elections (Masunungure 2009).

The period following the harmonised elections that MDC-T won provides an unsavoury picture, as (ZANU PF) resumed its culture of violence in the run-up to the 27 June presidential election run-off between Tsvangirai and Mugabe. ZANU (PF) militias, overtly led and/or provided with logistical support by senior military personnel, initiated an intense 'war' in both the rural and urban areas against those accused of 'voting incorrectly' in the March 2008 elections. Hammar (2008: 31) asserts that violence was conducted without fear or remorse. The Solidarity Peace Trust (2008a) reported that close to 200 people were murdered and scores of others abducted without trace. The Trust further adds that thousands were brutalised through beatings, rape, or torture and thousands were forced to flee their homes. The violence by ZANU (PF) was aimed at forestalling any possible repeat victory for the MDC's Presidential candidate, Morgan Tsvangirai, in an internationally discredited second-round Presidential vote at the end of 2008. From the orgy of violence unleashed by ZANU (PF) on the MDC and its supporters soon after the March elections, it was clear that the prospects for a generally acceptable June election

were slim (Raftopoulos and Eppel 2009). On repeated occasions, Mugabe, his supporters in the military and even his wife expressed that the violence could not be fought. Claiming divine support for his power, Mugabe declared unequivocally that:

The MDC will never be allowed to rule this country- never ever. Only God who appointed me, will remove me, not the MDC, not the British. Only God will remove me.

In the end Tsvangirai was ultimately forced to concede and withdraw from the election due to the levels of violence meted out against his supporters. Mugabe's pyrrhic victory held little legitimacy for the region and for the continent as a whole. This precipitated more intensive support for South African brokered negotiations between ZANU (PF) and the MDC formations, culminating in the signing of Global Political Agreement (GPA) on 15 September 2008, which set the stage for a coalition government, formed in February 2009. The signing of the GPA was the result of several factors.

Firstly, the March 2008 harmonised elections made it clear that both Mugabe and ZANU (PF) had lost the support and confidence of the majority of Zimbabweans. The violence that followed the elections and illegitimate presidential run-off that took place at the end of June only confirmed this loss of electoral and political legitimacy on the part of ZANU (PF) and its president.

Secondly, Raftopoulos and Eppel (2009) contend that growing criticism of Mugabe within SADC and the African Union (AU) and their unwillingness to sanction his presidential 'victory' provided Mugabe with clear signals that his support base in the region and the continent had declined. This led to a growing reliance on Mbeki's role in the mediation.

Third, the growing international pressure from the G8 and the UN provided evidence to the Mugabe regime that its international isolation was growing. Although there were divisions between the West and Africa on the one hand, and the West and China and Russia on the other, the international attention given to this issue placed more pressure on SADC to seek an African solution to the Zimbabwean crisis (Raftopoulos and Eppel 2009: 376). The fact that the European Union (EU) renewed its targeted sanctions against the members of the ZANU (PF) leadership in July 2008 served to further remind the Mugabe regime of the need for a political settlement.

Lastly, the MDC (at least the Tsvangirai faction) realised that outside the election process, their most likely route to some share of power would be through a negotiated

settlement.³³ The alternative of mass action to bring down the Mugabe regime has looked improbable, notwithstanding the brave attempts of some groups like the Zimbabwe Social Forum (ZSF) and the International Socialist Organisation (ISO) within civil society. Such actions were an important part of the struggle against Mugabe's authoritarian rule in the late 1990s, but they lost currency as their effectiveness was undermined by a combination of ruthless state repression and a catastrophic economic decline which led to the partial disintegration of the working class.

Violence in Zimbabwe's political terrain is not, however, a new phenomenon, as Scarnnechia (2008) points out. Scarnnechia (2008: 159) traces the history of violence in Zimbabwe's politics and comes to the conclusion that the use of violence as a weapon to intimidate opponents has its roots in the nationalist movement of the early 1960s. Scarnnechia (2008: 51) is of the opinion that the factionalism in the Zimbabwean nationalist movement in the early 1960s, initially around trade union loyalty, led to a split in the nationalist leadership, which inadvertently served to assist the white regime's efforts to weaken the nationalist movement. John Day (cited in Scarnnechia 2008: 159) cynically described the outcome, 'civil war between ZAPU and ZANU was the outstanding feature of the nationalist movement during the period when the government tolerated their existence, between August 1963 and and August 1964'. Scarnnechia (2008) further adds that violence by ZANU and ZAPU youths against those who were intimately involved in the running of township life, such as social workers, teachers, nurses and shop-owners, created an extremely difficult situation in the townships, and often in rural areas. The culture of political violence which began in the 1960s was unfortunately not a temporary situation, as the recourse to political violence in post-independence Zimbabwe has remained a key strategy to intimidate and harass voices of opposition.

5.3.6 The Militarisation of State Institutions

In tandem with the politics of violence and displacement that the beleaguered ZANU (PF) regime resorted to since 2000, there was a systematic militarisation of key state institutions. This involved the removal or marginalisation of professional state functionaries in key command posts, and the placement of personnel from the state security agencies and uniformed paramilitaries into positions of effective public authority. Parastatals that were affected by this

³³ These sentiments were echoed in an interview with Nelson Chamisa, the MDC-T National Spokesperson on 3 November 2008.

development include the National Oil Company of Zimbabwe (NOCZIM), the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) and the National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) amongst others. Evidence is also found in the re-birth of the land-invading war veterans as a paramilitary grouping patronised by the ruling party; the restructuring of local commands within the Zimbabwe Republic Police to bring into positions of authority, personnel linked to ZANU (PF); the increasing role of the Zimbabwe National Army in 'policing' and suppressing opposition voices inside Zimbabwe; and the creation of a second paramilitary organisation in the form of the national youth brigades (Bond and Saunders 2005: 48). Through these instruments, the opposition was attacked and in many cases killed.

It is the contention of this thesis that the working class, notably in Harare, where the majority of the workers are found, failed to take radical action in the 2000s, in the face of ZANU (PF) electoral violence and fraud, and unprecedented levels of hyper-inflation as it did in the late 1990s. The working class in the 1990s forced Mugabe to increase the cost of living income, induced him to retreat on the proposed 5 percent levy to fund the war veterans' gratuities, and to set in motion the drafting of a constitution, a process which was unfortunately flawed. Mugabe was forced into a corner as a consequence of the militancy and political consciousness displayed by the workers. The tragedy for the working class is that from 2000, it became partially disintegrated on two fronts, namely at the physical and organisational level and so became vulnerable to the violent and intimidatory politics of ZANU (PF) in the 2000s.

5.3.7 The Government of National Unity (GNU)

On 15 September 2008, the two MDC formations and ZANU (PF) signed the Global Political Agreement (GPA) which facilitated the creation of a Government of National Unity (GNU) in February 2009. This was in the wake of the electoral debacle that surrounded the controversial June 2008 presidential run-off election that remained unrecognised regionally and internationally. The GPA had flaws in it because the MDC joined as a junior partner, with Mugabe retaining the Executive Presidency, despite the MDC having won the 29 March 2008 harmonized elections. In the early stages of the GNU, ZANU (PF) continued with its culture of violence and persecution of the MDC officials and supporters, with more than 10 Members of Parliament from the MDC-T facing various court cases before a highly partisan judiciary.

The GPA has come under severe criticism from civil society organisations in Zimbabwe

(Cliffe and Bracking 2009). Gwisai (2008) concludes that locking civil society out of negotiations between the political parties in Zimbabwe, has critically demobilised the MDC, marginalised the historical support base of the MDC and left critical issues of transitional justice unattended. The National Constitutional Assembly (NCA)'s chairperson Madhuku termed the signing of the agreement by the MDC 'a capitulation' (SW Radio Africa 2008a). The ZCTU concluded that the GPA 'Creates a government that is in itself not a transitional government, but a structure incorporating losers' (ZCTU 2008). Raftopoulos, however, argues that the GNU represented an opening of political space by unequal parties, and that this is the best that they could do in the circumstances, where none of the parties held clear advantage in parliament (SWRadio Africa 2008b).

5.4 Conclusion

The chapter has traced the origins of the Zimbabwean hyper-inflation and political crisis in the 2000s. It is the contention of the chapter that, in order to understand the economic crisis in Zimbabwe, one would have to look at the political problems the country has suffered since 1997. The controversial land reform programme of 2000, the political violence, electoral irregularities, and the sanctions that were supposedly called for by the MDC, lie at the heart of these political problems. Just as what happened in other countries that experienced hyper-inflation like Weimar Germany, Argentina and Yugoslavia, the main catalyst for the hyper-inflation that ravaged Zimbabwe in 2007 and 2008 was the wanton printing of money. Thus, hyper-inflation is in most cases the consequence of ill-advised political decisions. The political and economic context of the Zimbabwean crisis assists in setting the context for the workplace and household responses of the working class to the hyper-inflation Zimbabwe underwent in the 2000s.

CHAPTER 6

UNION EXPERIENCES AND RESPONSES

6.1 Introduction

The central aim of this chapter is to assess the working class at the level of its formal leadership, the unions, during the decade of crisis. This chapter argues that the main labour body in the country, the ZCTU was adversely affected by the economic crisis, and this in turn contributed to the partial disintegration of the working class in a number of ways. First, the depletion in the numbers of formal sector employment, resulted in a drop in the rate of unionisation and subscriptions, thus undermining the capacity of unions to carry out various organizational and educational activities for their working class members. Secondly, as a result of the physical shrinkage of the working class and the increased repressive nature of the state on union leaders, the labour movement was debilitated in terms of its organisational and mobilisation abilities. Thus, the ZCTU was less able and willing to lead broad civic alliances as it did in the period from the late 1980s to 2000, even in the face of unprecedented hyper-inflation and a political crisis in Zimbabwe which reached its peak in 2008. Thirdly, the informalisation of the labour force moved workers away from formalised labour practices and protest actions in the public sphere, into more individualised and to some extent criminalised modes of survivalism, as Chapter 7 argues. As a result, at the ideological level, the sense of working class consciousness that could have seen the members of this class uniting to protest against hyper-inflation and the political crisis, was missing during the peak of the Zimbabwean crisis. This chapter therefore shows that the activities of the trade unions, the bodies in which the working class organises and mobilises were muted in the 2000s, unlike the late 1990s, when the trade union movement showed great vibrancy, culminating in the formation of the MDC. The chapter is based on data obtained from the key informants and secondary sources.

6.2 Size and Union Participation of the Employed Working Class, 1998-2008

Formal sector employment shrank in Zimbabwe during the peak of the crisis. The working class was not spared. The working class increasingly abandoned jobs in the formal sector or was made redundant by company closures or retrenchments. From a peak of 1.4 million employees in 1998, formal sector employment declined to an estimated 700,000 in 2008, which implies that only 6 percent of the Zimbabwean population was in formal employment (UNDP 2008, ZCTU 2008). Appendix 2, which is a table on the levels of formal employment in Zimbabwe from 1985 to 2004, illustrates some of the physical decline in the numbers of workers employed in the different sectors of the economy. The table in Appendix 2 shows that the manufacturing sector and public administration sector began to lose employees between 1991 and 1996, which were the years when ESAP was implemented and companies and the civil service had to scale down their workforce, in line with Bretton-Woods prescriptions. From 2000, the agriculture sector's workforce started to decrease, as a result of the farm invasions of 2000. The period from 2000 saw almost every sector downscaling levels of employment, with the exception of few sectors such as Financial Services and Real Estate, which boomed during the peak of the crisis. These sectors were able to maintain their employment levels on the back of an inherently speculative economy that had banks and real estate firms taking a leading role, as people tried to hedge themselves from hyper-inflation by buying shares on the stock market and property. The table, however, only goes as far as 2004, thus failing to capture the dramatic physical disintegration of the working class that peaked in 2008. Consequently, the working class partially disintegrated physically during the period of the crisis, and by 2008, sectors such as teaching and nursing had been severely depleted by the mass exodus of workers in their ranks, as workers in the above professions sought employment in the diaspora, or joined the informal sector. The physical disintegration of the working class in the formal sector through mass resignations and company closures deprived the ZCTU of a critical mass of workers that could be mobilised to embark on mass action to protest the crisis Zimbabwe faced in the 2000s.

With the decline of the formal sector, the informal sector took over and became the mainstream of the economy. Jobs in this economy are insecure, unrepresented, unregulated and generally suffer from decent work deficits. The Labour and Economic Development Research

Institute of Zimbabwe (LEDRIZ), the economic research arm of the ZCTU, and the Central Statistical Office (CSO) did not have accurate and updated figures for people in formal sector employment during the peak of the crisis in 2008, due to the rapid and continuous decline in the numbers of the working class. The total number of people believed to be in formal employment in 2008, during the peak of the crisis was estimated to be 700,000 by Khumbulani Ndlovu, the Information and Publicity Secretary for the ZCTU. The UNDP Report on Zimbabwe of 2008 confirmed these figures.

With respect to union membership, Ndlovu claimed the ZCTU estimated that it had a membership of 320,000 in its 36 affiliates, including members from the ZCTU's affiliate of informal sector workers. It is not clear whether this figure is accurate, as most affiliates of the ZCTU did not have accurate records of their members because of the continuous labour turnover in most sectors of the economy. Bond and Saunders (2005: 43) posit that the ZCTU's membership between 2000 and 2005 oscillated between 150,000 and 200,000. Two of the sectors that are looked at in this dissertation, namely teaching and catering, reported a decline in union membership during the decade of crisis. The banking sector, which thrived during the crisis, managed to maintain the numbers of its unionised members, from those of the mid 1990s before the crisis set in. Unionisation in the manufacturing sector was difficult to ascertain because of the diverse nature of the sector. ZIMTA and the PTUZ claimed that before the Zimbabwean crisis, there were around 100,000 teachers registered with the two teachers unions, and according to their records, they were still getting subscriptions from almost that figure of 100, 000. However, the two unions were quick to add that this did not mean that 100,000 teachers were unionised. According to their records, 45,000 teachers had left the profession in the 2000s, but most of them continued to get salaries from the government, and part of their salaries were being deducted by the Salaries Services Bureau (SSB) to pay for their union subscriptions every month. Therefore, the *de facto* numbers of teachers who were unionised and still teaching had in reality declined dramatically during the crisis. Most teachers were still getting their salaries from the government because a majority of them did not bother to tender their resignations due to the fact that the government benefits were meager, having been eroded by hyper-inflation. So the above were 'ghost workers', who in reality had left the teaching profession for the diaspora or the informal sector. If the claims by the PTUZ and ZIMTA officials are correct, this means that the figure of 320,000 active ZCTU members that was suggested by Ndlovu would be an over-estimate of the

actual ZCTU unionized members. The Zimbabwe Catering and Hotel Workers Union (ZCHWU) claimed that during its peak between 1998 and 2000, it had a total membership of around 13,000 members, but as of February 2008, its membership had diminished to around 6,000. The union attributed the decline in its membership to the economic crisis, the huge staff turnover in the industry, and a general lack of interest in joining the union by the workers in the catering industry, due to the rapid erosion of wages. Collen Gwiyo the former secretary general of The Zimbabwe Banking and Allied Workers Union (ZBAWU) and Wellington Likukuma who had succeeded Gwiyo as the new secretary general claimed that their union's subscription levels of around 4,000 members had not changed since the early 2000s. They attributed this to the relative stability of the banking sector during the period of the Zimbabwean crisis. Thus, with the exception of the banking sector, other sectors like catering and teaching examined here, experienced a slump in their union membership levels during the peak of the Zimbabwean crisis.

6.3 The State, Labour and Social Dialogue, 1998-2008

Social dialogue has been defined by the ILO (1992) as the tripartite dealings between the government and representatives of organised labour and business with a view to addressing issues of the formulation of agreed socio-economic policies. This section of the chapter argues that the predatory and patrimonial nature of the Zimbabwean state led to the failure of social dialogue in the 2000s, which might have been a panacea for arresting Zimbabwe's economic decline that was marked by a high rate of inflation which eventually ballooned to hyper-inflation.

The serious economic problems that were bedeviling Zimbabwe from 1997 led the government to collectively decide along labour and business to come up with a forum that would discuss national issues that were affecting the country. The *Financial Gazette* reported:

A stalemate developed between labour and government, prompting employers to approach government in August 1998. As a result, the three social partners, the Employers Confederation of Zimbabwe (EMCOZ), ZCTU and government met on 2 September 1998 to discuss the way forward. This meeting marked the birth of the Tripartite Negotiating Forum (TNF).³⁴

Japhet Moyo the deputy secretary general of the ZCTU explained how the state, labour and business attempted to operationalise the TNF:

³⁴ The *Financial Gazette*, Zimbabwe, 25 September 2003.

A tripartite technical team was constituted and its terms of reference were to come up with a document on the founding principles of the negotiating chamber. The team came up with a document that spelt how the state, labour and business were supposed to engage under the TNF. The TNF document spells that although the forum is not legally constituted, it can conclude binding agreements based on trust. Unfortunately, the ZANU (PF) government has broken agreements in the past and it cannot be trusted, that is the reason why the TNF has failed to work.³⁵

Matombo and Sachikonye (2009) highlight the fact that it has been the task of the TNF, which brings together labour, business and government, to negotiate for a social contract through a process of social dialogue. A major landmark in this process was the 2003 Kadoma Declaration of Intent, which came up with the following objectives: Creating a conducive and tolerant environment for the negotiation and conclusion of a social contract; Overcoming stakeholder differences and working towards a common goal guided by a common vision of national development; Working towards the sustainability of social dialogue in a spirit of smart partnership and tripartism (NECF 2003). The three negotiating parties in general agreed to 'promote, observe and ensure good governance, openness and accountability, and to prevent and fight corruption' (NECF 2003). Through a series of workshops in 2005 and 2006, the ZCTU took steps towards strategic planning for the conduct of the social dialogue process despite state vacillation over the process (Matombo and Sachikonye 2009). The state's propensity towards unilateralism remained a major stumbling block during the period of the crisis, and an example of such unilateralism was Statutory Instrument No. 159 of 2007, which froze wages and salaries without consulting the labour movement. This legislation, which invoked presidential powers, directly undermined collective bargaining (Matombo and Sachikonye 2009). A stalemate in the TNF always continued over the Poverty Datum Line (PDL) during the period of hyper-inflation, as the PDL continuously increased because of hyper-inflation, while the government was always slow to re-align wages in line with the ever increasing PDL.

The harassment of trade union leaders which included the physical assault on the President of the ZCTU, Lovemore Matombo and the secretary general Wellington Chibhebe, in 2006 after a foiled demonstration, widened the rift between the state and labour and made any attempt at engagement between these two parties impossible. Such heavy-handed tactics, which included the promulgation of POSA in 2000 have curtailed the activities of the ZCTU and ensured the failure of the TNF.

³⁵ Research Interview with Japhet Moyo, 11 January 2009.

6.4 The ZCTU Activities in the Lead-Up to the Formation of the MDC, 1998-1999

As noted in Chapter 4, the late 1990s witnessed a period when union-led worker militancy was at its peak. This was amply demonstrated by the huge 1996 Public Sector strike and 1997 strike, which have already been discussed in Chapter 4 of this thesis. The above workerist responses demonstrated the ZCTU's increasing political credibility and popularity. In January 1998, food riots were witnessed in Harare's working class townships, and these spread to other towns such as Beitbridge, Chegutu, Chinhoyi, Mutoko and Murewa (Gwisai 2002, Saunders 2001).

Saunders (2001: 163) put forward the argument that the government's response to the food riots and to the perceived heightened credibility and popularity of the ZCTU and its leadership, was to deflect criticism by means of a limited round of consultation with the labour centre and business. The first initiatives by the government towards consultation came with the establishment of the National Economic Consultative Forum (NECF) in late January 1998 (Saunders 2001, Schiphorst 2001). Saunders (2001) goes on to make the assertion that in 1996-1997, the ZCTU had envisaged the establishment of a candid, transparent national dialogue by convening a forum to which all key social interests – from workers and peasant farmers to indigenous and commercial farmers – would send representatives. For the ZCTU, this was a way of instituting effective, negotiated partnerships between the government and a range of social and economic groups (Saunders 2001). However, Saunders (2001) contends that the ZCTU refused to participate in the NECF proposed by the government in 1998, because the NECF that the government had set up differed significantly from the aforementioned ZCTU vision of a negotiated partnership. The government proposed that the NECF delegates would be selected on an individual basis, and not directly by the social constituencies they were to represent. Furthermore, the NECF would have no specific recognised mandate – informal or legal – to negotiate and enforce decisions in conjunction with the government. This gap between a government-dominated consultative process and the position of the ZCTU would grow in the coming months, as a new round of mass action took place (Saunders 2001).

A two-day strike took place between 3 and 4 March 1998 and it took the form of a 'stay-away', with the ZCTU telling workers to stay at home to avoid attacks by state security agencies on demonstrations or rallies (Saunders 2001, ZCTU 1998). Most of the country was brought to a

standstill, with hundreds of thousands heeding the call. Saunders (2001) argues that the disciplined nature of the strike proved that the ZCTU structures at national and regional levels, could work effectively under difficult circumstances and in co-operation with union affiliates.

In October 1998, the government announced a 67 percent increase in the cost of fuel, and increases of up to 40 percent in basic food items, without prior indication to labour and business, or seeking their advice (Saunders 2001). The ZCTU responded by resorting to mass action with the aim of forcing greater transparency and openness from the government. Two stay-aways were held on 11 and 18 November 1998. Near-complete shut downs of commerce and industry were reported (*The Herald*, 12 November 1998; *The Financial Gazette*, 19 November 1998).

With the ZCTU having once again demonstrated its capacity to mobilise workers, and threatening to draw other political constituencies into its camp, the government responded by banning further stay-aways and other 'politically motivated' forms of industrial action which sought to bring pressure on the government to change its policies. Thus, the Presidential Powers (Temporary Measures) Act was passed by the government on 27 November 1998 (*The Financial Gazette*, 3 December 1998). The new regulations resulted in an outcry from the ZCTU and international labour groups, as they represented a direct attack on the basic right to strike, and the right to freedom of association and speech. Saunders (2001) rightly observes that having failed to impress upon the state in various tripartite discussions, it would remain for the ZCTU to deal head-on with the key underlying problem workers saw with government, and this was the issue of governance. *The Financial Gazette* of 19 November 1998 quoted Tsvangirai as having suggested:

There is no longer any need for people to continue skirting the root cause of our economic problems. Zimbabweans must now resolve the question of national governance.

Consequently, by the end of 1998, the stage had been set for the broadening of the repertoire of the working class responses to the economic crisis that had started to manifest itself at the end of 1997. In addition to the union-led workerist responses, partyism was also embraced by the workers, as the workers became increasingly convinced that the economic crisis that was bedeviling the country could only be remedied if the issue of governance was addressed. It was therefore not surprising that in September 1999, the ZCTU was in the forefront of forming a political party to challenge ZANU (PF) in the political arena. Chapter 5 has already covered the civil society meetings that preceded the formation of the MDC in 1999, and the eventual

formation of the party on 11 September 1999. Chapter 5 also explored the leadership dynamics of the MDC by highlighting how the first leadership was dominated at the top echelons by the leading ZCTU members. From 1999 onwards, partyism began to be utilised by the working class, in conjunction with the workerist responses that reached their peak in the late 1990s.

6.5 ZCTU-MDC Relations, 1999-2008

Matombo and Sachikonye (2009) contend that the relationship between the ZCTU and the MDC was originally close and that there was a popular perception that the latter was the former's creation. This gave ZANU (PF) grounds to argue repeatedly that the ZCTU was a front for the MDC and that it was short-changing those workers who did not belong to it or were non-partisan. It would be simplistic, however, to view the ZCTU as a constituent part of the MDC without its own institutional personality and autonomy. Although the ZCTU was instrumental in facilitating the founding of the MDC in 1999, it did not become part of the new movement, although its individual leaders and members were free to participate in the party's activities (Matombo and Sachikonye 2009). There has been a major debate within the ZCTU, on the issue of the degree to which the ZCTU should align itself with the MDC. One position cautioned against a close alliance with the party. This position included a critique of MDC parliamentarians, describing them as 'opportunists' who used the labour movement as 'a stepping stone to greater political heights' (*The Worker*, February 2001). These parliamentarians were alleged to have departed from pursuing 'bread and butter' issues that affected workers. It was argued that it would therefore be prudent for the ZCTU to distance itself from the MDC.

Another position was that there should be a close relationship in the form of a strategic alliance between the ZCTU and the MDC. A special congress was organised in 1999 to consider the issue of an alliance. It would later be recalled that at that congress, Tsvangirai argued that the ZCTU should take 'an organizational decision to enter into a strategic alliance with the MDC' (Alexander 2000: 390). As has been argued in Chapter 5, the MDC, however, evolved into a broad political movement drawing on a wide support base larger than the labour movement.

In December 2007, the ZCTU secretary general, Wellington Chibhebe voiced some misgivings about the political and ideological direction of the MDC. He stated that:

We are now observing that the party has been drifting from the left to the right... the mistake was for the party to allow visitors the liberty to control the party. Some of these

'fly by night' and political charlatans have now taken over the party... (*The Worker*, December 2007).

Chibhebe made specific reference to the demotion of several unionists, namely Lucia Matibenga and Ephraim Tafa, from influential positions in the MDC. Nevertheless, the internal contradictions in the MDC and the tenuous position of labour in the party had been foreseen in some of the analysis presented in 2000 and 2001 (Matombo and Sachikonye 2009). Alexander (2000) observed that the predominantly middle-class character of the MDC, especially its parliamentarians, was in marked contrast to its working class base of support, and that the labour movement had no institutional hold over the party leadership. To illustrate this observation, Alexander stated that of the 57 MDC parliamentarians elected in 2000, 12 or less than 20 percent were unionists, while the majority consisted of academics, lawyers, professionals, businessmen and farmers. Another study by Dansereau (2001) observed that multi-class alliances like the MDC's are difficult to maintain. The ZCTU also had misgivings towards the MDC's involvement in the GNU with ZANU (PF) and the MDC-M. According to the ZCTU, the mainstream MDC's actions were tantamount to sharing power with losers. Even though ties still exist between the MDC and the ZCTU, the relations between the two had become uneasy by 2008.

6.6 Downturn in the ZCTU Operations, 2000-2008

The operations of the trade unions since 2000 were stifled by two pieces of draconian legislation, namely the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA). Raymond Majongwe, the secretary general of the Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ) remarked:

The state went into a panic mode following the events of the late 1990s that showed the organizational power and mobilization ability of the ZCTU. The successful strikes and mass stay-aways of 1997 and 1998 and the formation of the MDC largely as a result of the efforts of the ZCTU, forced the government to come up with legislation that virtually makes it impossible to strike, to congregate as a crowd and illegal for companies to shut down during stay-aways.³⁶

His observations appear to be plausible because since 2000, it has been very difficult for trade unions to engage in industrial action or call for successful stay-aways because of the draconian POSA which makes it difficult for people to demonstrate or strike since permission has to be

³⁶ Interview with Raymond Majongwe, Secretary General of the PTUZ on 3 April 2008.

sought from the police, which in almost all the cases has refused to sanction labour strikes³⁷. In 2004 and in April 2007, the general strikes the ZCTU tried to organise failed due to the large presence of the police in the major cities and towns of Zimbabwe. The leaders of the ZCTU were also heavily brutalised by the police. This state intimidation has proved to be a deterrent to the trade unions every time they tried to mobilize workers to demonstrate against the state's failed policies which had caused the economy to implode. This state repression had the effect of causing a gradual ideological disillusionment amongst the ranks of the working class. Interviews in Chapter 7 reveal that most workers had lost interest in embarking on strikes that would improve their economic situation as a class, in the face of a severe economic meltdown. This indifference towards mass action by the working class was partly founded on the fear of state violence under POSA.

The absence of major demonstrations and strikes gives the impression that the trade union movement lost its bite with the exit of trade unionists like Morgan Tsvangirai, Gibson Sibanda, Isaac Matongo and Gift Chimanihire into mainstream politics. Kanyenze, however, disputed this argument that trade unions were no longer vibrant and were on the wane, when he argued that trade unions still had effective leaders, and that the absence of demonstrations or strikes was as a result of increased state repression beginning with the closure of the *Daily News*, an important mouthpiece for the working class and the trade unions.³⁸ Each time the ZCTU wanted to call for a strike or stay-away, it would communicate to the workers through the sympathetic *Daily News*. POSA and AIPPA worsened the situation for the labour movement according to Kanyenze. If anything, Kanyenze argued that the ZCTU's structures were now better organised and thus the MDC was able to do well in the 2008 Presidential and Parliamentary elections. Kanyenze claims the MDC used the ZCTU regional structures throughout the whole country in its campaign, and this bore fruit as the MDC won the 2008 parliamentary elections. Kanyenze was right, because the ZCTU's role in the MDC's victory in the March 2008 elections suggested that even though the labour centre was weakened by the crisis, it was not totally debilitated. What appears to have weakened some of the structures, however, was the rapid and continuous turnover of workers in formal employment in most sectors of the economy. It is this dissertation's contention that this is what militated against

³⁷ Claim made by Khumbulani Ndlovu, the Information and Publicity Secretary of the ZCTU on 12 May 2008.

³⁸ Interview with Godfrey Kanyenze, was conducted on 14 May 2008.

efforts to mobilise workers to protest the crisis during its peak in 2008.

Ndlovu, in similar vein as Kanyenze, also claimed that the structures of the ZCTU were very strong in all its six regions throughout the country. However, the fact that the ZCTU failed to come out strongly against the ZANU (PF) government's devastating *Operation Murambatsvina*³⁹ in 2005, which destroyed not only people's livelihoods in the informal sector, but also some of the homes of the working class people (the ZCTU's constituency in the locations), does not bode well for the trade union body. The fact that the ZCTU failed to mobilize the workers who had overwhelmingly voted for the MDC, in the 2008 harmonised elections to engage in civil disobedience or to stay-away from work when the presidential election results were not being released by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), is an indictment of the ZCTU and a sign of lack of leadership on the part of the congress. The ZCTU council also failed to speak out strongly against, or to dissuade the MDC from joining the precarious GNU, which showed itself to be a very fragile political arrangement that had failed to get Zimbabwe out of its economic quagmire, which had affected the working class badly at the time of writing the thesis in mid-2010. The crop of leaders of the ZCTU during Zimbabwe's crisis appears to have failed to get out of the shadow of the Sibanda and Tsvangirai executive, which was able to tackle the state head-on, on issues that affected the welfare of the workers, during the heady days of working class radicalism in the late 1990s. However, as has been argued earlier in the previous chapter, Tsvangirai and Sibanda were also culpable in demobilising the militancy amongst the working class (organisational disintegration) once they began to flirt with neo-liberal elements that helped found the MDC. The neo-liberal element within the MDC was influential in toning down the confrontational approach of MDC leaders whose background stemmed from the labour movement (Gwisai 2002). Rather, the neo-liberals won the day by encouraging the MDC to confine itself to the rule of law, which implied confronting ZANU (PF) in the electoral 'ring' (Gwisai 2002). Thus, Matombo and Chibhebe, the President and secretary general of the ZCTU during Zimbabwe's crisis, failed to resuscitate the militancy of the late 1990s.

The weakening of the labour movement and the culture of worker mobilisation and

³⁹ Operation *Murambatsvina* (Remove Trash) was carried out by the ZANU (PF) government in 2005, and it led to over 720,000 people being left unemployed in the locations and the CBD in Harare, as flea markets and home industries in the locations were destroyed. Anna Tibaijuka a special United Nations envoy who was tasked to look into the operation by the UN, claims that over 2.4 million families were affected by the operation, as they either lost their livelihoods or homes.

organisation that was central to it, led to urgent appeals from the once strong ZCTU, for international intervention in the Zimbabwe crisis. Coker (2008) quotes a statement to the above assertion made by the ZCTU President:

Mr Matombo said that many of his members are too brutalised by Zimbabwean forces to organise effectively. That is why he will push his group to support stronger international intervention, despite the short-term pain that a blockade or other action could cause to Zimbabwe's poor.

Given the gradual weakening of the main labour centre in the 2000s, it is not surprising that there emerged a strong urge to view the economy as an active ally in the struggle against ZANU (PF) (Raftopoulos 2008: 5). What amounted to an admission of the diminished capacity of the opposition to mobilise politically at the national level was increasingly translated into an adamant assertion of the capacity of an economic crisis to complete the task of that depleted resistance.

Since 2000, the ZCTU has been working with other organisations that are a part of Zimbabwe's civil society, in a bid to help solve Zimbabwe's economic crisis. Some of these organisations are the leftist International Socialist Organisation (ISO), The National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), the Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU) and the Combined Harare Residents Association (CHRA) and Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA). These organisations have formed an umbrella civic body, the Zimbabwe Social Forum (ZSF), to air and fight for the redress of grievances that society might have. The ZCTU is the largest body in this Forum. I was in attendance at a ZSF meeting on 10 October 2008. The main issue that was being debated was the Global Political Agreement (GPA), which had been signed by ZANU (PF) and the MDC on 15 September 2008, to set the stage for a coalition government. Inspiring speeches were given by leading trade unionists like Japhet Moyo and Munyaradzi Gwisai from ISO. Disappointingly, however, was that after almost all the participants had unanimously denounced the GPA as elitist and excluding civil society, the ZCTU leaders who were responsible for closing the day-long meeting, failed to rally the participants and to come up with a concrete way forward on how to express civil society's disdain for the flawed 'deal'. The meeting ended without resolutions, due to an apparent lack of leadership. This partly explains the absence of any resistance to electoral fraud and record hyper-inflation from the workers and civil society.

In addition to the repression that the ZCTU experienced from the state, and the partial

physical disintegration of the working class, which in turn weakened the organisational abilities of the ZCTU, the main labour centre also experienced in-fighting in the immediate aftermath of the MDC's formation. In a research interview with Kanyenze on 14 May 2008, he claimed that after the MDC was formed in 1999, leading figures of the ZCTU such as Morgan Tsvangirai and Gibson Sibanda had left the ZCTU to lead the new party, both ZANU (PF) and the then recently formed MDC party began vying for control of the ZCTU in the lead-up to the 2001 ZCTU national conference. Kanyenze went on to add that at the 2001 ZCTU conference, a more MDC – sympathetic leadership was elected. Having failed to wrest control of the ZCTU, Kanyenze believes that this is what motivated ZANU (PF) to found a rival labour centre, the Zimbabwe Federation of Trade Unions (ZFTU) in 2001, in a bid to weaken the ZCTU.

The formation of the ZFTU in 2001 can best be understood by what Valenzuela (1989) calls a 'containment strategy' that is of a corporatist nature and involves the creation by the state of a worker organisation through funding and compulsory membership. The leadership usually toes a party line and is chosen by the state and the overall labour body maybe limited in the areas that it is allowed to cover. The ZFTU thus is widely believed to be an off-shoot of ZANU (PF), allegedly due to the presence of Alfred Makwarimba, the founding president, who is a known ZANU (PF) supporter and also the inclusion of Joseph Chinotimba, a war veteran leader and staunch ZANU (PF) member as the founding Vice President of the ZFTU.

In addition Kamete (2006) posits that ZANU (PF) sponsored the ZFTU after failing to neutralise and takeover the ZCTU, which remains the most representative labour centre in Zimbabwe. The above was confirmed by Chinotimba who, justifying the forceful recruitment of members by the ZFTU was quoted by Kamete (2006: 261) as stating:

We were given the mandate to do so by government. I want to tell you, we are the current government. We have to talk to the workers, but if they stand in our way, we will be forced to make them dance to our tune. If they want to remain with the ZCTU, then they should go to other countries and not stay in Zimbabwe. They should wake up and realize that we are the only recognized trade union in this country.

Pursuant of its claim, the ZFTU was at the forefront of the factory invasions allegedly sanctioned by the ruling ZANU (PF), sponsored and supported by a 'Labour Committee' of senior party officials and war veterans (Magure 2008: 32). Dorman (2003) contends that these occupations contravened the Labour Relations Act and abandoned the established industrial relations machinery in order to secure perceived quick victories amongst urban workers, and in so doing

undermine the trade union base of the MDC.

The ZFTU leadership also wreaked havoc in the agricultural sector by instilling fear in the commercial farm workers and their white employers at government acquired farms.⁴⁰ The ZFTU leadership even went a step further, and disrupted operations on farms that were never acquired by the state and instructed the farmers to halt operations. In both cases the ZFTU would then demand an immediate and unconditional payment of the workers retrenchment packages, whereupon the union would demand 30 percent to 40 percent of the amount due to the worker as their 'service fees'.⁴¹ Collen Gwiyo argued that, the fact that the above activities were happening under the nose of the government reveals that the activities by the ZFTU had its blessing.⁴²

Despite enjoying the support of the ZANU (PF) regime, the ZFTU failed to make a mark on the labour scene, as it has failed to win the hearts and minds of the working class. This is shown by the fact that the ZFTU can really only boast of a membership from the agricultural and plantation workers.⁴³ However, when the ZFTU was formed in 2001, it managed to destabilise the ZCTU to some extent, as it created splinter unions in nine sectors of the economy that were namely: furniture and timber, engineering, catering, leather, clothing, commerce, agriculture, sugar plantations and construction (Raftopoulos 2009: 225). With the exception of the unions in the agriculture and sugar plantations sectors, the other splinter unions fizzled out, and are just there in name, as was confirmed by Makwarimba when he was alleging the ZFTU's strength in the agricultural sector.

6.7 The Working Class and the Watershed 2008 Elections

The 2008 harmonised elections held on 29 March proved to be watershed elections, as for the first time since independence in 1980, the ruling ZANU PF government lost both the Presidential and Parliamentary elections. This can largely be attributed to the corruption and economic mismanagement by the ZANU (PF) regime, which has pauperised the middle-class, working class and the peasants. The working class, also known as 'starving billionaires', who largely bore

⁴⁰ The claim was made by the *Zimbabwe Independent* of 27 July 2002 under the headline: 'ZFTU accused of extortion'.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Interview with MP Collen Gwiyo on 9 January 2009.

⁴³ Statements of the ZFTU's huge membership in the agricultural sector were made by Alfred Makwarimba in an interview with him on 9 January 2009. Makwarimba is the President of the ZFTU and he was also the first President of the ZCTU in post-independent Zimbabwe.

the brunt of the economic crisis, played a pivotal role in campaigning vigorously for the Movement for Democratic Change, in the hope that the MDC would turn its economic fortunes for the better. The efforts of the workers bore fruit as the MDC won parliamentary majority in the 210 seat legislature, with 99 seats, as compared to ZANU PF's 97 seats. The other splinter group of the MDC, which is headed by Arthur Mutambara managed to win 10 seats. One independent candidate, Jonathan Moyo, a former spin doctor of ZANU PF won a seat in Matebeleland North Province. Three seats were uncontested as the incumbent members of parliament for these seats passed on, just before the elections. In the presidential poll, the MDC candidate, Morgan Tsvangirai, managed to outpoll the incumbent, Robert Mugabe, as the former garnered 47.8 percent of the votes cast, while the latter managed to win 43.2 percent of the vote. This is according to the official figures that were released by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), the body tasked with running the Zimbabwean elections.

The official figures were however disputed by the MDC, which claims that according to its own figures, based on the returns of the election results posted outside every polling station, Morgan Tsvangirai managed to win the elections outright, after getting 53 percent of the votes, a figure that easily surpasses the 50 percent plus one vote needed to win the election. The other presidential aspirant, Simba Makoni managed to get close to 8 percent of the votes cast. Even though officially, Tsvangirai was denied outright victory by the ZEC, he managed to debunk the myth that Mugabe cannot be defeated in an election. Tsvangirai's victory in the 29 March elections saw him emerge as the front-runner in the 27 June run-off elections that pitted him against Robert Mugabe for the right to lead Zimbabwe. However, by the time the run-off election was held, Tsvangirai had been forced to capitulate, leaving Mugabe as the sole candidate, thereby giving him leave to take up the presidency of Zimbabwe once again.

6.7.1 Disillusionment of the Workers over the MDC

In the 2000s, the working class felt increasingly disillusioned with the MDC and in the run-up to the 2008 harmonised elections, most workers and even political analysts did not see the MDC dislodging ZANU PF from power (Raftopoulos 2008). In an interview, Khumbulani Ndlovu⁴⁴, suggested that there was a feeling amongst workers that, 'The MDC had been hijacked by the bourgeoisie element, workers also felt marginalized by the MDC leadership when it came to

⁴⁴ Khumbulani Ndlovu was interviewed on 12 May 2008.

making critical decisions and the adoption of neo-liberal positions also alienated a lot of the workers.'

Godfrey Kanyenze⁴⁵ attributed the disenchantment of the workers to the MDC's neo-liberal agenda and the 2005 split within the MDC. Kanyenze felt that the failure of the unity talks between the two MDC factions in January 2008, just before the harmonised elections, worsened the situation resulting in loss of popular support for Tsvangirai. The failure of Tsvangirai to enter the elections as a united front with the other MDC formation led to the sense that he was a weak and indecisive leader. The entrance of Simba Makoni, a former ZANU PF minister into the Presidential race appeared to be the final death blow for Morgan Tsvangirai and his MDC formation as the former's entrance caused quite a stir and excitement amongst the urban electorate, the traditional supporters of the MDC.

6.7.2 Enter the ZCTU into the Election Fray

With the back of the Morgan Tsvangirai formation of the MDC on the wall, the ZCTU came to the rescue when on 28 February the labour body made a public endorsement of the Tsvangirai formation of the MDC, regardless of the party's perceived flaws. The first strategy of the labour body was to neutralize the new contestant to the presidential race, Simba Makoni. The ZCTU argued in its mouth-piece, *The Worker*, of March 2008, that Simba Makoni was only an opportunist who had been part of the ZANU PF regime that had presided over the economy's collapse and as such, he was part of the reason why the workers had suffered such economic hardship. The ZCTU further argued that Makoni stood for the interests of capital, and not those of the workers, since he was receiving substantial financial support and backing from the business community to fund his campaign. The labour body went on to suggest that economics cannot be separated from the politics of the state, and that it was only the Tsvangirai formation of the MDC that would improve the fortunes of the starving billionaires of Zimbabwe, since the MDC was created by the workers themselves.

The run-up to the historic election led to a bustle of activity among the working class. MDC committees were built in factories, usually around the most militant members of the workers' committees. Meetings were convened in the towns by the ZCTU regions which acted as *de facto* MDC provincial structures. In previous elections, the MDC's support in the urban areas

⁴⁵ Interview with Godfrey Kanyenze on 14 May 2008.

had been overwhelmed by ZANU (PF)'s support in the rural areas, where the majority of Zimbabwe's population is registered. This time, impoverished teachers in the rural areas acted as political commissars for the MDC and managed to convince peasants to vote for the MDC and not fear any recriminations from the ZANU PF government. The MDC was able to convincingly win the majority of its 99 seats in five of Zimbabwe's ten provinces, namely Harare, Bulawayo, Masvingo, Manicaland and Matabeleland North. Zanu PF managed to win the majority of its seats in the three Mashonaland provinces of Mashonaland West, Mashonaland East and Mashonaland Central. The Midlands Province was almost equally split between Tsvangirai's MDC and ZANU (PF). The Mutambara formation of the MDC managed to win its ten seats in Matabeleland South Province. The ZCTU was able to rally support for Tsvangirai's MDC largely due to the country's desperate economic state. This is also the reason that Mugabe's revolutionary rhetoric, which is centred around anti-imperialism and the 'land question', failed to move both the urban electorate and a large percentage of the rural electorate. The role that the ZCTU played in the March 2009 elections gives credence to Webster and Adler's (2000) assertion that the labour movement can play a central role in the transformation of society – as is what transpired in South Africa in the 1980s leading up to that country's first democratic elections in 1994. The 2008 harmonised elections showed that the ZCTU still had strong structures, but lacked a critical mass of workers who were sufficiently class conscious and could be mobilised to engage in mass action when the ZANU (PF) government forced the ZEC to sit on election results after Mugabe was defeated in the first round of the Presidential elections and subsequently resorted to violence in the Presidential run-off election.

6.7.3 Mugabe vs Mugabe Run-Off Election

When the Zimbabwean Electoral Commission (ZEC) announced the presidential election results, a month after people had voted, and it emerged that Mugabe had lost the first round of elections, although not outright, his party began to orchestrate violence in the rural areas and the locations. Kriger (2005) notes that violence and intimidation have consistently been used by ZANU (PF) in the Zimbabwean elections since 1980. Mugabe and ZANU (PF) made it very clear that the run-off election on 27 June 2008 was a manner of war to them and they reiterated this point to the electorate. The odds were heavily stacked against the MDC and its supporters, as the party was frustrated and intimidated at every turn during the campaign trail. Morgan Tsvangirai was

arrested on no less than five occasions and in mid-June, the Zimbabwe Republic Police barred him from campaigning, ostensibly for his own safety. The Secretary-General of the MDC, Tendai Biti was arrested on the 9 June 2008 on suspected false charges, and was to remain in jail until a day before the date of the run-off election. This meant that the MDC was denied the organisational and strategic expertise of Biti, prior to the run-off election.

During the campaign trail, statements uttered by Robert Mugabe, the military, the ZANU (PF) militias and the war veterans, suggested that Mugabe was not going to concede defeat to Morgan Tsvangirai and make way for him to become the president of Zimbabwe. On 29 May 2008, at a rally in Shamva, Mashonaland Central Province, Mugabe's wife, Grace Mugabe, revealed that Robert Mugabe would never vacate his office for opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai, even if he lost the run-off election. To show that Mugabe is contemptuous of the electoral process, he proclaimed in the Midlands province on 14 June 2008 that, the ball point pen cannot fight the bullet, and on 21 June 2008, at a rally in Bulawayo, he reiterated his threat by saying, 'The X must follow the gun. Xs should not defeat the gun'. The military establishment in Zimbabwe also issued similar threats of war if ZANU (PF) lost the election, especially the top hierarchy in the security forces who fought in the country's war of liberation. On 19 June 2008, the army's second in command addressed a rally in Masvingo and declared that, 'Zimbabwe is tied to the gun and therefore should be untied from that gun by one who intends to be the future president'. The army officer stated in no uncertain terms that Mugabe would only leave office after a war, and not through the democratic systems of voting him out. The army General ordered people to go and vote, 'so that Robert Mugabe remains the president, forever and ever, until Amen'. Such public statements by Robert Mugabe and his party turned the run-off election into a charade that was supposed to have only one acceptable outcome to ZANU (PF), that is a Mugabe victory.

It was not only the threats of war by ZANU (PF) that rendered the 27 June 2008 election unfree and unfair, but also the violence that was orchestrated in the rural areas and most locations in Zimbabwe. Isaac⁴⁶, an auto-electrician at a factory in Harare who resided in Mufakose, a high-density suburb in Harare, confessed that ZANU (PF) had unleashed youth militias in his location and surrounding locations such as Glen View, who were harassing and beating people. Isaac had this to say about the violence: 'People are being beaten up like no

⁴⁶ Telephone interview of 25 June 2008.

man's business'. Isaac also alleged that the militias were visiting each and every house in his neighbourhood and forcing the youths to join them in their toyi-toying and '*pungwes*' (night vigils), in order to defeat '*Chematama*'⁴⁷ (Tsvangirai) in the run-off election. Isaac and another interviewee, Donald,⁴⁸ who was an electrician and resided in Glen View, also claimed that the ZANU (PF) militias were carrying out an operation code-named *dzikisa dish rako*, (operation remove your satellite dish), because the militias were alleging that people's minds were being 'brainwashed by the propaganda' being churned out by foreign media like BBC, CNN and ETV. The two interviewees claimed that they had heard from people who reside in the locations of Dzivarasekwa, Tafara, Mabvuku and Hatcliffe that they had been affected by the satellite dish operation.

Patrick, who worked in the catering industry and resided in Glen Norah, claimed that the militias camped in his neighbourhood expected everyone to attend midnight vigils everyday without fail. At these sessions, ZANU (PF) songs and slogans were taught to the people. Patrick⁴⁹ claimed that, 'They give us time to cook and eat after we come back from work. After that, from about 8pm until 3am, we are expected to be at the midnight vigils. We are only released in the morning so that we can prepare to go to work. Everyone in my neighbourhood is now a ZANU (PF) comrade'. On the eve of the election, Isaac and Kennedy,⁵⁰ who was a primary school teacher in Highfields, asserted that the ZANU (PF) militias had knocked on the doors of their homes in the early hours of the morning, and took down their names and ordered them to go and vote for Robert Mugabe, otherwise they would be dealt with severely. The two respondents said that the militias told them that the operation which they were carrying out was code-named 'operation red finger'. The aforementioned operation was widespread in the locations and the rural areas. The information and publicity secretary of the MDC confirmed that after Tsvangirai had pulled out of the run-off election, ZANU (PF) began a campaign forcing everyone to go and vote for Robert Mugabe, in a bid to give some 'semblance of respectability and credibility to the poll'. It was also widely reported in the independent media in Zimbabwe and international media that some rural areas and locations were coerced into writing down the serial numbers of their ballot papers, so that they would give these to the ZANU (PF) militias

⁴⁷ *Chematama* is a derogatory nickname, meaning one with fat cheeks, given to Tsvangirai by the (ZANU PF) supporters.

⁴⁸ Telephone interview of 25 June 2008.

⁴⁹ Telephone interview of 25 June 2008.

⁵⁰ Telephone interview of 26 June 2008.

who would check whether everyone had voted for Robert Mugabe or not. It was alleged that those who were discovered to have voted for Morgan Tsvangirai would be punished severely. The ZANU (PF) party and the Zimbabwe Republic Police meanwhile claimed that it was mostly the MDC which was perpetrating the acts of violence that were witnessed in Zimbabwe, in the run-up to the run-off elections.

On 22 June 2008, Morgan Tsvangirai finally capitulated to the violence and intimidation of ZANU (PF) and withdrew from the presidential election because of the murders, rape and beatings that were being experienced by his supporters. In his letter to the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, written on 23 June 2008, announcing his withdrawal from the presidential election, Tsvangirai made the claim that the violent retributive agenda of ZANU (PF) had seen over 200 000 people internally displaced, and over 86 MDC supporters killed. Over 20 000 homes were also reportedly destroyed and over 10,000 people injured or maimed in the orgy of violence. Tsvangirai also claimed that there were over 3,000 militia bases throughout the country that were being used for purposes of intimidation of MDC supporters. Consequently, by the time the date of the run-off election arrived on 27 June 2008, Mugabe was the sole candidate as the run-off election became a one candidate election. When the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission announced the final results in the presidential elections, Mugabe was reported to have won 2,150,269 votes representing 85.5 percent of the votes cast. Tsvangirai had 233,000 votes. There were 131,481 spoilt ballots. The conspicuous amount of spoilt ballots drew attention and some analysts claimed that most of these were from people who were coerced to go and vote. Unlike the 29 March elections, which were won by Tsvangirai and the MDC, the run-off election of 27 June 2008 was marred by a great deal of violence and intimidation. Even the election observers from SADC, The African Union and the Pan African Parliamentarians called the election in Zimbabwe unfree and unfair. The ZCTU structures that had been used by the MDC in the March elections were forced into submission by ZANU (PF) and the workers were not given a chance to campaign for a party of their choice or to express their free-will. The teachers who had acted as political commissars for the MDC in most rural areas in March were terrorized and not allowed to play the role they had played in March.

6.8 Conclusion

The chapter has argued that the activities of the trade union movement in Zimbabwe were stifled in the 2000s. This was as a result of the partial disintegration of the working class at the physical, organisational and mobilisation levels. The predatory nature of the ZANU (PF) government also played a part in weakening and suppressing the organisational and mobilisation abilities of the labour movement. It is the chapter's contention that the partial disintegration of the working class, incapacitated the once militant working class movement of the late 1990s. This disintegration resulted in the MDC failing to rally the working class, which is its biggest support base, to engage in mass action, given the electoral fraud, violence and economic crisis caused by the ZANU (PF) government. This partial disintegration of the working class meant that large portions of this social grouping were forced to retreat from engaging the ZANU (PF) government in the political realm as a collective (engaging in mass action), and to concentrate on survivalist strategies at the individual and household levels, in order to cope with the economic implosion in Zimbabwe, that was marked by a historically high rate of hyper-inflation. Thus, the union-led workerist responses to the crisis that had peaked in the late 1990s went on the wane in the 2000s. However, workerist responses at the company level still proved useful in sectors such as manufacturing as Chapter 7 of the thesis shall reveal. Partyism though, was retained by most sections of the working class as an alternative of expressing anger at the ZANU (PF) government, as was shown by the MDC's victory in the working class constituencies of Zimbabwe, in the 2000, 2005 and 2008 elections. The chapter also revealed that even though the ZCTU was weakened in terms of its membership and organizational and mobilization abilities, it nevertheless was not totally destroyed, as the MDC victory in the 2008 March elections was to some extent made possible by the ZCTU structures and leadership which campaigned strongly for the MDC-T party. The 2010 General strike by public sector workers in the first few months of that year also proved that the organizational capacity of the labour movement had not been totally decimated by the economic and political crisis experienced in the 2000s.

CHAPTER 7

WORKPLACE EXPERIENCES AND RESPONSES

7.1 Introduction

Chapter 7 endeavors to capture the experiences of the workers within the workplace environment, during the decade of crisis. Workplace experiences of the workers were captured because this takes us beyond studies that have merely been conducted at the household level. To re-iterate, workers in four sectors of formal employment were interviewed individually, and sometimes in group interviews, as happened with the artisans in factories.

As has been explained in chapters 1 and 3, workers in the teaching sector were chosen because teaching in state schools appeared to grind to a halt in 2008, when the fieldwork was conducted. Artisans in the manufacturing sector were chosen because, manufacturing has traditionally been one of the biggest contributors to Zimbabwe's GDP, and workers in manufacturing made up a large component of the working class. Bank workers were chosen because the banking sector appeared to be doing well during the peak of the crisis in 2008. The catering workers were chosen because the performance of this sector is normally an indication of whether people have disposable income or not. Forex dealers were included because, even though originally I had not set out to interview these informal traders, I came across a number of informal forex dealers who had been artisans in the formal sector, while others had been teachers. I therefore wanted to capture the experiences of these former workers. The interviewees were selected using purposive and snowball methods of sampling. The selection of four sectors was an attempt to deal with the fact that the crisis affected different workers in different ways. There may, however, have been greater variation within sectors than reflected in the dissertation, though, in practice, there seemed to be strong commonalities within the sectors.

The workers' responses were quite enlightening, as they showed three distinct phases that the workers encountered, and in each phase, the working class was forced to modify its responses to the Zimbabwean crisis. The three phases span the periods, 1997-2000, when the crisis in the Zimbabwean economy first began to emerge. This is when union-led workerist

responses such as striking, rioting and engaging in mass stay-aways were employed by most sections of the working class to protest the increasing economic difficulties they were facing. Partyism was also adopted in 1999, when the MDC was formed, largely through the initiatives of the workers and their trade union leaders. The second phase covers the period 2000-2006, when the ZANU (PF) government spearheaded the violent land reform programme in 2000. 2000 was also the year when Zimbabwe had its general elections that were characterized by considerable violence, mostly perpetrated by the war veterans and ZANU (PF) supporters, which led to the West imposing sanctions on the ZANU (PF) government (Makumbe 2005). These sanctions imposed by the West and the multi-lateral money lending institutions, the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) worsened the crisis for the ordinary worker in Zimbabwe. This period saw workers shifting their responses to the crisis, as a broad range of survivalist strategies at the individual and household level, gradually replaced the workerist responses of the late 1990s. The final phase which was experienced by the majority of the workers in Zimbabwe covers the period 2007-2008. This is the period when the economic crisis worsened significantly, with hyper-inflation setting in during February 2007. In this period, inflation breached the 50 percent month-on-month rate, which translates to 12,875 percent (year-on-year rate of inflation) to run into the millions and finally peaking in November 2008 at 89.7 sextillion percent, according to the Cato Institute. During this phase of the crisis, survivalist strategies became more widespread than ever amongst most ranks of the working class, and also became more speculative in nature, as hyper-inflation continued to spiral out of control.

The chapter argues that the working class showed signs of low levels of class consciousness, and this is one of the reasons why forms of collective action within the workplace setting never took place, to protest the hyper-inflation that pauperised the working class. Rather, it was within the socio-economic realm (individual and household survival strategies) that the working class concentrated its energies on countering the political crisis and hyper-inflation. The chapter contends that most of the survivalist responses were speculative in nature and were confined to the informal sector, as most workers retained their jobs in the formal sector, but also dabbled in informal activities.

The chapter ends by reaching the conclusion that there was considerable unevenness and paradoxes in the experiences of different sections of the working class, during the decade of

crisis, thus exposing the heterogenous nature of Harare's working class, in addition to the fact that not all workers were experiencing hardships during the decade of crisis.

7.2 Teachers

The teaching sector is one of the sectors that suffered immensely during the period of hyper-inflation. The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions' (ZCTU) monthly lists of incomes for the unions that are affiliated to it, consistently showed teachers to be amongst the lowest paid workers. From October to December 2008, teachers' incomes were Z\$ 729,000, Z\$ 3 million and Z\$ 12 million respectively (*The Worker*, October, November and December 2008). However, if these incomes are converted to the prevailing exchange rates *vis-a-viz* the US dollar during that time, it becomes evident that the teachers were earning next to nothing, because their income was less than US \$10 for each of the three months. The October 2008 income was the worst because, when the teachers earned Z\$ 729,000, it was equivalent to US\$ 0.72, not even enough to take public transport to go to the bank to withdraw the salary. That is the reason why, in the last half of 2008, teachers in the public schools left the classrooms to embark on indefinite industrial action.

Loss of skilled workers in the teaching sector reached epidemic proportions, especially in 2008, when the economic crisis was at its worst. Consequently, the teaching profession was disintegrating at a fast rate, and by the end of 2008 it was only teachers in the private schools who were still teaching.⁵¹ The majority of the teachers in the public schools had stopped teaching. They were either on strike, or had just quit the profession, most without even handing in their resignations.⁵² Raymond Majongwe, the secretary general of the Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ) reported that in the first two terms of 2008, 15,200 teachers had officially resigned from the profession, and it meant that teaching as a sector had collapsed. In total, ZIMTA and the PTUZ posited in 2008 that between the years 2000 and 2008, 45,000 teachers were estimated to have left the teaching profession for the diaspora. A study was conducted by the Zimbabwean government through the Scientific and Industrial Research Development Centre (SIRDC) in 2004 to ascertain the situations of Zimbabweans who were in

⁵¹ Teachers in private schools were being paid more money by the affluent parents who could afford to send their children to private schools. In some cases, these teachers were being paid in hard currency while teachers in public schools were being given the valueless Zimbabwean dollars.

⁵² Interview with Raymond Majongwe conducted on 12 October, 2008.

the diaspora.⁵³ Factors such as age, gender and the professions of the Zimbabwean migrants in the diaspora were reviewed. The SIRDC research claimed to have covered 532,609 of the estimated three to four million Zimbabweans who are resident outside the country. Of these, 36.8 percent were in the United Kingdom, 34.5 percent in Botswana, 6.9 percent in the United States, 4.6 percent in South Africa, 3.4 percent in Canada and 13.8 percent elsewhere. In their 2004 report, SIRDC claimed that the majority of those in the diaspora - 61.6 - per cent were males, with 38.4 percent being females. SIRDC (2004) found that 76.7 percent of those in the diaspora were married, 19.8 percent were single, 2.3 percent were divorced and 1.2 percent widowed. Whereas 5.7 percent of Zimbabweans reportedly moved into diaspora in 1985, the levels increased to 21.4 percent in 1995 and to 45.7 percent by 2002. From the interviews conducted in this research, one can conclude that the percentage of the loss of skilled workers began to increase because of the deepening economic crisis in Zimbabwe.

In terms of profession, 26 percent were teachers, 25 percent doctors, nurses and pharmacists, 23 percent engineers and other scientists, 17 percent accountants, five percent farmers, two percent bankers and one percent each were clergy and others. 34 percent had a first degree, 28 percent had polytechnic education, 20 percent had a masters degree, nine percent vocational training and two percent each had diploma level training and none. The largest category of 40.8 percent were in the age group 30-39, followed by the 20-29 age group at 25 percent, 40-49 age group at 23.7 percent and those at least 50 years of age at 10.5 percent (SIRDC, 2004). Thus, teachers constituted the largest group of professionals who had left Zimbabwe. This was confirmed in the interviews that I conducted with teachers. Ben Chatuka, a teacher who had stopped teaching by September 2008 due to the poor salaries, explained the extent of the brain drain at his school:

I am a teacher at a government primary school in Mufakose (a working class township in Harare), and I have been teaching at that school since 2004. When I joined the school in 2004, the staff complement was over 20, including some temporary teachers, but by September 2008 when I stopped teaching, twelve teachers had left for South Africa, Botswana and Swaziland in order to look for better teaching posts in these countries. When the PTUZ called for an industrial action

⁵³ According to SIRDC, the data collection exercise involved conducting group discussions with professionals in the diaspora and sending out questionnaires to these professionals. The information on Zimbabwean professionals was obtained from embassies and resident associations abroad. SIRDC purports to have included all Zimbabwean professionals in its survey. However, this is contentious because some professionals in countries such as South Africa are undocumented because they entered the country through illegal means and are employed in menial jobs and not in their actual professions.

just before the start of the third term in September, there were only 7 permanent teachers in the whole school, including the headmaster, who were still coming to school to teach. 2008 as an academic year for the pupils at my school was just a disaster. It's a sad situation for the school children, but the truth of the matter is that the income teachers have been earning for the past three years has not been enough even for transport costs to report to work. As for myself, I hustle in order to make ends meet. I hoard and sell airtime, I engage in forex dealing and I have been 'burning money'⁵⁴ just like most people of late.⁵⁵

Memory Chipunza who was a teacher by profession, but had since stopped teaching in May 2008, recalled the exodus of teachers from the primary school she was teaching at in Glen View:

When I joined the school I was teaching at in Glen View in 2006, there were 16 teachers, but when I decided to quit in May this year, 9 of the teachers that had been at the school when I joined, had left for other countries. Most did not say where they were going. You would just hear through the grape-vine after some time that so and so is now in Botswana or South Africa. As for me, I decided to quit the teaching profession because the salaries were just an insult. My wish is to look for a teaching post in one of the neighbouring countries just like some of my colleagues. The problem is that I am married and my husband works for the city council. He will not allow me to leave him with the children while I try my luck in other countries. He says it is best if we leave the country together as a couple, when he decides to resign from the city council. He has been saying this for the past two years, but still he has not resigned.⁵⁶

The resignation of teachers from the teaching profession because of salaries that had collapsed, as a result of hyper-inflation, meant that this component of the working class had largely disintegrated by the time dollarisation was officially introduced in March 2009.

As Zimbabwe's economic crisis deepened and the formal sector shrank, the informal sector burgeoned and proved to be the sector that sustained many livelihoods. Amongst the 16 teachers that I interviewed during the course of my research, all of them were engaged in some informal sector activity. Ten of the teachers said that although they had not quit the teaching profession altogether, they were concentrating most of their energies towards informal sector activities, because this is where they were able to earn an income in order to survive. Six of the teachers claimed to have quit the teaching profession totally and were engaged in petty commodity trading, cross-border trading and foreign currency dealing.

One salient feature of Zimbabwe's informal sector during the period of extreme hyper-

⁵⁴ 'Burning money' was a form of bank transfers that were done through a banking system known as the Real Time Gross Settlement. If a person gave US dollars to the bank and requested that the money be transferred into their accounts as Zimbabwean dollars, that individual would get an amount of money that was many times higher than the prevailing exchange rates on the market.

⁵⁵ Interview with Ben Chatuka conducted on 4 October 2008.

⁵⁶ Interview with Memory Chipunza on 6 August 2008.

inflation was its largely speculative outlook. The 'black market' in the informal sector was very lucrative because of the shortages in foreign currency and most basic commodities in Zimbabwe. Thus, a 'black market' thrived in foreign currency dealing, fuel and basic goods such as sugar, cooking oil, mealie-meal and soap, to mention but a few products in short supply in the formal economy that were easy to find on the parallel market. There was not much production activity in the informal sector because of the plethora of problems that were dogging Zimbabwe during the period of extreme crisis. These were, namely, the shortages of fuel, foreign currency, the crippling power outages and incessant water-cuts. As a result, it was difficult to embark on productive business ventures in the informal sector, save to engage in speculative activities like foreign currency dealing, hoarding and selling of fuel, and taking part in petty commodity trading in goods that were in short supply. This is where the cross-border traders mostly operated. The teachers were best placed to engage in cross-border activities because since 2005, Zimbabwean civil servants could visit South Africa without the need to obtain a VISA, which until early 2009 cost about R2000 to obtain for those individuals who were not civil servants. However, in early 2009, that application fee of R2000 was waived. The school holidays and the almost year-long industrial action by teachers in 2008 also meant that some teachers had 'free time' to engage in cross border trading. Tracey Chamboko narrated how cross-border trading became pivotal for the survival of her family:

I started engaging in cross-border trading in 2006 and it has helped my family a lot because the salary that I earn as a teacher is not enough to do anything with it. The teaching that we have been doing for the past few years now, has just been a community service because teachers have been working for nothing. So, because of the meager salary, I decided to become a cross-border trader, while I continued to teach [on] the side. I have been going to South Africa, mostly to Musina, to buy goods like sugar, cooking-oil, soap, rice and hair extensions, which I have been re-selling here in Zimbabwe, because these goods are not readily available in the shops and the supermarkets. I go to South Africa twice a month, and when we are not on school holidays, I still go and we cover for each other with my other teaching colleagues, because, they will take my classes when I am away. I also do the same favour for other colleagues who engage in cross-border trading. When a colleague takes your class while you are away, you bring them some token of appreciation like soap or rice. We also give (for free) the headmaster some of the goods that we import. This is a way of pacifying him, so that he does not report us to the Ministry authorities.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Interview with Tracey Chamboko conducted on 6 August 2008.

Edith Madombwe, a 42 year old primary school teacher explained how cross-border trading was helping her cope with the crisis:

From about 2002, our economic situation as teachers has worsened and we have become the laughing stock of society because of our meager salaries. As I am talking to you now, my salary last month (September 2008) was Z\$ 812,000, which was equivalent to about US\$ 2 on the parallel market which is widely used. Tell me, what do I do with US\$ 2 as a salary for a whole month? No wonder most teachers are no longer going to schools to teach, its just not worth it. I have also stopped going to my school. I am currently engaged in cross-border trading. I go to Musina (South Africa) twice a month to buy groceries like sugar, mealie-meal, flour, rice and cooking oil, which I resell here in Zimbabwe. That is how i am coping with this hyper-inflationary environment. Majongwe's Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe is making a lot of noise but to no avail.⁵⁸

In a follow-up interview with Mrs. Edith Madombwe, on 4 March 2009, she said that she was back at work, although she had not stopped her cross-border activities as this was sustaining her family:

I am now back at work because the Government of National Unity (GNU) last month gave us a salary of US\$ 100. I believe this is a good start even though the money is not enough. I believe that if the GNU works well, this salary might actually improve. This is much better than the trillions which we were earning at the end of last month which were worthless and even difficult to withdraw from the bank.⁵⁹

Alice Chiware, who was 34 years old and a high school teacher in Kuwadzana posited that:

I am engaged in cross border trading and I have been doing it since 2005. Cross-border trading has been able to sustain me and my two children. I am a single mother and so I have no one to help me raise my children. I made a lot of quick and huge profits from cross-border trading between 2005 and 2007 because there were a lot of shortages of food on the shelves of most shops in Harare. However, this year (2009), the situation has now changed, some shops are now well stocked because they are getting supplies from an influx of people who are now engaged in cross-border trading. Big shops like Spar, are now also buying their own goods from South Africa in huge quantities, because of the relaxation of price controls on foodstuffs by the government and also because since September 2008, they have been allowed to sell their goods in hard currency by the central bank. So, there is now a lot of competition for the cross-border traders like me, because the goods that previously were in short supply like rice and mealie-meal have suddenly flooded the market.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Interview with Edith Madombwe conducted on 3 October 2008.

⁵⁹ Follow-up Interview with Edith Madombwe conducted on 4 March 2009.

⁶⁰ Interview with Alice Chiware conducted on 4 March 2009.

Alice's account shows that cross-border trading was very helpful in sustaining people in the working class, and teachers were taking advantage of school holidays and the crippling teachers' strikes of 2008 to make the most of the situation, and engage in cross-border trading. However, Alice's account also shows that cross-border trading was no longer as lucrative and profitable as it used to be, because of the huge number of people who were visiting nearly all of Zimbabwe's neighbouring countries to buy goods that were in short supply in Zimbabwe and reselling these goods. The dollarisation of the economy and the lifting of price controls by the Goodwills Masimirembwa-led National Incomes and Pricing Controls Commission (NIPCC) also saw most big supermarkets being well-stocked, thereby providing stiff competition for the cross-border traders who had taken advantage of the gap in the Zimbabwean economy of goods shortages, especially food.

Informal sector activities such as cross-border activities that the teachers had been engaged in, appeared to have been affecting the quality of education during the peak of the crisis, because most teachers were otherwise engaged in other ways of earning a living. This meant teachers spending a lot of time out of the classrooms. But again, without doing this, most of the teachers would not have been able to go to the classrooms totally, especially when the economic crisis worsened between 2006 and 2008.

Foreign currency dealing was also a way of weathering the hyper-inflationary environment in Zimbabwe. Sam Dhana, who was a primary school teacher in Highfields claimed that he was able to sustain his family through the foreign currency trade:

Every month, I receive between 50 Pounds to 100 Pounds from my brother who is in England. I use some of the money to buy food for my family but mostly, I use this foreign currency to buy Zimbabwean dollars. I will then use the Zim dollars to buy more forex from other people who want to dispose of their forex at favourable rates, that ensure that I can buy more US dollars than I would have had previously. I repeat the cycle continuously, and at the end of the day, I make a lot of profit in forex terms.⁶¹

All the sixteen teachers interviewed argued that the collective bargaining exercise was futile, because the hyper-inflation was just too high and the government had shown that it was unable to pay salaries that were in line with the PDL. The teachers argued that during the decade of crisis in Zimbabwe, the collective bargaining exercise had only been useful in the late 1990s and early 2000s. But as hyper-inflation worsened, the teachers argued that the collective

⁶¹ Interview with Sam Dhana conducted on 10 August 2008.

bargaining exercise became an increasingly meaningless exercise as their incomes continued to be eroded by the high levels of inflation.

On the issue of engaging in strikes to force the government to improve their salaries, 12 teachers said that they had tried to take this route on a number of occasions, notably in the 2000s, but that this response to the Zimbabwean crisis had not yielded positive results. Edith summed up most teachers' perceptions on strikes thus:

ZIMTA and the PTUZ have been calling for strikes on many occasions and we have always obliged and participated in huge numbers in these strikes. Right now as I am talking to you, we are on an indefinite strike, and this time we will not go back to work because we are working for nothing. Our salaries for the whole month can only buy two loaves of bread.⁶²

I also asked my teacher interviewees whether they would join a ZCTU or MDC led form of mass action to protest the violent presidential run-off elections of 2008 and the decline in the economy. Ten of the teachers did not express a keen interest in engaging in mass action as a response to the Zimbabwean crisis that had impoverished them. Sandra Duma, a primary school teacher in Glen View remarked:

I would not join the mass action because the previous ones have been poorly organized and they have failed. The present government is also very vicious and I do not want to risk my life by engaging in any kinds of demonstrations. I would rather just continue with *kujingirisa*⁶³ (engaging in informal activities that are not all that straightforward) so that I can put food on my family's table.⁶⁴

Interviews with the teachers revealed that the workerist responses such as collective bargaining and engaging in strikes began to lose currency as the Zimbabwean crisis worsened in the 2000s. The teachers nevertheless embarked on an almost year-long industrial action in 2008 which however did not lead to an improvement in their incomes as hyper-inflation was most severe during this period. Survivalist strategies in the informal economy proved to be the only avenue of surviving the hyper-inflation for those teachers who chose not to go into the diaspora.

When the Government of National Unity (GNU) was formed in Zimbabwe in February 2009, one of the first measures the GNU implemented was to dollarize the Zimbabwean economy, in order to bring some semblance of macro-economic stability, and to stem the scourge of hyper-inflation. In line with dollarisation, the government decided to pay every civil servant

⁶² Interview with Edith Madombwe conducted on 3 October 2008.

⁶³ *Kujingirisa* is a Shona colloquial term which refers to illegal hustling.

⁶⁴ Interview with Sandra Duma conducted on 10 August 2008.

an allowance of US\$ 100, regardless of one's post or educational qualifications. This move by the government resulted in sectors that were 'dead' like the teaching and nursing profession being resuscitated because teachers who had not been teaching for the greater part of 2008 went back to work. The same occurred in the medical fraternity. Thus, since February 2009, there was a gradual re-composition in the teaching sector of the working class, as teachers who had long abandoned the profession went back to the classrooms. The PTUZ reported in April 2009 that out of about 100,000 teachers that were teaching in public schools before 2006, 60,000 had gone back to work after the GNU started paying civil servants in forex (*The Worker*, May 2009). The PTUZ went on to say that the outstanding 40,000 were mostly those teachers who went to other countries to get better paying teaching posts or other opportunities. The union however, went on to add that, by April 2009, 6,000 teachers had returned to Zimbabwe from South Africa, and that about 3,000 of these were already teaching again in government schools. The other 3,000 had just deserted their teaching posts, and so the Ministry was deciding whether these teachers should be re-employed without punitive measures being taken against them.

Of the teachers that I spoke to, 14 said that they had gone back to the classrooms because the US\$ 100 that they were getting was much better than the worthless trillions of Zimbabwean dollars, which they had been getting from the government before the dollarisation of the economy. Those same 14 teachers also revealed that the dollarisation of the economy had 'killed-off' some of the informal sector activities they had been involved in, such as foreign currency dealing and cross-border trading, and so they had no choice but to re-join teaching and earn the US\$ 100 which was being paid by the government. Elizabeth Mpariwa summed up the feelings of the 14 teachers on the US\$ 100 that they were receiving:

The US\$100 that we are getting from the government may not be enough to sustain an individual for a month, let alone a family, but, I believe that this is a good starting point, given the economic crisis we are coming from as a country. I had stopped teaching in April 2008, but I have decided to go back to work because I believe that if the GNU works properly, our salaries will improve with time, to be in line with the Poverty Datum Line. But for now, at least I can buy a few groceries and afford my transport costs so that I can report for work, unlike in the past.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Interview with Elizabeth Mpariwa conducted on 26 April 2009.

7.3 Factory Workers

Placing importance on the collective bargaining exercise was one of the strategies employed by the workers committees in most industries between 1997 and 2000, in order to cushion the workers from the rising cost of living. Mr Francis Chogureyi aged 57 years old, who was a panel-beater in the transport section at Delta Corporation and had been with the firm for 20 years had this to say about the role of his workers' committee during the early years of Zimbabwe's crisis:

Our workers' committee tried its level-best to ensure that we were getting salaries that were commensurate with the increase in the cost of living in the late 1990s. Management tried to give us salaries that were in line with the cost of living. Even today, management is trying to cushion us from the economic meltdown by providing us with free transport, paying for the greater part of our medical aid and paying some of the school fees for those employees who have gifted children.⁶⁶

Munyaradzi Murandu, the Human Resources Manager at Delta Corporation claimed that in 2007 the organisation lost half of its qualified artisans to Namibia and, as such, the company was trying its best to cushion its workers from the adverse effects of the economic meltdown. Murandu explained:

Last year alone we lost 27 qualified artisans whom we had trained to Namibia, and that is half of our artisans. That rate of losing qualified personnel is just unsustainable and so we are trying to come up with incentives to retain our staff and some of the incentives we are giving them are providing them with groceries. We have made an arrangement with Unilever whereby we get goods like soap, toothpaste and margarine which we give to our employees, in addition to their salaries. We also provide our employees with free transport, and we assist them with school fees for their children and medical aid. We also provide them with a case of alcohol at the end of every month which has 24 pints which they can resell in order to supplement their incomes. So, the macro-economic environment is quite tough but we are trying our level best to retain our staff.⁶⁷

Booyesen Mlambo, a 35 year old male auto-electrician at Olivine Industries who had been with the company for nine years and was also the chairman of his company's workers' committee recalled:

When I joined this company in the late 1990s, the company's management was very receptive to the demands and requests of the workers' committee, especially wage and salary grievances. But

⁶⁶ Interview with Francis conducted on 5 October 2008.

⁶⁷ Interview with Munyaradzi conducted on 5 October 2008.

now things have changed. Management is saying the macro-economic environment is unfavourable and [it] cannot do anything about our plight when we present to it our grievances. If the management gets wind of the fact that members of the workers' committee are attending union meetings, it can lead to victimization.⁶⁸

Sentiments expressed by Francis and Booyesen suggested that in the late 1990s, when the economic crisis first set in, the collective bargaining exercise that workers committees and trade unions engaged in was useful in driving their employers to improve their salaries. However, with time, Zimbabwe's economic crisis overwhelmed most companies and even forced most organisations to retrench some of their staff or even to close altogether. The hyper-inflationary environment rendered the collective bargaining exercise largely futile especially when it comes to wages and salaries that were being eroded on a daily basis by the rampant hyper-inflation. The best that most companies could do was to assist their employees with groceries, and providing other fringe benefits like paying for medical aid, assisting with school fees and providing free transport as was happening at Francis' company.

Industrial action in the late 1990s was readily adopted by the workers in almost all sectors of the economy, as a response to the worsening economic situation of Zimbabwe. The demonstrations and mass stay-aways that were held in the late 1990s were largely organised and co-ordinated by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions. The workers also co-operated and paid heed to the workplace strikes that were co-ordinated by the ZCTU affiliates. Edgar Magaramombe aged 48, and a motor-mechanic who worked for Olivine Industries recalled: 'From 1997 to 1999, we engaged in many demonstrations and stay-aways. We were not happy with the government's policies that were causing hardships for us'. When I pressed Edgar on why strikes and stay-aways were no-longer occurring, despite the worsening economic situation in the country, he had this to say:

In those years like 1997, the ZCTU was being led by energetic and inspirational leaders like Tsvangirai who were listened to by the workers. These days, strikes are no longer being allowed by pieces of legislation like the Public Order and Security Act, which will lead to your arrest. These days it is also difficult to strike because your mind will be occupied with looking for money and food for your family.⁶⁹

Workerist responses, notably strike action was made use of frequently and with a lot of success in the late 1990s by the workers when the first signs of strain in the Zimbabwean economy began

⁶⁸ Interview with Booyesen conducted on 3 October 2008.

⁶⁹ Interview with Edgar conducted on 15 August 2008

to show. The working class became somewhat subdued in the 2000s, since strikes were very rare, despite economic conditions in Zimbabwe worsening more than before. Firstly, the working class was no longer as huge as it used to be. A lot of the workers who were there in the late 1990s were no longer in their jobs because of company closures and retrenchments. Others had joined the ranks of those in the diaspora, while still more joined the informal sector or had died. Consequently, the small numbers of the working class and constant labour turnover because of the difficult macro-economic environment made it difficult for labour to be well organised. Secondly, draconian pieces of legislation like the POSA also made it difficult for the workers to engage in strike action. Edgar also raises a valid point that most workers were pre-occupied with looking for money and food for their families.

The working class responded to the economic difficulties that Zimbabwe was facing by resorting to partyism. This was reflected by the fact that the workers helped found the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in 1999. The office bearers of the MDC elected into office were leading trade unionists and these included Morgan Tsvangirai, the president, Gibson Sibanda, the deputy president, Isaac Matongo, chairman and Gift Chimanihire, deputy secretary general. Linda Zvidzai who was an auto-electrician at Delta Corporation had this to say on the 2000 elections: 'When the MDC was formed in 1999, I thought that they would be the solution to our problems. I remember waking up very early in the morning to go and vote. When I got to the polling station, the queue was already so long. Such was the excitement that the MDC party created when it was formed. When the results started being announced I remember the MDC leading ZANU (PF) in the early results, and we were already celebrating thinking that the MDC had won the elections'.⁷⁰ The working class voted for the MDC overwhelmingly in the 2005 General elections and the harmonized elections of March 29 2008. In the latter elections, the MDC party was able to beat ZANU (PF), inflicting that party's first electoral defeat in a general election since 1980. This suggests that partyism was adopted by the workers as a response to the crisis, although disintegration at the physical level, and organisational and mobilisation level, militated against more radical forms of political responses such as protests. The increased levels of government repression also made radical political responses difficult. On the reason why workers were not engaging in any form of mass action to protest the hyper-inflation and the

⁷⁰ Interview with Linda conducted on 5 September 2008.

fraudulent 2008 Presidential elections, Simon who was a panel-beater at Olivine industries explained:

I, for one, would not join that kind of mass action, because we have had stay-aways in the past. The first ones were successful but I am sure as you saw, the latter ones from about 2003 have been flops. The workers and the public were poorly mobilized for these stay-aways. I remember the final push which Tsvangirai said he would spearhead and lead the masses to state house and pressure Mugabe to quit in 2003. That mass action was a total failure which failed to take – off. I no longer have faith in MDC or ZCTU led forms of mass action because these always fail.⁷¹

Chiedza, who was an auto-electrician at Delta Corporation, had the following response on engaging in collective action in order to address the crisis Zimbabwe was facing:

Mass action has generally been a failure since 2000. I would not join such a stay-away because I doubt it would succeed because of the government soldiers and police that would quell it. I also do not think a lot of people would take part in such actions, because of the failure of previous mass actions. People would need to be mobilized in a big way. I do not think that has been happening.⁷²

Consequently, while the workerist responses proved to be inadequate as the Zimbabwean crisis worsened, survivalism and partyism were embraced by large sections of the working class, who supported and voted for the MDC in the 2000, 2005 and 2008 harmonised elections. The hope for the majority of workers was that the MDC would alleviate their suffering. It is therefore evident that even though more radical forms of political action such as protests did not take place in protest of the crisis, other more peaceful political forms of responses, in the vein of partyism, remained options that the working class pursued.

Moonlighting⁷³ proved to be an important source of survival for the skilled artisans, as 12 of the 16 artisans interviewed were moonlighting when they were not at their jobs in formal employment. Rogers, a motor mechanic at Delta Corporation had this to say concerning the economic hardships:

My friend the situation is difficult. I am just coming to work so that I find a place to while-up time because one cannot just sit at home doing nothing. Otherwise, the money that I get here is not enough to buy anything. If it was not for the piece jobs that I do during weekends, repairing people's cars, I do not know how I would survive.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Interview with Simon conducted on 8 September 2008.

⁷² Interview with Chiedza conducted on 5 October 2008.

⁷³ Moonlighting in the dissertation refers to the additional work that is done outside one's normal workplace.

⁷⁴ Interview with Rogers conducted on 5 October 2008.

Eve Rundora, a 24 year female auto-electrician at Olivine industries also said that piece jobs, (sorting out electrical problems on people's cars) was helping her quite a lot and she was doing this during the weekends.⁷⁵ She also went on to add that some of her clients were paying her in the form of foreign currency and this became an added bonus since the Zimbabwean dollar was a precarious currency to have since it was always losing value. She said that in a good month she could get as much as R800 to R1000 for fixing electrical problems on people's vehicles. Edward Mapepa who was 26 years old and was a colleague of Eve's also said that he was surviving on piece jobs which he charged in Rands and US dollars during the weekends.⁷⁶ Thus, artisans were at least able to survive on the side jobs that they were undertaking during the peak of the Zimbabwean crisis.

7.4 Catering Workers

Workers interviewed in the catering industry complained bitterly about the poor remuneration that they were receiving in the sector. The workers however revealed some of the strategies that they were employing to deal with their economic predicament. Chipso Teverai, a single woman aged 36 years old working as a supervisor for a restaurant in the central business district of Harare revealed:

I have been with Candy's restaurant for the past 12 years. I first joined the restaurant as a till operator until I was promoted to become the overall supervisor of all the employees who are 13 in total in 2005. The collective bargaining exercise was very helpful in the late 1990s when I joined this restaurant until the early 2000s. Our employer would always respond positively to the wage demands of our union without any problems and I can safely say that the wages I was receiving between 1997 until about 2003 were enough for me to lead a fairly decent life. I could buy clothes, visit my parents in Wedza frequently and buy my food without any problems. However, from 2003 up to now, I do not think that the collective bargaining exercise has been of much help since our employer has been failing to meet the salary demands of our union, especially in the last two years. However, I cannot totally dismiss the collective bargaining exercise as being totally a futile exercise, because we are still able to bargain for free food from our employer, we still get transport allowance to come to work and we are now being paid in foreign currency and the latter scheme began in December 2008, when the Zimbabwean economy became increasingly dollarized. I am currently getting US \$20 per week. This money is not enough, but at least I can pay my rent which is R 200 per month, for my one room I am renting in Glen View.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Interview with Eve conducted on 6 October 2008

⁷⁶ Interview with Edward conducted on 6 October 2008

⁷⁷ Interview with Chipso Teverai conducted on 2 February 2009

On whether engaging in forms of mass action led by the ZCTU or MDC was an option that she would consider, Chipso retorted:

Forms of mass action have generally failed and I, for one have no faith in them or the ZCTU leaders' capabilities to organise mass action that can remove ZANU (PF) from power.

Paul who was a cook in a restaurant was asked the same question as Chipso on the issue of collective action and he posited:

Yes I would join any form of mass action that would improve the plight of every suffering person in this country. However, I am not sure whether this will be successful because a lot of the workers are in the informal sector where one's direct presence and input is important if one is to make money. So my fear is that if mass action is called for, it might be poorly attended, and end up failing, especially if the informal sector workers do not take part.⁷⁸

Silica Mhlanga,⁷⁹ who was a till-operator in a take-away shop alleged that she and her co-workers were no longer bargaining for higher wages per week from their employer, as the hyper-inflation was constantly eroding any wage increments given to the workers. Silica revealed that she and her workmates were now bargaining for benefits like free lunches and the payment of part of their wages in the form of groceries.

Rural-urban linkages appeared to have acquired more significant importance during this period of crisis. Maurano, a 36 year old woman in the catering and hotel industry who stayed in Budiro (a township in Harare) with her husband, who was an informal trader, said that two of her elder children who are in primary school stayed with her in-laws in the rural area of Nyazura. She said that this was cheaper for her, since school fees were cheaper in the rural areas. The children also helped in the fields thus, at least, they were able to enjoy easier access to food in the rural areas in comparison to access in Harare, where she was staying. Rural areas also became very important sources of scarce maize, which is the staple food for Zimbabweans. Brenda Chuma who is a 32 year old till operator in a restaurant Dzivarasekwa said, 'I am getting maize from my parents' rural home in Chiweshe and this is saving me a lot, as a bucket of maize is being sold for US\$20 in some places. I cannot afford to pay that kind of money and so I am making a huge saving'.⁸⁰

Workers, such as Shelton who was a 25 year old male and a cook in the catering and hotel industry, walked everyday for a total of about 25km, to and from work from his home

⁷⁸ Interview with Paul conducted on 4 February 2009.

⁷⁹ Interview with Silica conducted on 5 August 2008.

⁸⁰ Interview with Brenda conducted on 2 February 2009

Epworth, because the wages that he received were not enough to pay for his transport costs. 15 of the respondents in the catering sector that the researcher spoke to stayed in the locations, and most of them rented single rooms, because they were affordable. It was common for rooms in the locations to be rented for R 100 or R 150 per month. During the peak of the crisis in 2008, some landlords in the locations had begun charging their tenants in the form of groceries. Shelton had this to say: 'Since last month (July 2008) my landlord started to make me pay my rent in the form of groceries. In the room I am lodging in Epworth, the landlord said I should give him two kilogrammes of sugar and two litres of cooking oil'.⁸¹ Ten of the workers who were interviewed in the catering sector revealed that they were taking part in some informal sector activities such as trading in forex, buying and selling cellphone recharge cards, and also trading in petty commodities such as cigarettes and vegetables in their free time. However, eight of the catering workers who took part in some of the above activities in the informal sector confessed that their informal activities were on a very small scale, and did not augment their wages from their formal employment significantly.

7.5 Bank Workers

During Zimbabwe's period of hyper-inflation, the banking sector is one sector that continued to reap large profits while businesses in other sectors of the economy were shutting down. Most banking institutions were embarking on speculative activities such as buying shares on Zimbabwe's thriving stock exchange, which ironically during the period of the crisis was the best performing bourse in Africa. Banks were also buying assets such as buildings and cars, in order to hedge themselves against the country's ravaging hyper-inflation. Most banks, including the central bank were also involved in foreign currency activities on the black market. The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe would print large sums of Zimbabwean dollars and use this nearly worthless currency to buy foreign currency in Zimbabwe's thriving foreign currency black market. Other banks were likewise doing the same, and buying forex on the black market with part of their daily allocations of cash from the central bank, (Interview with Collen Gwiyo, 9 January 2009). As a result, most of the banking institutions in Zimbabwe were able to hedge themselves against Zimbabwe's hyper-inflation. The profits that were being made by the banks trickled down to the working class sections of the sector, such as the bank tellers and other junior

⁸¹ Interview with Shelton on 5 August 2008

bank clerks. Paula Porusingazi, a bank teller with one of Zimbabwe's commercial banks narrated the favourable working conditions that bank workers were enjoying:

Even though working conditions in Zimbabwe are generally tough because of inflation, my bank has been trying to give us remuneration that is better than what most workers get in other companies. We earn salaries twice a month, and last month, my two salaries amounted to Z\$ 120 million (Then, in October 2008, this was equivalent to between US\$ 100 and US\$ 120 on the forex black market). Each person also gets fuel coupons of up to 50 litres, which one can sell to other motorists, if one does not have a car. Before 2006, we used to get bank loans and I was able to buy myself a second-hand Toyota Corolla, after I got a bank loan in 2005. Bank loans are now no longer there, because the inflation that is too high. So, even though my salary is not enough to buy what I want, it is still better than what most people are getting in other companies. There are also opportunities of 'burning money' for clients and getting kick-backs from these clients in the form of US dollars. This is however not allowed by the bank managers, and if they catch you doing it these days, you will get fired.⁸²

Miriam Sithole, a 26 year old, who had been a bank teller at Stanbic Bank for three years, echoed Paula's statement when she narrated the relatively favourable working conditions and remuneration in the banking sector, as compared to other sectors of the economy:

I have been a bank teller with Stanbic Bank for three years now, and although the salary that I receive is not enough to buy all my needs, especially household furniture, I think I am better off than my friends who work as secretaries in private companies in town because my salary is always higher than theirs, even though our academic qualifications are almost the same. Last month, (October 2008), i got two salaries which totalled Z\$ 150 million (a total of around US\$ 146 on the parallel market in Zimbabwe at the end of October 2008). Getting paid twice a month is quite helpful in ensuring that we always have some money to buy basics and to be able to report for work. Apart from my salary, the bank used to give us soft loans to buy goods like furniture, although this was stopped at the beginning of the year. The bank was citing the difficult economic conditions as the reason for stopping the facility. We are also provided with transport, to and from work and so this saves me in terms of transport costs. Even though the situation has been tough in Zimbabwe in the last number of years, I think the banking sector is the best sector to work in at the moment. Another advantage of working in a bank is that I am able to withdraw my whole salary without having to endure the long queues for many days like the other members of the public who have limits to the amounts of money they can withdraw.⁸³

Seven bank tellers interviewed were travelling to places such as Dubai and China to buy electronic goods which they would resell in Zimbabwe. The 'burning of money' was helping people to fly with Air Zimbabwe for almost nothing, as they would burn a few US dollars and

⁸² Interview with Paula Porusingazi conducted on 8 December 2008.

⁸³ Interview with Miriam Sithole conducted on 11 November 2008.

then pay for their airfares with the quadrillions or quintillions of Zimbabwean dollars they would have obtained in the RTGS transactions. In reality, the national airline was making huge losses, and that is part of the reason why it is currently financially unstable.

On whether engaging in forms of mass action led by the ZCTU or the MDC was an option that the working class was supposed to consider, Evans, a bank teller, argued:

The situation is tough of course, and I would join mass action that has the participation of a lot of workers, but I am not sure whether most workers will have the courage to engage in protest action. I think most people are afraid and disinterested in forms of mass action like stay-aways.

Even though the working class in other sectors of the economy was showing signs of disappearing, in sectors such as banking, the working class continued to remain intact and appeared to be able to cope better with the economic crisis, as compared to the working class in teaching for instance, which had to leave formal employment and engage largely in petty commodity trading. The introduction of dollarisation in the economy, which brought an end to speculative activities, however, changed the situation dramatically for the banks and their workers, as most banks struggled to remunerate their employees in hard currency, because of depressed deposits in the banking sector.

The Worker of April 2009 reported that a massive retrenchment exercise was looming in the banking sector as most institutions were struggling to adjust to the dictates of a dollarised economy. Several banks such as Zimbank, CABS and Stanbic, had already closed some of their branches in reaction to the slump in business, as the public no longer had confidence in the sector (ZIBAWU, April 2009). ZIBAWU went on to report that contract workers and those that worked in lending and advances departments had been the most adversely affected as banks were no longer issuing out loans. This had resulted in many banks being forced to streamline their operations owing to the slump in business as most people no longer visited banks. The central bank had already retrenched some of its employees, mostly those who were processing Real Time Gross Settlements and some from its money printing company, Fidelity Printers (ZIBAWU, April 2009). Fidelity had been rendered virtually useless by the use of multiple-currencies, since the use of the Zimbabwean dollar was shelved in March 2009. The Secretary General of the Zimbabwe Banks and Allied Workers Union (ZIBAWU), Wellington Likukuma explained the bleak situation that banks were facing:

There is very little banking going on due to some factors and very few people are making deposits, the bulk of clients are going to the banks for withdrawals. There are a few banks that have closed some branches owing to some operational factors and a slump in business, but they have not got rid of the workers. Most banks are not retrenching because they cannot afford the huge costs that come with retrenchment packages.⁸⁴

Consequently, the working class in the banking sector is the one that was now facing serious threats of disintegration because of the dollarisation of the economy.

In a follow up interview with Miriam on 24 February 2009, she bemoaned the difficulties that her bank and the other banks were facing, to reward their employees in hard currency, in line with an economy that had largely dollarised:

The management of my bank in its negotiations with our workers committee agreed to pay us in hard currency, with effect from the end of January, which was last month, and again at the end of this month, but the management is now turning around and insisting on paying us in the form of those problematic Sakunda fuel coupons again. The management is saying it does not have enough forex to pay us, since most of the banking transactions are done in Zimbabwean dollars. I am not sure how I shall pay rent at the end of this month and with everything now dollarised, it is going to be difficult for me.⁸⁵

The banking sector which had been one of the most lucrative sectors to work in during the period of the crisis was now in big trouble, as the tables had been turned against it by the dollarisation of the Zimbabwean economy. In the first two months of 2009, the banking sector was not engaging in many foreign currency transactions and the banks did not have enough foreign currency reserves to sustainably pay their workers in hard currency (Bloch 2009).

7.6 Informal Forex Dealers

The period of sanctions was characterised by increased participation of formerly working class people in Zimbabwe's informal sector. Dumisani who was 26 year old, and was once a panel-beater at Delta Corporation from 2002 to 2004, but was now a forex dealer and diamond dealer, had this to say concerning the informal sector in Zimbabwe: 'My friend, I discovered that I was sinking into deep poverty at Delta Corporation. That is the reason why I decided to engage in forex, fuel and diamond dealing activities. I am reaping a lot of profits, especially from the

⁸⁴ Interview with Wellington Likukuma, the Secretary General of ZIBAWU, conducted on 1 May 2009.

⁸⁵ Interview with Miriam conducted on 24 February 2009.

diamonds I am getting from Chiadzwa.⁸⁶ David Muchirahondo (popularly known as Diva amongst forex traders at Harare's Roadport bus terminus) who once worked for Olivine Industries as a motor-mechanic says that he was retrenched by the company in 2003 and decided to engage in forex dealing as a means of survival. Diva narrated:

When I was retrenched, I had to come up with a plan for survival and I decided to join other forex dealers who were buying and selling forex at Roadport bus terminus. I used part of my retrenchment package to buy forex worth US\$ 300, and that is how I began dealing in early 2004. I can tell you that from buying and selling forex, I was able to change my life in no time. After two years of forex dealing, I was able to buy a good second hand Japanese vehicle which I imported from Durban and I also managed to buy a housing stand in New Marlborough and I am busy building a cottage which I am about to complete. After that, I shall build a bigger house and then leave Chitungwiza where I am currently renting a six-roomed house. Between 2004 and 2006, I made a lot of profits from forex dealing and I even had regular clients who always came to change their forex with me. From 2006 until now, there has however been a heavy influx of people who have joined us to become forex dealers. I am sure as you can see, Roadport bus terminus is infested with forex dealers and in fact, it is not only Roadport now, but also around Ximex Mall, Eastgate shopping mall and at Copa Cabana bus terminus here in the central business district. This influx of forex dealers, some who are runners (agents) of forex for the Reserve Bank, have now hurt us because there is now heavy competition and I am no longer making as much money as I used to. However, my regular clients are the ones that sustain me, and anytime they want to change forex, they just have to call Diva.⁸⁷

The rapid 'dollarisation' of the Zimbabwean economy from September 2008, when the Central Bank governor, Gideon Gono announced that shops and traders could now apply for licences to trade in foreign currency, severely hurt the operations of dealers in the former lucrative forex parallel market. People no longer had to change their forex into Zimbabwean dollars in order to buy goods. Instead, they were just purchasing with that forex in the shops, since that was the preferred form of legal tender, rather than the Zimbabwean dollar which had been severely eroded by hyper-inflation. In follow-up interviews with Dumisani and Diva in early February 2009, the two gentlemen were mourning the overnight collapse of their lucrative source of income. Dumisani bemoaned:

My friend, the situation is not going on very well for me. Forex dealing has been wiped out overnight by this dollarisation. One needs to adapt quickly and I am now into repairing of damaged tyres at Caltex Service Station in Hatfield, where I am renting a small corner from the owner of the fuel station. I learnt how to repair tyres when I was with Delta Corporation.

⁸⁶ Interview with Dumisani conducted on 5 October 2008.

⁸⁷ Interview with Diva conducted on 7 October 2008.

Business is a bit slow, because I have just started this business and so many people who may require my services do not as yet know that I can fix tyres. At least everyday, I get some US dollars to buy goods that are needed home and to pay for my rent at the end of the month. I am renting two rooms here in Hatfield and I am currently paying R 400 every month for the two rooms.⁸⁸

Diva also remarked that the 'dollarisation' of the Zimbabwean economy had wiped out his forex dealing overnight and he reflected:

My lucrative source of survival has been destroyed and I now have to find another alternative source in order to put food on the table. I have not decided on what to do next, but in the meantime, I am hoarding and selling cellphone recharge cards, but the profits I am making are miserly as compared to forex dealing. There are also too many recharge cards hawkers and this just makes it more difficult. I am also dealing now in forex cross-rates at roadport. What I do is I exchange the rands that I will be having for US dollars with people who will be boarding buses to South Africa. A lot of people who will be going to South Africa for shopping in some cases will not be having the South African rand, but the US dollars, so for them to transact easily in South Africa, they exchange their US dollars for the rands which we will be having. The current official exchange rate between the US dollar and the rand hovers around 1:10, but when I am exchanging the rands for the US dollars, I use a rate of 1:8, so that I can get some profit from my rands. So in other words, I inflate the value of the rand and that is how I make profit from this cross-rate system. After engaging in these transactions, I then go to shops and change all the US dollars I would have gotten into rands, and I repeat the cycle again. This is not as lucrative as the forex dealing we were doing, but at least I get something. But as I told you, I need to look for another source of income that is more stable and sustainable. This dollarisation however, has really killed some of us.⁸⁹

The suspension of the RTGS system ('burning money') of transacting, which was discussed in Chapter 5 of this thesis, proved to be a blow to all forex dealers interviewed and also other members of the working class who were benefitting from this activity. To the dismay of many forex dealers and speculators, the RTGS system was suspended by the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe on 3 October 2008, due to the fact that a lot of speculators were making fast money overnight and becoming instant trillionaires and quadrillionaires in Zimbabwean dollars, thereby stoking hyper-inflation. Too much liquidity was being created on the market that was disconnected with production and the sale of goods. Tafara Zamchiya, a forex dealer commented, 'Well, this is only a temporary setback because definitely we were spinning a lot of money using the 'R Tigo',⁹⁰ system. We shall however find a way of continuing with the

⁸⁸ Interview with Dumisani conducted on 7 February 2009.

⁸⁹ Interview with Diva conducted on 12 February 2009.

⁹⁰ 'R Tigo' was street lingo for the RTGS system.

speculative activities, otherwise how do you think we will survive? We can always use the cheque system to continue with our speculative activities’.

It is not only the forex dealers who had been benefitting from the ‘burning of money’. Workers in different sectors of formal employment were also engaged in this activity, as long as they had access to foreign currency. Taurai and Chipso, who were bank tellers with respective commercial banks, revealed that they had made a lot of money through the RTGS system. They were, however, afraid to divulge much information, since they feared victimisation from their banks. Some of the bank tellers who were involved in the RTGS transactions were being fired from their positions by their banks for engaging in illegal activities, after the central bank suspended the RTGS system in October 2008. This was done because the central bank claimed that this was fueling speculative activities in the Zimbabwean economy.

However, most of the other workers in the factories and industries were not able to ‘burn money’ because they did not have access to US dollars. Bank workers and teachers were in a privileged position, being able to buy forex and to use it for speculative purposes. What was shown in the research was that, although almost 90 per cent of the respondents were engaging in some form of coping mechanism to survive Zimbabwe’s hyper-inflation, all informal forex dealers and 80 per cent of the bank workers interviewed, were managing to respond well to the crisis. However, as Mrs Kuchera who was a forex dealer commented, ‘It’s a dog eat dog situation in Zimbabwe. The corruption starts from the politicians themselves, so how are we supposed to respond as well, when there is so much suffering in the country?’ However, developments in the Zimbabwean economy in 2009, notably, the dollarisation of the Zimbabwean economy, threatened some of the survival strategies of informal traders such as the forex dealers, as the Zimbabwean dollar was shelved.

When asked whether they would join forces with ranks of the working class to embark on mass action, eight of the informal forex dealers interviewed argued that embarking on mass action was counter-productive for them, because their incomes were directly dependent on their participation in informal activities on a day-to-day basis. Consequently, embarking on mass action would result in loss of income. Seven of the dealers went as far as saying that they did not want to have anything to do with formal sector employment, or the struggles that workers in formal employment have to go through, in order to improve their incomes. The divergence of interests between formal and informal economy workers can be explained by the fact that,

arguably, in terms of the latter's work, experience of exploitation and consciousness, these informal sector traders had stepped out of the working class albeit temporarily in most cases. On whether she would join a working class protest against hyper-inflation and the political crisis in Zimbabwe, Rosemary who was a forex dealer revealed:

I would obviously not join it, because my livelihood is directly dependent on my input, and so if I join those indefinite stay-aways for instance, I would lose the opportunity to make money. Moreover, if the situation normalises, I will again not be able to make the money I am making at the moment. So the crisis is in a way allowing me to make money from forex dealing.

Such sentiments by the informal forex dealers suggested that those levels of class consciousness necessary to improve the working class' situation were absent from the informal traders.

The informal sector in Zimbabwe during the period of the crisis in the 2000s was characterised by widespread speculative activities that in some cases were of an extra-legal nature. Some of these activities included forex dealing, fuel dealing, trading in precious minerals such as gold and diamonds and petty commodity trading. This was largely because of the ravaging effects of hyper-inflation, which made it difficult to operate businesses profitably. Incessant problems of shortages in foreign currency, electricity and water, also contributed in making operations in the informal economy difficult, just as in the formal sector. These kinds of speculative activities are what sustained most workers during the economic implosion in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe is no exception though, because when Latin American countries were experiencing the scourge of hyper-inflation in the 1970s and 1980s, many people who belonged to the working class joined the informal sector in order to supplement their incomes or for their overall survival, (Gonzales de la Rocha, 1991). Acosta (2005: 5) elaborates further by citing the case of Peru, 'The significant growth of the informal sector in Peru, parallel with the shrinking of formal employment, both in the private and public sector, clearly shows that informal employment has played an important role for the working class in Peru, acting as a safety cushion, preventing them from annihilation, saving the country the levels of unrest experienced elsewhere'. The fact that the working class that was fast shrinking in Zimbabwe, was able to find a safety cushion in the form of speculative activities in the informal sector, may have prevented unrest in the country, given the fact that the formal sector was contracting and people's real incomes had shrunk to a negligible amount.

7.7 Salient Effects of the Crisis on the Workers

Workplace interviews revealed that the primary school teachers in the public sector were severely affected by the Zimbabwean crisis, as the incomes of the teachers steadily declined as the crisis worsened, and eventually became eroded to a negligible amount during the peak of the Zimbabwean crisis in 2008. The workerist responses by the teachers to embark on industrial action, notably the long strike of 2008 did not lead to an improvement in the dire situation of the teachers, as the government failed to pay remuneration that could keep pace with hyper-inflation. This resulted in an estimated 45,000 teachers joining the ranks of the diaspora between 2000 and 2008, according to ZIMTA and the PTUZ. Most of the teachers who remained behind tried their hand at various survivalist activities in the informal sector that included cross-border trading, petty commodity trading and foreign currency dealing in order to sustain their families.

The manufacturing sector was not spared the devastating effects of the hyper-inflation and the political crisis either. With most manufacturing companies that continued to operate downsizing their operations and struggling to pay decent incomes to their workers, about 80 percent of the workers employed in this sector who were interviewed said they had resorted to workerist responses. These included bargaining for benefits such as groceries as a form of payment, free lunches and transport from their employers. The artisans also increasingly relied on their skills in order to moonlight during their spare time in an endeavor to supplement their income as the crisis worsened in the 2000s.

Workers interviewed in the catering sector appeared to be the ones who fared worst among those investigated, as 14 of them did not enjoy non-monetary benefits. 15 catering workers interviewed claimed that they were unable to moonlight, as they lacked the specialised skills possessed by artisans in the manufacturing industry. The informal sector deals that six of the respondents in the catering sector were engaged in were on a very small scale as compared to the rewarding cross-border activities involving teachers. It was also in the catering sector that the researcher came across five respondents who had to walk long distances to and from work, because they could not afford to pay for public transport.

The Zimbabwean crisis had paradoxical outcomes for different sectors, and the banking sector is one sector that brings out the contradictions of the Zimbabwean crisis on some of the sectors in Zimbabwe. The banking sector fared well during the crisis largely because of the

speculative activities most banks were involved in. These benefits trickled down to their employees such as bank tellers who were being paid twice a month during the peak of the Zimbabwean crisis in 2008 by most banks, in a bid to cushion them from the hyper-inflation. The ZCTU monthly lists of minimum incomes amongst its affiliates in 2008 also consistently saw the banking fraternity topping these lists. Workplace interviews also revealed that the bank tellers, unlike workers in teaching, manufacturing and catering, were best placed to benefit from financial transactions such as 'burning money', which were highly rewarding during the peak of the crisis. Thus, the banking sector shows that not all sectors suffered from the Zimbabwean crisis. If anything, sectors such as banking thrived during the height of the crisis.

70 per cent of the workers interviewed dismissed and rejected collective action as a possible response to hyper-inflation and the political crisis. They did for different reasons. Firstly, some of the workers felt that previous forms of mass action failed because of poor worker mobilisation by the labour movement leaders, including the MDC leaders. This history of failures - according to most of the workers, from 2000, prevented any successful future forms of protests, as the trade union leaders who had presided over previously unsuccessful forms of mass action were still in office at the ZCTU. Secondly, some of the workers cited the repressive nature of the ZANU (PF) regime towards any form of opposition or protests against its rule as a major impediment against any successful form of mass action. The disinterest in collective action as a response to the hyper-inflation and political crisis that had pauperised most workers, suggested that workers had low levels of class consciousness that prevented them coming together as a collective to protest the crisis. Thus, the successful forms of mass action of the late 1990s, failed to be replicated in the 2000s, as the working class became mired in an unprecedented political and economic crisis. The class consciousness and militancy displayed by the workers in other countries that once experienced hyper-inflation like Germany and Argentina, proved to be shockingly absent amongst the ranks of the working class in Harare. This can be attributed, as has been argued elsewhere in the thesis, to the partial disintegration of the working class in physical and organisational terms, which in turn might have contributed towards the gradual reduction in forms of class consciousness amongst the workers. Consequently, responding to the Zimbabwean crisis, as a class or collective, gradually lost appeal. The increased repressive nature of the ZANU (PF) government only worsened the plight of the working class.

Reduced levels of class consciousness amongst some sections of the working class is a

notion that is ignored by radical leftist scholars such as Gwisai and civil society leaders in Zimbabwe. This thesis argues that, because of the gradual disappearance of a sense of class consciousness amongst the workers, the 'working class revolution' which the radical leftists argue should have been organised by the MDC and ZCTU leaders, would not have been possible or successful.

It must also be noted that there was a negative attitude towards workplace strikes to push for remuneration that was in line with the Poverty Datum Line (PDL) amongst some of the interviewees because they reasoned that it was not useful to engage in forms of industrial action, as most companies were struggling financially. Consequently, the argument of the workers was that the problem of their incomes that were constantly shrinking because of hyper-inflation was as a result of an unfavourable macro-economic environment prevailing in the country and not *per se* an issue of their organisations refusing to remunerate them fairly. This saw workers in sectors such as manufacturing and catering resorting to workerist responses such as bargaining for benefits that were non-monetary like free lunches, payment in the form of groceries and transport to and from work. Furthermore, a sense of class consciousness in the ranks of some of the working class was always in doubt, as most of the interviewees in the manufacturing and catering sectors were not union members, were unaware of their trade union leaders, or the names of the trade unions that represented their sectors of the economy.

The interviews with the workers were quite revealing with regards to the workerist responses in their bid to survive hyper-inflation in Zimbabwe. From 1997, when the crisis began to manifest itself to 2000, it is evident that workers were relying a lot on the collective bargaining exercise to improve their situation and to sustain their families. During this period, inflation in Zimbabwe ranged mostly between 19 percent and 55.8 percent (Central Statistical Office 2004) and so wage and salary increment gains could improve the situation of the workers, albeit in a small manner. But from what Francis from Delta Corporation revealed, the collective bargaining exercise had not yet been reduced to bargaining for fringe benefits, such as free transport and fuel coupons, as what was happening in some of the sectors of the economy during the peak of the Zimbabwean crisis.

Industrial action and national strikes were also a weapon that was used quite often by the workers to demonstrate their anger and frustration towards the state of the economy. Raftopoulos (2000) points to the strikes and food riots of 1997 and 1998 as a sign of

disenchantment of the workers to ZANU (PF) policies. Thus, the period between 1997 and 2000 was marked by mostly workerist reactions to the crisis that was beginning to engulf Zimbabwean workers.

The years 2000 to 2008 witnessed responses from workers that displayed resourcefulness as workers began to exploit openings in the informal sector (survivalist responses) to sustain themselves and their families. The period 2000-2008 was characterised by increased repression on the part of the Mugabe regime that was increasingly becoming unpopular because of the economic meltdown. This is when the ZANU (PF) government introduced the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) in 2001 to make it difficult, if not impossible, for workers to engage in large scale strikes and demonstrations as they had done in the late 1990s. AIPPA also gagged the independent press which culminated in the banning of the *Daily News*, a newspaper that was very popular amongst the working class and predominantly sympathetic to the MDC and the ZCTU, two organisations that were trying to promote the agenda of the workers. Since political space became a very treacherous terrain, as a result of the draconian pieces of legislation that were being crafted by the beleaguered ZANU (PF) government, workers began to show a streak of individualism as almost each worker was now looking at ways and means of sustaining one's own family, due to the fact that confronting the regime as a collective, through strikes and mass action was proving to be difficult, if not dangerous. Thus, from 2000, a shift from workerist responses, to mostly survivalism, was witnessed amongst large sections of the working class, as informal sector activities such as cross border trading, moonlighting, forex dealing, fuel dealing and diamond and gold dealing and general petty commodity trading became widespread. Unlike workerism, partyism was however always retained by the workers, as large numbers of this constituency voted for the MDC in the 2000, 2005 and 2008 elections.

7.8 Conclusions

A number of conclusions can be reached from the workplace experiences of the workers interviewed. One of them is that moonlighting in the informal sector proved to be a very helpful way of coping with the crisis in Zimbabwe for the workers. During the research, I found out that moonlighting was very common amongst the artisans and the teachers. A possible explanation for this is that the skills of qualified artisans is readily sought after as people will always seek the

services of artisans such as electricians or mechanics who can charge reasonable rates for services rendered, as compared to approaching the companies that employ these artisans. Most of the artisans interviewed carried out their moonlighting during the weekends, when they were not at work. Most were also charging in forex from September 2008, when the central bank gave permission to certain shops and traders to conduct their transactions in foreign currency. The fragility and volatility of the Zimbabwean dollar also caused most people engaging in moonlighting to resort to charging in foreign currency. Most of the teachers interviewed were also engaging in moonlighting, as they were providing private lessons to students adversely affected by the long strike of the teachers in 2008. Those parents who could afford to pay for private lessons for their children were doing so, and this is how some teachers were able to continue making income, since their salaries had become paltry to the extent that between October and December 2008, teachers' salaries in primary and secondary schools were less than US\$ 10 per month (*The Worker*, December 2008).

Of interest in the interviews conducted, was the fact that a majority of the respondents were below the age of thirty years. According to managers who were interviewed, most of the workers who had been employed in the factories and industries before the crisis began in 1997, had either left the country, joined the informal sector or died of A.I.D.S. Zinyama (2002) argues that since independence in 1980, emigration has occurred in two main waves. The first, during the early 1980s, involved mainly white Zimbabweans. Zinyama further postulates that it was reported that from 1980 to 1983, the country recorded a loss of 19,300 skilled and professional workers, mostly to South Africa, Australia and the United Kingdom. It is Zinyama's contention that this wave of migration was somewhat mitigated by returning Zimbabweans with high qualifications but limited experience, who filled most of the vacant posts.

A second phase of emigration began soon after the disputed general elections in 2000 and the commencement of the fast track land reform programme (Zinyama 2002). The destinations have varied from nearby Southern African countries to as far away as New Zealand, Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States. So, what started as a trickle turned into an exodus that bled the country of a reservoir of skills that neighbouring countries and those abroad have welcomed. The UNDP (2008) report on Zimbabwe argues that from survey data, it is estimated that the population of Zimbabweans resident outside the country is at least two million people. Makina (2007: 14) puts South Africa at the top of the list of countries where Zimbabweans have

migrated with an official figure of just over 1,000,000. Makina gets the figure from Statistics South Africa. However, according to media reports which allege widespread border hopping on the South African and Zimbabwean border, the figure might actually be higher. According to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the United Kingdom has the second largest population of Zimbabweans living abroad, with an estimated 200,000-500,000, while Botswana is estimated to have between 100,000 and 300,000.

The teaching sector was badly affected by the economic crisis in Zimbabwe, and this was reflected by the number of official resignations that took place as Zimbabwe's economic meltdown worsened in 2008. Raymond Majongwe, the Secretary General of the Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ), in September 2008 asserted that 15,200 had migrated to neighbouring countries such as Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland since the beginning of 2008. Majongwe went on to claim that 8,000 teachers had left Zimbabwe after the first term of 2008, while a further 7,200 left after the second term of 2008. The crippling strike action by teachers in the third term of 2008 also gave some of the teachers a huge opportunity to conduct their cross-border activities in an unfettered manner, which was however detrimental to school children in the government schools. Private schools were largely spared of the industrial action by the teachers, because teachers in these schools were paid in foreign currency by the affluent parents who sent their children to these schools (PTUZ 2008).

The departure of workers from Zimbabwe's formal sector left the sector severely depleted to such an extent that the ZCTU in December 2008 estimated that about 700,000 workers were left in Zimbabwe's formal sector. The UNDP report of 2008 argues that out of Zimbabwe's estimated population of 13,000,000, this means that only six percent of the country's population was in formal employment. It should however be noted that the departure of workers from the formal sector was not always voluntary and in a number of cases, workers were retrenched by companies because of the unfavourable economic conditions that saw companies not performing well and having to be forced to make some of the workers redundant.

The widespread dollarisation of the Zimbabwean economy in September 2008 by the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe in response to the weakness and volatility of the Zimbabwean dollar, had devastating effects on the livelihoods of many forex dealers, fuel dealers, cellphone airtime dealers and RTGS speculators who were still 'burning money'. Bloch (2009) argues that the approval of the widespread use of foreign currency by the Zimbabwean government, effectively

'killed' the beleaguered Zimbabwean dollar and forex dealers' markets. Interviews with forex 'barons' like Diva and Dumisani revealed that that forex dealing business was one of the earliest casualties of the devastating effects of dollarisation, as forex dealers saw business disappear overnight when the Zimbabwean dollar was rejected for currencies like the US dollar and the rand, when the government approved the use of foreign currency to designated shops that would have applied to sell their products in foreign currency. This saw the termination of the use of the Zimbabwean dollar, because even those shops and traders that did not have licences or permission from the central bank to charge in forex began to do so, thereby rendering the Zimbabwean dollar unwanted legal tender. The *Zimbabwe Independent* of 13 February 2009 aptly sums up the demise of the forex black market when it reported:

A few months ago, fast talking dealers swarmed a downtown intersection that serves as a long-distance bus depot called Roadport also known as the 'World Bank'. They waved handfuls and bagfuls of cash at this Roadport terminus, the Holiday Inn Hotel, Eastgate shopping mall, Ximex mall and Copa Cabana bus terminus. Now those places are quiet, no shops accept Zimbabwean dollars anymore and most dealers are now broke like most other people.³⁶

Some resourceful dealers like Diva were still in the forex business, doing cross-rates between the US dollar and the South African rand, even though this was not as rewarding as conducting forex exchanges with the Zimbabwean dollar, which was extremely fragile.

The dollarisation of the economy, and the removal of price controls by the NIPCC in September 2008, saw the fuel service stations suddenly awash with petrol and diesel because they could now openly charge fuel in forex without fears that the government would prosecute them. This development saw the fuel traders who would sell fuel in the streets or bushes, away from the glare of the police get out of business, as most consumers opted to buy fuel from the fuel stations where one was guaranteed *bona fide* fuel which had not been mixed with water or paraffin, as some of these fuel dealers were notorious for doing. Fuel dealers were also hurt by competition in the latter part of 2008 from workers who were now increasingly being paid in the form of fuel coupons which they could dispose of, for a price of their liking on the market. Consequently, the influx of fuel coupons on the market and the fuel in the service stations put the fuel black market into jeopardy. Street vendors who had been selling cellphone airtime (juice cards) in the streets also found themselves in trouble from September 2008 because of the dollarisation. Prior to the dollarisation of the economy airtime was readily available from the street vendors as it was being sold in Zimbabwean dollars. However, dollarisation caught most

vendors flat-footed as they had to buy airtime from cellphone network providers in hard currency. Accessing the foreign currency was proving to be a challenge for most of these vendors, and most of them found themselves out of business overnight.

The sealing off of the Chiadzwa diamond fields in Manicaland province of Zimbabwe also cut off a very lucrative source of earning a livelihood for the daring, who were prepared to go and mine diamonds at the heavily protected fields. The Zimbabwean government decided to send the military to seal off the diamond fields in October 2008, on the pretext that the diamonds should be mined properly, with the revenue derived from these diamonds going to state coffers, so that the government could then use this money for the benefit of the whole nation. The *Zimbabwean* newspaper of 6 March, 2009 reported that the Zimbabwean government confiscated 100 luxurious vehicles of people who were mostly engaged in forex and diamond deals in early March under an operation code-named *Mari wakaiwana kupi?* (Where did you get your money from?) Most supermarkets that previously had been empty were now full with goods, mostly from South Africa, as they were now permitted to sell in forex and because the lid on price controls had also been removed. This meant that those street vendors who used to sell foodstuffs in short supply in the streets were now facing stiff competition and risked losing their source of livelihood. Therefore, one can conclude that the dollarisation of the Zimbabwean economy which effectively started in September 2008, to a greater extent wiped out the black market in Zimbabwe, which was a source of income for quite a number of workers who had to supplement their ever-shrinking formal sector incomes.

Most Zimbabwean workers were affected in a negative manner by the dollarisation of the economy, largely because most companies were not paying their workers enough hard currency to sustain their families. At the end of February 2008, the Government on National Unity (GNU) was able to pay all the civil servants a uniform salary of US\$100. 75 per cent of the respondents argued that the salary was not enough, but that at least it was a start and was definitely much better than the worthless trillions that teachers were earning before February 2008. When the fieldwork was completed in May 2009, some companies were totally failing to pay their employees in hard currency, and the banking sector was one such example.

In a twist of cruel irony, the bank workers who previously had been the most highly paid workers at least in 2008, according to the ZCTU statistics on incomes of its affiliates were still being paid in the form of the worthless Zimbabwean dollars and fuel coupons, which meant that

class. The working class in sectors such as teaching was starting to re-compose again, because of the more stable form of reward (US\$) that the workers like teachers were now getting. Schools that had been shut for many months re-opened, and most teachers who had abandoned the ranks of the working class to become petty commodity dealers in the informal sector re-joined the ranks of the working class. At the time of writing, it was the working class in the banking sector that appeared to be in danger of disintegrating. It remains to be seen whether reconstruction will successfully take place.

It is also clear from the chapter that the main response of the workers interviewed who were still formally employed, was to begin to participate in informal sector activities while still retaining their jobs, in order to cope with the economic crisis. Workerist forms of responses such as workers' protests, food riots and political participation which were prevalent in the late 1990s were not very visible, as the crisis worsened in Zimbabwe, but this can be attributed to the disintegration of the working class at the physical and organisational levels. The interviews with the workers revealed that collective workplace responses ironically receded, as the workers became more pauperised by the crisis. Interviews with the working class respondents revealed that it was not only the physical disintegration of the working class that caused this lethargic attitude towards mass action, but also, possibly low levels of class consciousness that prevented the workers rallying together to protest against the Zimbabwean crisis which had impoverished the workers. The 2000s witnessed a shift in the responses to the crisis, as survivalism became the main form of reaction to the crisis.

Partyism was also made use of, as large sections of the working class supported and voted for the MDC in the 2000, 2005 and 2008 elections. Partyism as a response to the crisis partially paid dividends for the workers, as their agency as a collective enabled the MDC to win the harmonised elections of 2008. The MDC's victory was, however, not conclusive and this led to the formation of the GNU which dollarised the Zimbabwean economy. Dollarisation had the effects of wiping away the devastating effects of hyper-inflation and it also led to the re-integration of sectors that had almost collapsed, such as public sector teaching. The immediate aftermath of the dollarisation of the economy, however, had paradoxical outcomes for sectors that to some extent benefitted from the crisis, for instance the banking sector, as most banks, including the central bank, struggled to pay their workers in foreign currency. The workplace experiences revealed that it is important to periodise the Zimbabwean crisis, as shifts from

workerism between 1997-2000, to survivalism, which increasingly became speculative in nature, as well as partyism, were witnessed between 2000 and 2008. Unevenness in the working class' experiences of the crisis was also revealed, as sectors such as banking fared better during the peak of the crisis in 2008 than other sectors such as catering.



CHAPTER 8

HOUSEHOLD EXPERIENCES AND RESPONSES

8.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the household experiences of working class households during the period of crisis. The households of the workers were interviewed in order to complement the chapters on unions and the workplace by looking at the experiences at the household level. This is because we know from the literature that decisions about survival strategies are generally taken at the household level (Portes and Castells 1989, Lingam 2005). One can only fully understand the responses of workers in terms of work, if we also have some sense of the alternative sources of income, not only cash income, generated by other family members.

The household interviews were conducted in the high density locations of Highfields, Mufakose, Glen View, Mbare, Dzivarasekwa and Glen Norah. Teachers in the low-density suburb of Hatfield were also interviewed. Twenty of the workers who were interviewed in the workplace interviews were again interviewed in household interviews (though this time it was with their spouses). This might have created some bias. However, 14 workers were interviewed twice because of convenience and safety reasons, since the bulk of the research was conducted in 2008, a year that was marked by severe violence that was centred around the presidential run-off election of that year. Interviewing some of the workers at the workplace and in their households also provided me with the benefit of seeing how individuals coped in the two most important parts of their lives. Sometimes, the answers I got from workers who had been interviewed at the workplace were similar – teachers becoming cross-border traders, for instance – but this was not always the case.

The presentation of the data focuses on particular households. The rationale behind this is to reveal how different details of responses came together. The families that are presented in the data were also selected because of the way they highlight different kinds of experience. In other words, I am not simply going through all the couples interviewed, but rather have made a selection, thereby already contributing to the analysis. Whilst there is value in considering

families in this holistic manner, it is also important to comment on the general pattern that begins to emerge, and I do this in the discussion of findings.

Finally, the household interviews revealed that the full range of experiences and responses at the household level were considerably broader than those captured in the workplace and union chapters. This is, however, not to suggest that the workerist responses that were limited during the peak of the crisis were not important and did not matter.

8.2 Moonlighting and the Chogureyis

In my interviews with the households, moonlighting (previously mentioned in the workplace interviews) was re-inforced as a source of income that was sustaining a number of working class families in the locations, especially in cases where one of the spouses was a skilled artisan. In the research it was found that of the 16 artisans interviewed, most of them were moonlighting in their spare time when they were not at work. In most cases they were also charging in forex, (mostly US\$ or Rands) for their services like repairing cars or fixing electrical problems. The wives of three quarters of the artisans were not working in formal employment, but in the informal economy, where they were trading in petty commodities, like selling vegetables and goods like sugar, salt, meal-meal and air-time (juice cards). An Interview with the Chogureyis revealed these survivalist strategies.

On 19 October 2008, I visited the home of Mr. and Mrs. Chogureyi who reside in the working class area of Mufakose. Mr. Chogureyi was a panel-beater at one of the largest beverage manufacturing concerns in Zimbabwe, Delta Corporation. Mr. Chogureyi had been with Delta Corporation since 1988, this including the four years of apprenticeship which he undertook there. Mr. Chogureyi was one of my respondents when I conducted the workplace interviews. Mr. and Mrs. Chogureyi were 43 years and 41 years old, respectively. The couple had three children, with the eldest being a 20 year old son who was studying Tourism and Hospitality at the University of Zimbabwe. The second child was another boy who was 16 years old, doing form Four (Grade Eleven) at Harare High school in Mbare. The last born is a girl who was in form Two (Grade Nine) at Harare High school. The Chogureyis were staying in a six-roomed house which Mr Chogureyi finished building in 1995. Mr Chogureyi bought the ¼ acre stand on which he built his house in 1984 for Z\$ 400, which was a fortune during those years. The Chogureyis bemoaned the fact that life had now become unbearable in Zimbabwe since 1997, when the

Zimbabwean economy began to witness a sharp decline in its performance. Mr. Chogureyi had this to say:

I used to be able to buy groceries for my family with my monthly pay without any difficulties. I could easily pay school fees for my children when they were in primary school and also clothes on special occasions like Christmas. Food was not a problem and we could afford to eat all the three meals everyday as a family. However, since about 2003, the situation has changed dramatically as my salary is no longer enough to even buy food for my family. At most we are now eating only two meals a day, that is breakfast and supper. I am lucky in the sense that Delta gives us lunch at our canteen in Graniteside.

Mrs. Chogureyi then added:

My son, before 2005, I was a full-time house-wife as there was no need for me to work. Mr. Chogureyi's income was enough to sustain the family. However, seeing that life was getting tougher and tougher, I decided to start hoarding vegetables and tomatoes which I sell in order to augment the family's income. I hoard these vegetables every other day at the Mbare market where you get fresh produce from farming areas that are near Harare. The prices of these vegetables are very low but one has to wake up very early in the morning to get the best vegetables, because the farm produce is normally delivered very early in the morning. So I normally wake up at 5 a.m in order to get the best vegetables. As you can see, we still have children that are going to school and they need school fees and school uniforms. Even though Mr. Chogureyi gets assistance from Delta with the school fees, the financial help is not enough and the company only assists those employees with children that are gifted academically.

Mr. Chogureyi alleged that the years 2005 to 2008 have proven to be difficult for his family's survival:

If it was not for the piece-jobs of panel beating that I am doing during weekends and getting paid in forex, I do not know how I would sustain my family. Yes, I am employed, but I now only go there for the benefits, like school fees, which Delta assists us with, the medical aid assistance and the groceries like cooking oil, sugar, mealie-meal and salt which the company assists us to buy every month. The pay is useless. Last week, on the 12th, I got paid Z\$ 8million (US\$ 8) which I cannot even withdraw from the bank. As you know we are allowed to withdraw a maximum of \$ 50, 000 per day which is enough to buy only one loaf of bread. We get paid twice a month but again this is not helpful because the salary is just too little. The queues at the banks are just a nightmare, and anyway, I will be at work during the day, so it means I cannot access my pay. The pay should also be paid in forex because almost everything is now being charged in forex in the shops and on the black market. So as you can see, survival has really become difficult for some of us.

Mrs. Chogureyi remarked, 'Maize or mealie-meal has become so precious like gold and it is now being mostly sold in forex terms. 10 kgs of mealie-meal is going for US\$ 7 or between R 70 and R 100. We are able to buy the mealie-meal because of the forex that Mr. Chogureyi sometimes earns from the panel-beating piece jobs he does during the weekends'. Mrs Chogureyi went on to assert, 'We do have a small piece of land here in Kuwadzana which we bought from the city

council and this coming rainy season we are going to grow a lot of maize on that land so that we will at least provide ourselves with mealie-meal and not buy from exorbitant shops and unscrupulous business-people'. The interviewer asked Mr. Chogureyi why he was not involved in petty trading or engaging in deals like 'burning money' or dealing in forex deals on the 'black market'. The respondent said that dealing was just not in his blood, as he preferred to perform piece-jobs that were related to his panel-beating training. On whether their social networks had been strengthened as a result of the economic hardships, the Chogureyis said that it was important that one had to be well networked in order to know where the cheap food is found or on ways of how to make side money, since people's wages and salaries had been eroded by the hyper-inflation besieging the country. At the end of the interview, both Mr. and Mrs. Chogureyi expressed hope that the power-sharing deal between ZANU (PF) and the MDC would work, so that economic revival would start, in order for people's lives to normalise again. I carried out a follow up interview with the Chogureyis on 15 January 2009, to find out how they were coping with the dollarisation of the Zimbabwean economy that was now widespread. Mr. Chogureyi explained the difficulties dollarisation had placed on his family:

This dollarisation of the economy is only good in the sense that we are now using stable currencies like the rand and the US dollar. The problem, however is that we are having problems accessing that forex. My employer is still paying me in Zimbabwean dollar. Three days ago, I got paid but my employer paid us in the useless Zimbabwean dollars that are being refused by everyone. The little forex I am getting is coming from my moonlighting activities as a panel-beater and from my wife who is a vegetable vendor. I do not know how I am going to pay for my two children's school fees this coming term, since the government schools are now also demanding to be paid in foreign currency. We are yet to be told how much we are supposed to pay by Harare High school.

So, the Chogureyis' response had been to work harder in order to augment the family's income. Mr. Chogureyi had to moonlight while Mrs. Chogureyi had to be a vegetable vendor. The piece of land that the Chogureyis had was also very important for the family's food security, especially during the rainy season when the family grew maize and its own vegetables. Consequently, urban agriculture was very important, given the precarious food security situation in Zimbabwe as a whole.

8.3 Petty Commodity Trading and the Gwauyas

Edward Gwauya, and his wife Ruth Gwauya who stay in Mbare, were interviewed on 26 October 2008. The couple was renting one room in Mbare for R 100. Edward was a restaurant supervisor in the Central Business District of Harare. Edward was 29 years old and his wife Ruth was 22 years old. The couple had one child who was four years old. Edward came from Rusape which is a small town in Zimbabwe's Manicaland province. He said he came to Harare to look for employment in 1998, after completing his secondary school education. He was employed by the Cotton Company of Zimbabwe Cottco as a messenger from 1998 to 2002. From 2002 to 2005 he worked as a messenger again at an employment agency. He said that the switch in companies was necessitated by the higher income that was being offered by Head Hunters Employment Agency. Edward left Head Hunters in 2005 and joined his uncle's restaurant as a supervisor. On why he moved to the catering industry, he recalled:

The income that I was getting at Head Hunters was increasingly losing its buying power and so I decided to move. When I first joined Head Hunters, I could afford to pay for my rent, buy myself food and clothes and even send a few dollars to my parents in Rusape. However, around the beginning of 2005, my income increasingly began to lose value and I was beginning to have difficulty in paying rent for the one room I was renting in Kambuzuma. That is when I decided to move. But to be honest with you, the money that I am getting at the restaurant is not enough at all and I am still going to work just because there is not much that I can do. Staying at home is a non-starter.

When I probed further on the benefits of being a restaurant supervisor, Edward answered, 'I am given a total of 25 litres of cooking oil every month, margarine, soap and 5kgs of rice every month, in addition to my salary'. Asked how the family was managing to make a living given the tough economic conditions prevailing in the country, Edward said that other than the cooking oil that he sells, his wife Ruth, supplemented the family's income by hoarding and selling freezits (juice which was packaged in small 50ml plastics) and maputi (popcorn) at Mbare market. Ruth revealed:

The freezits and popcorns that I sell at Mbare market are the ones that are sustaining us as a family because I am able to buy mealie meal and vegetables from Mbare market after I get money from the freezits and the popcorn. So I am the one who buys the food and my husband pays the rent.

On whether they were still having three meals a day, Ruth chuckled and commented:

'Three meals! That is a thing of the past! We normally have one decent meal in the evening which is cooked mealie –meal and vegetables. We cannot afford to have breakfast or proper

lunch, and food like meat is now a luxury that is way beyond the reach of people like us. I normally have popcorn and a freezit for lunch and my husband gets free lunch at his workplace'.

Edward added:

Yes, we are given free lunch at the restaurant, and this helps quite a lot. I also used to be able to afford opaque beer which I would drink during weekends, but I can no longer afford it. I am now buying illicit beer which is home-brewed by a lot of women here in Mbare. That is much more affordable but sometimes it makes me sick. I am also afraid of the cholera outbreak that has been reported in Kuwadzana and Budiriro.

The couple said it did not have any relatives in the diaspora that was sending them any money or food. On whether they thought Zimbabwe's political and economic malaise could be overcome, the couple was hesitant on answering the question and just said they hoped that ZANU (PF) and the MDC would come to some form of agreement so that the economic condition in the country could start improving. Unfortunately, I was not able to locate Edward and Ruth so that I could conduct a follow-up interview with them, particularly on the issue of the dollarisation of the Zimbabwean economy. Unlike the Chogureyis, whose main income was coming from the moonlighting that Mr. Chogureyi was involved in during weekends, the Gwauiyas' main source of income appeared to be the petty commodity trading that both Edward and Ruth Gwauiya were undertaking. However, Mrs. Chogureyi's petty commodity trading activities were also augmenting the Chogureyis' income.

8.4 Foreign Currency Dealing and the Mhondas

Dealing in forex was also a source of livelihood for eleven of the 25 families interviewed during the research. What was evident though from the interviews was that it was mostly those who received forex from those in the diaspora, or working in banks and had access to foreign currency through their bank clients, who mostly engaged in foreign currency dealings.

On 16 November 2008, I interviewed Precious Mhonda who was a bank teller with one of Zimbabwe's leading commercial banks and her husband Nelson who was a dealer of forex in Zimbabwe's thriving informal sector. Precious and her husband owned an 8 roomed house in the suburb of Arcadia. Precious was 26 years old and Nelson was 35 years old and the couple had one child who was 4 years old. Precious had been employed in the banking sector for 3 years as a bank teller and she had this to say on her experiences in the sector:

I have worked for two different commercial banks in the past 3 years. I left the first bank that I was working for in February this year and this was because the bank I am currently working for was offering a better salary. However, at the end of the day, I have come to realise that there is not much of a difference as the current salary I am earning still is failing to sustain me and my family. Last month I earned Z\$ 45 million (US\$ 43) which is not enough to buy groceries for the month and to pay for my transport costs to and from work.

On whether she was engaged in any activities to supplement her income, Precious' response was:

I buy and sell juice cards (airtime for cellphones) and my younger sister who sells the juice cards for me in town. I also burn money because I get access to foreign currency through my husband who is a forex dealer. Being a bank employee, sometimes I am able to withdraw a lot of money from my bank account. However of late this has been very difficult to do because of the shortage of cash (Zimbabwean dollars) in circulation and also the stringent banking regulations that have been imposed by the reserve bank of Zimbabwe which has lately been accusing the banking sector of engaging in illegal activities like clearing fraudulent bank cheques. My husband who is a forex dealer is the bread winner in the house as he is able to buy groceries and other necessities needed in the home given that Zimbabwe has now dollarised its economy.

Nelson corroborated what his wife was saying when he remarked:

I have been a forex dealer for the past 2 years. I am a medical doctor by profession but I have dumped the profession altogether because the remuneration I was getting as a doctor was failing to sustain my family. My decision to stop practicing medicine did not go down well with my family, but I am now reaping the rewards of my decision as I was recently able to buy the house we are staying in using the foreign currency I am getting from my dealings. The deals are dangerous though as dealings in foreign currency by the public are prohibited by the government. However, we always bribe the police in order not to get arrested. So generally my family's lifestyle has improved greatly because of the informal sector that I have now joined.

The couple said that it did most of its shopping in South Africa once every 3 months and was generally satisfied with the lifestyle they were leading. On the issue of the political stalemate in the country Precious chuckled and responded:

Of course I want the situation in Zimbabwe to normalize, but I am a bit worried that if the situation normalises we may no longer be able to continue making the amount of money we are making because normalcy and order would return in the country, and that would make it difficult to continue engaging in informal sector activities that are deemed illegal. I am not sure whether we will be able to continue making the amount of money we are making at the moment.

Nelson said he concurred with his wife as he said that the chaos in the country was providing him with an opportunity to make money. In a follow-up interview with the couple on 31 January 2009, the couple's exuberance and confidence they had exhibited in November was gone. Nelson explained the couple's changed situation:

My friend the situation is not looking too good because of this dollarisation of the economy. My lucrative forex deals have been wiped out overnight because everyone now shuns the Zimbabwean dollar. I still have some forex reserves but I need to look for an alternative source of income as a matter of urgency. I intend to go to Beitbridge and stay there for a number of weeks so that I can easily engage in cross-border trading in Musina South Africa, which is next to Beitbridge border post. I intend to buy goods from Musina and then resell them in Zimbabwe, in Beitbridge. I have opted to resell in Beitbridge because it's near Musina, and so I can quickly spin money rather than going all the way to Harare. My wife was saying I should go back to my medical profession, but it's now been two years since I stopped practicing and so I am now a bit rusty. I will have to look for something that is more sustainable in the informal sector. I am sure very soon I will come up with something.

Precious was also worried because the banking sector which had been paying better than the other sectors prior to the dollarization of the economy was now on the wane and actually retrenching workers because business in foreign currency was very low. Precious remarked that she hoped that the banking sector would also soon start remunerating its workers in foreign currency. The Mhondas are an example of how the precarious economic situation in Zimbabwe could change households' fortunes overnight, for better or worse.

8.5 Remittances and the Munyaradzis

The interview with the Munyaradzi family revealed that forex from the diaspora was sustaining this particular family. However, only six of the 25 households interviewed claimed to be receiving monetary remittances from the diaspora. Mr. and Mrs. Munyaradzi were interviewed on 26 October 2008. Mr. Munyaradzi was 48 years old and Mrs. Munyaradzi was 45 years old. The couple had 4 children. The eldest child was a 25 year old woman who was working in England as a nurse. The second born child was a 22 year old woman who was also in England and worked at an old age home. The last two children were 18 years old and 15 years old, respectively and they were still in High school. These last two children were staying with their parents. The couple was staying in a six-roomed house in the high-density area of Highfields in Harare. Mr. Munyaradzi was a headmaster at Seke High 1 Secondary School, which is just outside Harare. Mrs. Munyaradzi was a Primary School teacher at Rusununguko primary school. Mr. Munyaradzi told the researcher that he and his wife were able to buy their house after they got a mortgage from Central African Building Society (CABS) in 1990. Mr. Munyaradzi recalled:

We managed to buy this house in 1990 after I got a mortgage from CABS in 1990. I was just an ordinary teacher that time but I was able to buy a house for my family. Right now my salary can

only buy 3 loaves of bread. Last month (September 2008) I earned Z\$ 3 million (which was equivalent to US\$ 3 on the predominantly used black marked rate), and I honestly think that is a big insult to the teaching profession in Zimbabwe. But as you know, it is not only the teaching profession which is severely underpaid; virtually every sector in the formal sector is underpaid in this country. Since schools opened for the third term in August this year, teachers have not been reporting for work, not only at my school, but at virtually every school in Zimbabwe. The salaries that we are earning cannot sustain us, let alone allow us to report to work. I believe the education sector has totally collapsed in this country just like everything else.

I then enquired on how the couple was able to sustain its family given the unsustainable economic situation in Zimbabwe. Mr. Munyaradzi responded:

We are able to sustain ourselves as a family through remittances that are sent by my two girls in England. Every month they sent to us between 50 Pounds and 100 Pounds via Western Union. This is the money which we use to buy groceries and any other expenses which we might have. The only problem is that Western Union since the beginning of this year has become very inefficient. There are times when we have visited Western Union only to be told that their machines are down or that they do not have any forex. So, one has to continuously go back to their offices until one gets the money that would have come from the diaspora. The other problem is the long queues that are always at Western Union offices. You need to wake up at around 4 am if you want to make sure that you get your money, because of the many people who throng the Western Union offices. My wife also helps out through the cross border activities she engages in.

Mrs. Munyaradzi shed more light when she added:

I use some of the money that is sent by my daughters from the diaspora to go to Musina in South Africa or Mozambique to buy groceries like mealie-meal, flour, sugar, cooking oil and bathing and washing soap for my family and also for reselling. Mozambique is important for my cross-border activities because I can get some very cheap rice in Beira. I can get a 50kg of rice for US\$ 20 and then resell that rice for US\$ 50 or even US\$ 60. Mozambique is also quite strategic because one does not require a visa to go there whereas, although South Africa provides a wider variety of goods to buy from, one needs to fork out R 2000 for a visa. I go to Musina once a month on average. To be honest with you my son, I now go to the school that I am teaching at to find customers in the form of fellow teachers who may want household goods like soap and powdered milk. I take their orders and then come and resell to them the ordered goods in the form of US dollars. I usually make a profit of more than 200% from my cross-border trade activities. So we are managing to cope with the economic crisis in Zimbabwe, but I am very grateful to my daughters in the diaspora, otherwise I do not know how we could have managed. However, even though we get assistance from my daughters, our standard of life is still no longer the same as in the past because all we can afford now are basic foodstuffs. When it comes to buying commodities like furniture and clothes, we can no longer afford these. We used to have a vehicle but we sold it in 2006 because we could no longer afford the running costs of that car, especially the fuel. So our general lifestyle has drastically gone down.

Conducting private lessons at their home is also one form of response to the economic crisis that the Munyaradzis adopted. The couple revealed that since teachers were on strike in the third term of 2008, a number of parents had no choice but to send their children for private teaching lessons with teachers like the Munyaradzis. The Munyaradzis revealed that they were

charging R 10 per hour, for every child who came to their home for private lessons. They said they wanted to review this figure to R 20 per hour, but the problem was that most parents were failing to even pay the R 10 per hour charge. Mr Munyaradzi summed up the predicament of most parents with the dollarisation of the economy, 'Most parents cannot even pay the R10 that we are charging per hour, and so quite a number of parents are indebted to us. But at the end of the day, as a teacher and a parent, you end up teaching the children for free, as a community service, because it is painful to see the young children being denied an opportunity to receive an education'.

On whether the household was strengthening its networks in the face of the crisis, their response was that since they were teachers, they were providing private lessons for some of the children in the community, in some cases even for free, and in return they also were getting favours like free vegetables from some of the community members who engaged in urban agriculture. As a result they were of the opinion that community ties had grown stronger as people were assisting each other in cases where it was possible.

On the way forward for the country, Mr Munyaradzi said that ZANU (PF) and the MDC needed to work together and fix the country's problems as a matter of urgency. Mr. Munyaradzi argued that:

The country has literally collapsed. Where I am teaching and am the headmaster, teachers are no longer reporting for work. I understand this is a nationwide problem. Teachers are earning peanuts and they cannot genuinely report for work. What can you do with a salary of about Z\$ 2 million dollars (US\$ 2)? So it is the children that are suffering. I fear for my own children's future because they are still in high school and they are learning in government schools. I cannot afford to send them to private schools. Since my wife and I are teachers, we try to help them in the areas that we can, but the future is bleak for the country in general if this crisis persists. I think it might take some time though for the country to start functioning properly again, given the magnitude of our problems. People have become so corrupt and it shall take quite a lot to convince teachers to come back to the class-room because they are now used to making a quick buck in the informal sector.

In a follow-up interview with the Munyaradzis on 30 January 2009, concerning their perceptions on the dollarisation of the economy, they were of the opinion that dollarisation was a good move on the part of the government because the Zimbabwean dollar had become totally useless as a form of legal tender because of the hyperinflation that was plaguing the country. They however added that in order for the dollarisation to work, the government and the private sector were supposed to remunerate workers in hard currency and this is where the challenge was, because as

far as they were concerned the Zimbabwean government was bankrupt. As a household, the Munyaradzis said that they had not been negatively affected by the dollarisation as they were receiving some forex every month from their daughters in England.

8.6 Barter Trade and the Rundoras

Mr. and Mrs. Rundora were interviewed on 19 October 2008 and they were staying in the working class area of Glen Norah B. The wife, Mrs. Eve Rundora, had been interviewed earlier at her workplace, Olivine Industries, where she was employed as an auto-electrician. Mrs. Rundora was a 24 year old woman and her husband Steven Rundora was 27 years old and was employed in Bulawayo as a motor mechanic at Bulawayo's Vehicle and Inspection Depot (VID). The couple did not stay together because they worked in different cities. However Steven mentioned that he always tried to visit his wife every other weekend in Glen Norah where the couple were renting two rooms. Steven qualified as a motor mechanic in 2003 and for him sustaining oneself or a family for that matter, had become increasingly difficult because of the unstable macro-economic environment prevailing in Zimbabwe. Steven recalled:

When I started working for the (VID) in 2003 after completing my apprenticeship I was able to afford basics like food, buying a bed and clothes for myself. I could occasionally even give my parents some money from my salary. But the situation has now changed drastically. Since I married my wife in 2006, life has been very difficult for us. We have a small child who is nine months old and it is quite a struggle to buy that child's nappies, the milk formulae needed and the medication frequently needed by the child. In order to put food on the table, my wife and I are engaging in barter trade in the rural areas. My father owns a farm in Centenary and he gives us some of the maize that he grows.⁹¹ We then barter the maize for livestock in those areas where there is a scarcity for grain. We sell the livestock we get to the butcheries in Harare. This bartering is very lucrative, and it is the source of most of the income that I am making with my wife. I am very grateful to my father who is making this barter trade possible for me and my wife. I also moonlight by repairing cars, especially during weekends. I normally charge between R 100 and R 200 for fixing people's cars. I sometimes use the forex that I get from selling the livestock that I obtain through barter trade and moonlighting activities to go and buy food from Botswana. Almost once every two months I am in Botswana where I buy foodstuffs for my family such as sugar, cooking oil, salt, soap and milk for the baby. The dollarisation of the economy has worsened life for people like me and my wife who get paid in our local currency. I do not know how the government wants us to survive when almost every good and service is now being charged in foreign currency.

Eve echoed her husband's sentiments when she remarked:

⁹¹ Rural-urban links appeared to be important during the decade of crisis, as 60 per cent of the respondents mentioned that they were getting food supplements from their rural homes, especially maize.

Nowadays I am no longer concerned about items like clothes or buying household furniture because that is just beyond the reach of most people, unless if you are a dealer. I am more worried about putting food on the table. If it was not for the barter trade that we have been doing for a year now, I do not know how we would survive. The problem with the barter trade is that my father-in-law can only give us a few tonnes of maize after the maize has been harvested for us to engage in barter trade. He sells to the Grain Marketing Board most of his maize. The maize from the farm has also eased our need for mealie-meal, as we just grind some of the maize we get from the farm for our own consumption. That saves us a lot because mealie –meal is now very scarce and if you happen to find it, you are charged in forex, which one does not have most of the times.

When I probed Eve on her eating pattern given the scarcity of food and exorbitant pricing of foodstuffs in most shops, Eve laughed and revealed:

It is no longer feasible for someone to have three decent meals a day as we used to do a few years back. I now hardly ever have any breakfast, and if I am to have it, in most cases it will just be black tea without any bread. I prepare buns on those occasions that my husband sends flour from Bulawayo after he has visited Botswana. When it comes to lunch, well, that's where I benefit quite a lot from my employer. Olivine provides us with free lunch everyday at our canteen. The only problem is that sometimes the quantities are very little and on quite a number of occasions, we constantly get beans only as the relish and this sometimes is monotonous. Management says beef is expensive and quite difficult to access. For supper I normally have sadza (cooked mealie meal) and meat and vegetables. Meat is very expensive these days, and at times you do not even get it at our local shops. When this happens, we eat the sadza with vegetables only.

On whether Eve was also engaged in the 'burning of money' craze that had gripped Zimbabwe, she quipped with a lit up face:

Yes, occasionally I do it when I get 'USAS', (US\$) from the selling of the livestock which we get from barter trade and the part –time jobs I occasionally do, repairing people's cars. I am actually now a quadrillionnaire from burning money because at the moment for every US\$ 10 you take to the bank, you get, 2 trillion Zimbabwean dollars. The problem though is that I cannot get that money out of the bank as each person is only allowed to withdraw a maximum of Z\$ 50 000. So at the end of the day it is just money which is in the air which one cannot access. I can however use my debit card to swipe in the shops and get the goods that I need. The only problem is that most shops are empty at the moment as you know.

On the question of when the couple thought Zimbabwe's political and economic fortunes would turn for the better and what it would take to achieve this, Steven opined, 'At the present moment I do not see any hope for the country. ZANU (PF) and the MDC have been engaged in endless talks for many months now and these talks have not yielded anything positive for the country. The MDC should just pull out of these useless talks and organise protests that will remove Mugabe from power. There is no government in Zimbabwe and people are just suffering'. Steven continued dejectedly, 'It is a tough situation, I do not know'. Eve was more pessimistic, 'Mugabe cannot be removed from office by parties like the MDC, he shall be

removed by God from power. The MDC is just wasting its time. We shall just have to wait until Mugabe dies'. Eve mentioned that her social networks especially with her parents and relatives in Chiweshe communal lands were important in ensuring that her small family had access to maize which is the staple crop in Zimbabwe, since in 2008 maize and mealie-meal became scarce.

In a follow up interview with Eve on 30 January 2009, she was complaining about the dollarization of the economy:

The economy is virtually totally dollarised but I am still earning my salary in Zimbabwean dollars. How will we survive in such an environment? As you know, no one is still accepting the Zimbabwean dollar anymore. If my employer continues to pay me in Zimbabwean dollars next month, I shall have no choice but to resign and concentrate on repairing people's cars' electrical problem on a full-time basis, because that is how I am getting forex. The bartering that I have been involved in with my husband is full of uncertainties. My in-laws have a limited amount of maize at certain periods of the year and if harvests are generally good, then those people who have been bartering their livestock for grain will cease to do so.

Thus, the Rundoras during the peak of the crisis in 2008, were making most of their income from bartering maize for cattle in desperate rural communities that did not have grain. They would sell the cattle to butcheries in forex terms and use some of the money to buy household goods that were in short supply in Zimbabwe from Botswana. Just as with Mr. Chogureyi, both Mr. and Mrs. Rundora who were artisans were also moonlighting in their spare time in order to supplement their income.

8.7 Urban Agriculture and the Chatukutas

Mr. and Mrs. Chatukuta were interviewed on 9 November 2008 in Hatfield where they are staying with Mr. Edgar Chatukuta's parents. Edgar was 32 years old and he was a primary school teacher at Epworth primary school. His wife Esther did not work, and she was a full-time house wife. The couple was expecting its first child in 3 months time. Edgar asserted that life had become very difficult for him and his wife since the teaching profession and general formal employment was no longer rewarding in Zimbabwe. Edgar lamented:

I have been teaching at Epworth primary school for the past 3 years, but life of late has become very unbearable. Last month (October 2008) my salary was Z\$ 729,000 (roughly US\$ 0.70 on the parallel forex market). I have not bothered about my salary for the past year or so because one cannot buy anything with it. For the past three months teachers have been on strike and so I have not been teaching. Even if the industrial action were to end I am not sure I shall go back to the classroom. Teachers have become the laughing stock of society here in Zimbabwe, because of the

very low salaries we earn. At least I do not pay rent because I am staying in my mother's house who is now retired.

On how he was managing to put food on the table for his expecting wife and mother, Edgar revealed:

We have a portion of land that we plant maize, pumpkins and sweet potatoes near Chiremba in Epworth. We plant these crops during the rainy season, although it's my wife and my nephews who plant the crops and look after them. When we start harvesting, it means that I really save a lot of money because we will be eating the produce of the crops that we would have harvested.

Edgar also explained that practising urban agriculture in open spaces was a very risky business, as the city council which owned the land had the habit of slashing some of the crops, since the practice of growing crops on municipality land without permission was deemed to be illegal. Edgar also revealed that there was a common pattern in the kinds of crops that were grown under urban agriculture. These were mostly maize, sweet potatoes and pumpkins. These crops are the most common sources of traditional food that is eaten even in the rural areas. Other than urban agriculture, Edgar was also dependant on foreign currency remittances which he was getting from his brother who was in Canada. Edgar explained:

I also have a brother who is in Canada who occasionally sends us some money. Of late I have been 'burning' some of the US dollars that my brother has been sending and so I have a lot of trillions in my bank account. Of course, withdrawing the money is a problem, but I am able to swipe my bank debit card in those shops that accept bank cards so that I can buy food for my wife and mother. We also use the money that my brother sends to buy food since most shops are now insisting on payment in US dollars. I also sell freezits and popcorn and this is what has been kept us going as a family.

On why his wife was not working, Edgar replied :

Our church does not allow us to have working women. A woman's place is in the home and she is supposed to make sure that the husband is comfortable. The role of the husband is to provide for the family and so that is the church doctrine which we are following despite the economic hardships we are facing as a country.

I asked Esther whether she was agreeable to this arrangement and she concurred with her husband's position:

We had a white wedding in church last year that was sponsored by our church and I fully support the teaching that a wife should play a supporting role as a full-time housewife while the husband provides for the family.

When I probed further on whether Esther had any academic or professional qualifications, she said she had passed her Ordinary Level exams but did not have any professional qualifications.

Edgar and Esther said that their eating habits had been severely affected by the economic crisis. The couple said that breakfast was now a luxury and that they were now eating one meal or two meals a day which constituted mostly of cooked mealie- meal and vegetables. 'Meat is now an unaffordable luxury but we do grow a variety of vegetables including maize on a small piece of land that is owned by my mother-in-law', Esther said.

On the issue of the political impasse in the country, Edgar was of the opinion that both the MDC and ZANU (PF) had selfish leaders who were only interested in power and not the welfare of the suffering people in Zimbabwe. Edgar further added that it was crucial for the MDC and ZANU (PF) to form a government of national unity as a matter of urgency so that they could sort out the country's problems.

When I spoke to Edgar on 2 March 2009 in a telephone interview, he said that he had gone back to work as a teacher because the Government of National Unity had started paying people in foreign currency with effect from the end of February 2009. Edgar commented:

As I told you before in November, I had not been attending work because we were on strike during the third term last year. However, with these US\$ 100 salaries that we have started receiving, I decided to go back to work, because even though the money is not adequate but at least I can buy some groceries unlike last year when I could not buy anything with my salary. I am sure our unions, ZIMTA and the PTUZ will in future negotiate for higher salaries. I am still practicing urban agriculture and engaging in petty trading. There appears to be some optimism amongst some of the workers, especially teachers, that their economic plight might be eased by the GNU, since they have started getting paid in foreign currency.

8.8 Discussion of Findings

8.8.1 Moonlighting, Petty Commodity Trading and Foreign Currency Dealing

Among the artisans, moonlighting proved to be useful, as the great majority of those interviewed supplemented their families' incomes by taking up piece-jobs during the weekends, or in their spare-time. 80 per cent of the artisans interviewed were charging for their services in foreign currency, even before official dollarisation had set in. This was largely because in the second half of 2008, most companies and individuals had started charging in foreign currency, in response to the hyper-inflation.

Petty commodity trading was prevalent, especially amongst wives and children of working class men, whereas in the past, before the crisis set in, some of the wives of the working class men could afford to sit at home and be full-time housewives. 15 wives of the workers

interviewed during the household interviews claimed to be engaged in petty commodity trading. As a survival strategy, most women had to augment their husbands' incomes by mostly engaging in selling mostly vegetables, cigarettes and foodstuff that was in short supply such as mealie-meal and sugar. In cases where the working class households had children who were of a school going age, children in three quarters of these families would assist their mothers in selling different goods in their stalls or tuckshops.

Foreign currency dealing was one of the most popular forms of survivalism, as three quarters of the working class households interviewed took part in this activity. Forex dealing was most common amongst the households of the teachers and the bank tellers, who in most cases had relatives in the diaspora who were sending them foreign currency, which was permitting them to engage in forex dealing and the 'burning of money'. Only 30 per cent amongst the households of the artisans and workers in the catering sector were dealing in foreign currency, as most of them argued that they did not have access to much foreign currency, since they were not getting forex remittances from relatives in the diaspora. 80 per cent of the artisans were, however, getting forex through their moonlighting activities, but three quarters of this 85 per cent pointed out that the forex was being used to pay rent and to buy household goods.

8.8.2 Contrasting Reports on Remittances as a Source of Survival in Zimbabwe

Remittances, mostly in the form of foreign currency from the diaspora were sustaining a number of working class families during the crisis in Zimbabwe (Bracking and Sachikonye 2006, Cliffe 2009). However, this study came across only six out of 25 households that were actually receiving remittances in the form of money or food from the diaspora. In this dissertation, remittances refers to the money and goods that were transmitted to the households back home by people working away from their communities of origin. Maphosa (2007) and Fletcher and Taylor (2003) provide a broader definition as they posit that remittances include monetary or cash transfers, and other transfers such as consumer goods, capital goods, skills and technological knowledge. This dissertation decided to confine itself to the remittances in the form of cash and goods, since this is what those households that were receiving these remittances were mostly getting. Cliffe (2009) asserts that the scale of remittances by Zimbabweans abroad was such that it dwarfed all other transfers, export earnings, foreign direct investment, and certainly all donor and NGO aid. Maphosa (2007) notes that remittances can contribute significantly to poverty

reduction and development, if appropriate policies and regulations which encourage the flow and investment of remittances are in place. He further asserts that, without the development of such regulations and policies which require the collaboration of the government, migrant groups, the local community, non-governmental organisations and other international organisations, migrant remittances were going to continue to be used mainly for consumption with a very small proportion of them being invested in sustainable investment.

The International Fund for Agriculture Development, a United Nations agency dedicated to eradicating rural poverty estimated that remittances from Zimbabweans living outside of the country, excluding hand to hand transfers were expected to double in 2009 from an estimated US\$361 million in 2008. Other estimates put all remittances from expatriates in Britain to Zimbabwe at about US\$ 1 billion annually, (UNDP, 2008). Cliffe (2009) asserts that a survey in the United Kingdom estimated that on average, Zimbabweans surveyed sent home 300 pounds per month.⁹² Cliffe (2009) argues that if this were typical of the behavior of the say, 200,000 Zimbabweans in the United Kingdom, which is a conservative estimate, the aggregate for 2007 would have been 700 million pounds, which in turn would have yielded at the going exchange rate, roughly US\$ 1.4 billion. Cliffe goes on to claim that even with the effect of the global recession on the UK, North America, South Africa and the Western countries, with a large Zimbabwean population, the total flow of remittances still undoubtedly amounts to billions of US dollars. Eddie Cross (2009), an economic advisor for the MDC argues that if this is true, it puts a new dimension on this issue. He argued that it then means that the actual Zimbabwean population in the United Kingdom is much bigger than estimated and that they were sending much more money to Zimbabwe than was ever imagined. Cross further postulates that this would explain where all the foreign currency that kept Zimbabwe going during the crisis in the 2000s originated. It also explains why many more people were not actually dying from the crisis in terms of hunger, malnutrition and neglect (Cross 2009).

Sachikonye & Bracking's (2006) research on household survival strategies in a survey conducted in the low-density and high-density areas of Harare and Bulawayo in 2005 and 2006 also revealed that remittances are critical in sustaining many households which were surveyed. Bracking and Sachikonye observed that, not only did a full 73% of households in their survey

⁹² Cliffe's estimates are based on a survey conducted in 2008 amongst 400 Zimbabweans staying in Yorkshire. The survey was conducted by the School of Geography at the University of Leeds.

receive remittances, but it was clear that a substantial majority of these are dependent on them for essential household goods, including fuel. The households that did not receive these remittances were in a critical state. However, there is also some evidence that remittances do more for some households than reduce poverty; they contributed to productive accumulation more generally and the acquisition of consumption assets (Bracking and Sachikonye 2006:42).

An interesting outcome in Bracking and Sachikonye's research was the revelation that there is a low rate of monetary storage in the formal sector, and this was largely due to the opportunity costs of receiving lower exchange rates than are available on the parallel market. This, however, does not imply that remittances are not a significant contribution to economic and social reproduction in Zimbabwe. They are, but not through formal conduits. It is clear from Bracken and Sachikonye's research that a complex web of money and goods transactions within the informal sector supported the Zimbabwean economy in unrecorded myriad ways. The Zimbabwean economic collapse was being offset by this informal internationalised parallel economy. In practical terms, it is difficult to see how some of these households could even survive without these informal remittance transfers (Maphosa 2007). Thus, the economic crisis was being mitigated by this sector to some extent, and ironically by Zimbabweans who have themselves exercised the 'exit' option. However, the issue of sustainability of remittances as a survival strategy remained a critical and open question, not least because of the tightening of conditions in the principal migrant-receiving areas of South Africa and England, towards their Zimbabwean residents.

The Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZimVAC) report of January 2009 reported that remittances currently contributed a minimal 2% to the income of urban families in Zimbabwe. In a survey conducted by the Solidarity Peace Trust (SPT) in Matabeleland South Province in 2008, it was revealed that in a survey of 106 families, only 36 reported receiving any cash at all. The ZimVac and SPT reports contrast sharply to Bracking and Sachikonye's finding that 73% of families reported monetary remittances between 2005 and 2006 in the urban areas of Harare and Bulawayo. The huge discrepancy may have been caused by the fact that Bracking and Sachikonye's survey included middle-class households (50% of the survey), who had huge numbers of relatives in the diaspora remitting money almost every month. In contrast to Cliffe (2009) and Bracking and Sachikonye's (2006) surveys, most working class families in the townships interviewed in this study, did not have relatives who were sending them money or

food from the diaspora. Thus, this study's conclusions were that remittances appeared to be more important in the survival of the middle-class families as compared to working class households in Harare.

8.8.3 Barter Trade

Thirteen of the working class households interviewed revealed that barter trade acquired increasing importance in their survival, because of the shortages of food (mostly maize in some of the rural communities). Thus, maize was being traded for livestock such as cattle during the peak of the crisis in 2008. The shortage of foreign currency in some rural communities, just after the dollarization of the economy also resulted in barter trade becoming common in a number of rural communities. Bartering, as ten of the workers revealed, was mostly taking place in the rural areas where foreign currency was very scarce, but where food, like the staple crop maize, could be found during the peak of the Zimbabwean crisis. While barter trade in the rural areas has always existed, it was the frequency and exploitative nature with which it was conducted that had changed during the crisis. ZimVAC (2009) argues that this was no longer the neighbourly process of exchanging a cup of flour for a cup of sugar. It was now a case of rapid depletion of major assets, often bartered to people from the towns and cities, who had access to forex or maize, and were getting the desperate rural people's livestock such as cattle at extremely low prices. ZimVAC (2009) noted that more than 30% of their urban respondents had traded a household asset in 2008, and that 7% of them had traded livestock in exchange for food. They interpreted this as an indication of extreme poverty and expressed concern at the vicious poverty trap into which loss of assets was driving those who were already desperately poor.

8.8.4 Urban Agriculture

Urban agriculture, as revealed in 19 household interviews, proved to be a very important source of livelihood and food security. In studies conducted by Hungwe (2006) in the working class residential areas of Bulawayo and Gweru, she discovered that urban agriculture was important in sustaining many working class livelihoods. Moyo's (2008) research in Bulawayo also found urban agriculture to be of much utility in ensuring food security of the working class people. Urban agriculture was however disrupted by municipal authorities who argued that town dwellers were acting against council regulations, however, defiant households in the peri-urban and high-density areas continued to practice it (Moyo 2008).

Due to problems of space in the form of land, most of the working class families in the townships of Harare practiced urban agriculture on pieces of land that belonged to the city council of Harare. Hungwe (2006) argues that in Zimbabwe, the Urban Councils Act does not specifically provide for farming, although section 227, clause 81 (1) of the Third Schedule of the Act, gives local authorities power to make by-laws on a number of issues including prohibition of regulation of land cultivation and keeping of animals. The protection of land by-law that deals with the use of municipal land allows for the practice of urban agricultural activities, only after one has sought approval from the local authority before they engage in the activity. Section 10 of this by-law however states that no person shall cultivate any municipal land, or plant, sow, tend or reap any plant, shrub, bush, flower, vegetable, fruit or crop on any municipal land without council approval (Hungwe 2006: 6). It is this piece of legislation that has been used in the past to slash crops illegally grown by urban farmers.

Despite many households in the peri-urban and high-density areas engaging in urban agriculture, the Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZIMVAC), in its January 2009 report contends that urban hunger had deepened across Zimbabwe over the past three years, with families cutting back on their quantity and quality of food. ZIMVAC posits that the number of households consuming three meals a day declined from 54% in 2006 to 23% in 2008, indicating that households were reducing the number of meals as a coping strategy.

8.8.5 Child Labour

Child labour proved to be a common coping mechanism that was used by the working class to maximise household income. The researcher observed that vendors who were engaged in petty trading of commodities like bread, sugar, vegetables, tomatoes, airtime and cigarettes, were teenagers. Amongst the 18 households that were engaging in petty-commodity trading, 12 of them had children playing a big part in the selling of goods. Four of the children observed to be assisting their parents with the commodity trading were going to school, but the other eight had stopped going to school in 2008, mostly because of the long strike by the teachers in public schools. Four sets of parents claimed that they could not afford the school fees and so their children had stopped attending school. Rather than just sitting at home, some of these children were helping their parents to earn income by manning stalls where petty-commodity trading took

place. Even though all the 12 children that I spoke to were not paid for their labour, nine of them said that they were happy to be assisting their parents to increase their families' incomes.

8.8.6 Increased Levels of Prostitution

Prostitution activities appeared to be on the rise, although the exact extent of the practice was difficult to quantify. Although all of the households interviewed denied having any of their family members being involved in prostitution, 75 per cent of the households interviewed reported that there were increased incidents of prostitution in their local neighbourhood. Deepening poverty among women, a product both of their low status and the general economic decline, is what most probably contributed most, to the rise of prostitution activities in Zimbabwe.

Lingam (2005: 4) notes that the period of globalisation in several south Asian countries has seen the boom in the entertainment industry and sex tourism. Lingam (2005) goes on to assert that with the loss and decline in employment opportunities in general, the physical body is becoming the site of 'work' for women and young girls. In the Zimbabwean context, the general loss of survival and livelihood in the rural areas led to migration to the cities and the cross-border transfer of women to neighbouring countries such as South Africa and Botswana. This resulted in increased vulnerability to risky sexual life and the contraction of H.I.V./A.I.D.S. In Johannesburg, South Africa, many Zimbabwean women are often among the majority of sex workers offering sexual services for fees ranging from R 100 to R 200 per 'round' of a sexual encounter with clients at venues such as the Royal Park Hotel and the Summit Nite Club in Hillbrow. Most of the sex workers that were interviewed revealed that they were from Zimbabwe and had been forced into sex work by the economic meltdown in the country.

8.8.7 Extended Households

To conserve expenditure on housing, there was evidence of an increase in extended households, with the continuation of married sons in parental families due to lack of jobs and housing. Household composition in some of the working class families underwent changes that enabled combating increasing costs and crises. Extended households provided support in terms of other women members sharing domestic work and childcare. Very often, domestic responsibilities shifted to older daughters and daughters-in-law, thus re-inforcing women's 'natural'

responsibility to do domestic activities. However, as three of the household interviews revealed, sharing housing with married sons placed a lot of pressure on parents who were also struggling to survive. Thus, overcrowded conditions and friction in some instances placed strain on some of these working class households.

8.8.8 Household Fertility, Budgets and Consumptive Patterns

The households studied in this dissertation revealed that families engaged in multiple activities to earn a living. These normally revolved around informal sector activities such as petty commodity trading, and also involved new workers, mostly women and children who were entering the informal labour market in order to augment their family incomes. This type of strategy has been termed 'income-maximizing' by Beneria and Roldan (1987) or 'positive strategy' by De la Rocha (1991).

Change in fertility behavior was also reported amongst nine of households. These nine revealed they had decided to stop or postpone having children, until the Zimbabwean crisis had eased.

Household budgets and consumptive patterns among working class families in Harare changed dramatically during Zimbabwe's period of crisis. As revealed in 23 of the the household interviews, families were eating one or two meals at most per day, and most of these meals lacked food with protein such as meat, eggs and milk. Items like clothes and furniture became luxuries that were unattainable and beyond the reach of most working class households in Harare. A cut in the household budgets and consumption patterns has been observed in studies of working poor households in Latin America by scholars such as De la Rocha and Beneria. De la Rocha (1991) observes among other strategies, that households allocated a larger proportion of income for food at the cost of education, clothing, recreation etc. Intensification of domestic work and reduction in purchases of expensive meat and milk products was also observed. Gonzales de la Rocha (1991) has also termed this type of strategy 'negative'. Beneria (1992) observed household budget changes, reduction in food items, containment of meat consumption, fruits and milk and overall increase in indebtedness. Beneria and Roldan (1987) have also termed this type of strategy 'expenditure-minimising'.

8.9 Conclusion

Chapter 8 has shown that working class households in Harare devised various survival strategies in order to mitigate the effects of hyper-inflation that had wreaked havoc on the livelihoods of many workers. Most of these strategies involved engaging in activities in the highly speculative informal sector such as petty commodity trading and participating in foreign currency deals. Urban agriculture and strengthening rural-urban linkages were very useful in ensuring that most workers had food, when food was scarce in the country during the peak of the crisis in 2008. What was interesting and surprising from the interviews was the fact that less than a quarter of the families interviewed were getting any remittances from the diaspora, whether in the form of food or money. The others said they did not have close relatives in the diaspora who were in a position to send them any remittances. This finding corroborates ZimVAC's report in January 2009 that asserted that very few urban households were getting any remittances from the diaspora and the SPT findings in early 2009 in the Matabeleland provinces suggested that not as many families as expected were surviving on any meaningful remittances from friends and relatives in the diaspora. This contrasts sharply with Bracking and Sachikonye's 2005 and 2006 research in the urban areas of Harare and Bulawayo which suggested that 73% of the surveyed households were getting consistent remittances from relatives in the diaspora. This discrepancy can be attributed to the fact that Bracking and Sachikonye's survey population included some members of the middle-class who had many relatives in the diaspora, notably in countries in the West such as the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada. These relatives were reportedly consistently remitting some money through agencies such as Western Union or Moneygram. Consequently, it appeared as if remittances were more likely to be a form of survival for the middle-class as compared to working class families.

Most working class households had problems with surviving the crisis, as most families had to cut back on their consumptive patterns, which included cutting back on food. A very high proportion of the families interviewed reported that they were only eating one or two meals a day that did not have any proteins. This compromised the health of some sections of the working class, who appeared malnourished because of their poor diets they were eating.

The chapter also underscored the fact that the working class in Harare retreated to concentrating on individual and household forms of coping with the Zimbabwean crisis, as

opposed to, for instance, engaging in union-led collective forms of responses that were of a workerist nature. This is because, as has been argued in earlier chapters, the working class had partially disintegrated at the physical and organisational levels.



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CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

9.1 Problem, Methodology and Limitations

The dissertation explores the responses by Harare's working class, to the economic and political crisis that Zimbabwe experienced between 1997 and 2008. The Zimbabwean crisis was triggered by the unbudgeted compensation and gratuities given to the war veterans in 1997. To fund the war veterans pensions, the Zimbabwean government was forced to print money, and this caused the Zimbabwean dollar to crash against the world's major currencies on 'Black Friday', 14 November 1997. Zimbabwe's participation in the DRC war from 1998 onwards, the violent land reform programme of 2000, the electoral violence of 2000, and the sanctions placed on the Zimbabwean government by the West, all contributed to creating a crisis that was marked by the second worst hyper-inflation in world history. It is against this background that the dissertation considered the central question: How did the Zimbabwean working class, specifically in Harare, respond to the economic and political crisis that marked the decade 1997-2008?

The research methodology adopted is qualitative in nature and is based on semi-structured interviews with workers and their spouses, interviews with key informants, some observation, and documentary evidence. The above approach I took in conducting the research, provided valuable insights on the experiences of some sections of the working class, during the period in question, but it is not enough to make definitive statements about the whole of Harare's working class.

In the workplace interviews, workers in the formal employment sectors of teaching, manufacturing, banking and catering were interviewed. Informal forex dealers who were previously teachers and artisans were also interviewed. The selection of four sectors and the informal forex dealers was an attempt to deal with the fact that the crisis affected different workers in varying ways. However, focusing only on four sectors of formal employment might have led to some sectoral bias in the responses and experiences of the different workers, and may not have captured the full variation of experiences and responses of all sections of Harare's working class. I would have liked to conduct more interviews, but the time available and

political conditions in 2008 limited the scope of the study.

Household interviews were conducted in the high density locations of Highfields, Glen View, Glen Norah, Mufakose and Dzivarasekwa. Some teachers in the low density suburb of Hatfield were also interviewed. The household interviews provided a broad range of household survivalist strategies. However, the fact that I interviewed some of the household members twice, including in the workplace interviews, may have created some bias. Using the snowballing sampling method, in addition to purposive sampling created some bias in the household interviews as I was, in some instances, referred to households that had similar experiences.

The biggest challenge though during the course of the research, was the political violence that centred around the presidential run-off election of June 2008. In practice, this meant that between May and July 2008, I could not access the households in the townships, because of the intensity of the violence.

9.2 Summary of Findings

Harare's working class experienced and responded to the economic meltdown, specifically hyper-inflation, and the associated political crisis in a variety of ways. This variation was related partly to the different phases of the crisis and partly to the different sources of income that were available, though there was some interconnection between the two.

The initial response, in 1997-8, was dominated by what has been termed 'workerism', that is a high level of militancy mobilised mainly through trade unions. This fed into an increasingly political response, 'partyism', associated in particular with the formation and early success of the MDC. However, the failure of the MDC to consolidate its achievements in the 2000 election produced a shift in the range of the possibilities that existed for workers. This shift was reinforced and magnified by the intensification of the economic meltdown which, after 2006, developed into hyper-inflation that reached the second highest level in world history. This affected the working class along two axes. First, there was 'physical disintegration' – that is, a sharp drop in the number of employed workers; and, secondly, there was 'organisational disintegration', that is decline in the ability of trade unions to mobilise workers. The period after 2000 witnessed a growth in local and household responses, 'individualism'. In some cases workers were able to protect themselves through agreements, sometimes tacit, with their employers; that is, individualism was laced by residual workerism. Often, however, and

increasingly so (especially from 2006 onwards) individualism was about survival organised at household level. This period witnessed survivalist strategies that were of a highly speculative nature, for instance the 'burning of money', forex and fuel dealing and petty commodity trading of goods that were unavailable in shops. The failure of workerist and partyist responses was also a consequence of high levels of violence instigated by the governing regime.

The dissertation highlights the way in which different groups of workers experienced the crisis and responded to it in different ways. Teachers received below subsistence pay or, sometimes, no pay, but they generally had the education, networks and ability to travel that placed them in a relatively favourable position to undertake petty trade, often international and sometimes speculative. Whilst skilled workers were in a similar position and, like teachers, often sought employment outside Zimbabwe, unskilled workers suffered greatly and were pressed to find other means of survival, for instance, small-scale deals in the informal economy. By contrast, bank workers and informal currency dealers did rather well. This unevenness in working class experiences may have further undermined the potential for workerist responses. The dissertation also reveals the way in which responses were conditioned by decisions made at the level of the household, with this affected by the need to maximise income as much as possible, as hyper-inflation spiralled out of control in 2007-08. In contrast to other instances of hyper-inflation such as those that occurred in Germany, Argentina and Yugoslavia, the Zimbabwean response was marked by a wider array of responses, that included cross-border trade and urban agriculture.

However, the disintegration was partial and the rejection of 'workerism' and 'partyism' were incomplete. The intensification of the crisis led to the government's increasing unpopularity. In 2008, notwithstanding the emigration of millions of Zimbabwean workers and threats of violence, the electorate backed the MDC to a greater degree than ever. In large measure, support was mobilised by what remained of the trade unions. Whilst the MDC was blocked from taking over the government, the depth of the crisis and wide political opposition led to a government of national unity and to dollarisation. Inflation disappeared overnight. Teachers, like others in the public sector, received salaries again, and whilst the sums were tiny, particularly at first, they began to return to work, and began to gain confidence in 'workerist' responses, as reflected in a major public sector strike in early 2010. In contrast, the bank workers and informal dealers now suffered, thus revealing the unevenness and paradoxes of the

crisis, and the dollarisation of the economy, on different workers in different sectors of the economy.

The working class suffered greatly from hyper-inflation and the political crisis. But even in the grimmest of times, workers retained agency, even if this was manifested in individualist, albeit innovative, responses. The working class was battered but it survived, and today there are signs that, once again, it is developing the capacity to leave its imprint on history

9.3 Context, Analysis and History

The experiences and responses of some sections of Harare's working class reveal the continuities with the past and breaks with the past. To fully grasp the experiences and responses of Harare's working class during the decade of crisis, we have to trace previous experiences and responses of previous sections of the working class. The pre-1945 African working class mainly relied on survivalist strategies such as maintaining close rural-urban linkages. This survivalist strategy continued in the post-colonial era, during the ESAP phase, and was also witnessed amongst some sections of the working class during the decade of crisis. The post-1945 African working class resorted to workerism, which reached its peak between 1945 and 1948. Workerism reached its peak in 1997, when the decade of crisis began to unravel. The post-1945 African working class partly abandoned workerism for partyism, in the mid-1950s, and a similar situation occurred in the late 1990s, as workerism partly receded because of partyism that was embraced by the workers in 1999. The post-1945 working class' experience of losing the initiative and leadership of partyism to the middle class intelligentsia, also occurred to the working class in the post 2000 period, as the MDC became increasingly dominated by intellectuals, lawyers and business people.

Even though continuities with past responses and experiences can be discerned amongst the working class during the decade of decay, 1997 is an important year in Zimbabwean labour history, because it marks a break with the past. From 1997, when Zimbabwe's crisis began, workerist forms of responding to hardships that had been witnessed in the early 1980s and the ESAP years went on the decline. The increased repressive nature of the government and the partial disintegration of the working class at the physical and organisational levels, meant that most workers increasingly relied on survivalist responses to cope with the crisis. Partyism from

2000 was also adopted, as most ranks of the working class consistently voted for the MDC in the elections that were conducted between 2000-08.

9.4 Theoretical Contribution

This dissertation makes a theoretical contribution by revealing the responses and experiences of Harare's working class during the decade of crisis, from a broad perspective that captures three vantage points of unions, work, and the household. Empirical studies on Zimbabwe's decade of decay are scant. Most studies that have been conducted in this period have focused on rural sociology, specifically around the 2000 land reform programme. The few studies that have focused on urban sociology have mainly concentrated on household survival strategies, for instance, the efficacy of remittances on households. The recent studies that have focused on workers, have mainly concentrated on workers in informal employment, for instance, Jones (2008), Moyo (2009) and Tamukamoyo (2010). A shortcoming of the above studies is that, they make *a priori* judgements that survivalist strategies are the only responses that Zimbabweans enacted in the face of hyper-inflation and the political crisis that Zimbabwe faced in the 2000s. Thus, they adopted a methodological bias towards the household, thus obscuring what occurs at work and at the level of politics. In contrast, this dissertation takes into account the full range of workers' responses to the crisis, which encompassed workerism, partyism and survivalism. This approach enables us to discern the unevenness, variations and shifts in the responses and experiences of Harare's working class during the decade of crisis.

The international literature on hyper-inflation that covers countries such as Germany, Argentina and Yugoslavia, does not cover responses that include cross-border trading and urban agriculture that were witnessed amongst some sections of Harare's working class.

The experiences of the working class in Harare reveal that the working class displayed a great sense of agency in the face of an unprecedented political and economic crisis (hostile external structural forces or environment). Thus, Giddens' (1984) structuration theory is of great utility in explaining the survival strategies (agency of the working class) in the face of a hostile structure (political and economic context). According to Giddens' structuration theory, agents/actors, who are the workers in Harare, were able to monitor their own thoughts and activities as well as their physical and social contexts. This implies that actors (the working class living under an unfavourable structure of hyper-inflation and a political crisis) were capable of

rationalisation, which in Giddens' work means the development of routines that enabled them to efficiently deal with their social lives. In this case, these 'routines' would be the responses of the working class to an environment or structure which was facing an economic and political crisis. Consequently, Giddens' agents and certainly, those in the Zimbabwean context, have the ability to make a difference in the social world and improve their situation. Giddens certainly recognises that there are constraints on actors from the structure, but this does not mean that actors have no choices (varied responses to the hyper-inflation by workers) and make no difference.

Giddens' structures are not fixed 'girders' though, in the Durkheimian or Parsonian sense, and so the agency displayed by some of the sections of the working class had the effect of reshaping the structure, i.e. some sections of Zimbabwean society. Illegal activities that some sections of the working class were engaged in, in the highly speculative informal economy were abetting a 'get-rich quick' and 'dealer culture' among some sections of the society, and this in turn promoted corruption and illicit activities in institutions such as banks. Workers' agency at the political level (partyism), which entailed mostly supporting and voting for the MDC was partially successful, as the MDC won the March 2008 elections that led to the formation of the GNU. The MDC victory however was not outright, and this meant that the political agency of the majority of the workers voting for the MDC was not able to totally reshape the repressive political configuration, that was partly responsible for the Zimbabwean crisis.

Finally, for us to fully grasp the responses and experiences of the working class in Harare during the decade of extreme difficulties, we need to take on board the full repertoire of reactions to the crisis by the working class. Survivalist strategies alone do not capture the whole story on the experiences of the working class during its bleakest decade. Thus, in addition to survivalism, workerism and partyism need to be considered, if we are to fully appreciate the ordeals the working class went through, and how some sections of this class triumphed under extreme adversity.

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APPENDIX 1: LIST OF INTERVIEWS

- Banda, Evans. Bank Teller, 13 November 2008.
- Batsirai, Chiedza. Auto-electrician at Delta Corporation, 8 September 2008.
- Butau, Dumisani. Informal Forex Dealer, 5 October 2008; 7 February 2009.
- Chamboko, Tracey. Teacher, 6 August 2008.
- Chamisa, Nelson. MDC National Spokesperson and Minister of Information and Communication Technology in the GNU, 3 November 2008.
- Chani, Paul. Cook in a restaurant, 4 February 2009.
- Chatuka, Ben. Teacher, 4 October 2008
- Chatukuta, Edgar & Chatukuta Esther. Teacher & House-wife respectively, 9 November 2008; 2 March 2009.
- Chibhebe, Wellington. Secretary General of the ZCTU, 30 April 2009.
- Chikowore, Tendai. President of ZIMTA 2 May 2009.
- Chipunza, Memory. Teacher, 6 August 2008.
- Chiware, Alice. Teacher, 4 March 2009.
- Chogureyi, Francis. Panel Beater at Delta Corporation, 5 October 2008; 19 October 2008; 15 January 2009.
- Chuma, Brenda. Till Operator in a Restaurant, 2 February 2009.
- Dhana, Sam. Teacher, 10 August 2008.
- Duma, Sandra. Teacher, 10 August 2008.
- Fundira, Kennedy. Primary School Teacher, 26 June 2008.
- Garikayi, Shelton. Cook, 4 November 2008.
- Gore, Chipu. Bank Teller, 21 November 2008.
- Gwauya, Edward and Gwauya, Ruth. Restaurant Supervisor and Petty Commodity Trader respectively, 26 October 2008.

Gwiyo, Colin. Former Secretary General of ZBAWU and Member of Parliament for Zengeza Constituency, 9 October 2008; 9 January 2009.

Hawkins, Tony. University of Zimbabwe academic at the Business School, 14 May 2009.

Kachana, Donald. Electrician, 25 June 2008.

Kandukutu, Michael. National Organising Secretary of the ZCTU, 30 April 2009.

Kanyenze, Godfrey. Director of the Labour and Economic Development Research Institute of Zimbabwe, 14 May 2009.

Kuchera, Barbara. Informal Forex Dealer, 13 October 2008

Likukuma, Wellington. Secretary General of ZBAWU, 1 May 2009.

Madombwe, Edith. Teacher, 3 October 2008; 4 March 2009.

Magaramombe, Edgar. Motor-mechanic at Olivine Industries, 15 August 2008.

Majongwe, Raymond. Secretary General of PTUZ, 3 April 2008; 12 October 2008.

Makwarimba, Alfred. President of ZFTU, 9 January 2009.

Mandaza, Jane. Teacher, 5 September 2008.

Mapepa, Edward. Auto-electrician, Olivine Industries, 6 October 2008.

Masango, Thomas. Information and Publicity Secretary of the Catering and Hotel Workers Union, 8 September 2008.

Mhonda, Precious & Mhonda, Nelson. Bank Teller and Informal Forex Dealer respectively, 16 November 2008; 31 January 2009.

Mlambo, Booysen. Auto-electrician, Olivine Industries, 3 October 2008.

Moyo, Japhet. Deputy Secretary General of the ZCTU, 11 January 2009; 29 April 2009.

Mpariwa, Elizabeth. Teacher, 29 April 2009.

Muchirahondo, David. Informal Forex Dealer, 7 October 2008; 12 February 2009.

Mukosi, Taurai. Bank Teller. 21 November 2008.

Munyaradzi, Walter & Munyaradzi, Priscilla. Teachers, 26 October 2008.

Murandu, Munyaradzi. Human Resources Manager, Delta Corporation, 5 October 2008.

Muswere, Eric & Muswere, Jennifer. Electrician and Petty Commodity Trader respectively, 18 November 2008.

Mutandwa, Rosemary. Informal Forex Dealer. 7 October 2008.

Ndlovu, Khumbulani. National Information and Publicity Secretary of the ZCTU, 12 May 2008.

Phiri, Government. President of the Association of University Teachers, 2 May 2009.

Pondo, Rogers. Motor-mechanic, Delta Corporation, 5 October 2008.

Porusingazi, Paula. Bank- Teller, 8 December 2008.

Rioga, Isaac. Auto-electrician, 25 June 2008.

Robertson, John. Economist, 8 February 2009.

Rundora, Eve. Auto-electrician at Olivine Industries, 6 October 2008.

Rundora, Eve & Steven Rundora. Auto-electrician and Motor-mechanic respectively, 19 October 2008; 30 January 2009.

Sambo, Simon. Panel-beater at Olivine Industries, 8 September 2008.

Sithole, Miriam. Bank-teller, 11 November 2008; 24 February 2009.

Tarisai, Oscar & Tarisai, Cynthia. Electrician and Petty Commodity Trader respectively, 14 November 2008.

Teverai, Chipo. Restaurant Supervisor, 2 February 2009.

Zamchiya, Tafara. Informal Forex Dealer, 13 October 2008.

Zimbwa, Patrick. Cook at a restaurant, 25 June 2008.

Zvidzai, Linda. Auto-electrician at Delta Corporation, 5 September 2008.

APPENDIX 2: LEVELS OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE FORMAL SECTOR IN ZIMBABWE FROM 1985 TO 2004

	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Agriculture	276.4	275.5	265.6	277.0	284.6	290.0
Mining	54.3	54.9	56.7	57.7	55.7	51.4
Manufacturing	169.6	176.9	177.4	187.3	195.3	197.1
Electricity & Water	7.7	8.2	8.2	8.6	8.8	8.7
Construction	44.8	47.4	49.6	58.6	66.6	75.8
Financial Services & Real Estate	15.3	15.4	16.3	17.2	17.1	17.6
Distribution	78.3	81.2	83.6	87.3	91.9	96.0
Transport & Communication	50.0	50.7	50.7	51.1	51.8	53.3
Public Administration	90.8	90.8	93.5	92.4	93.5	93.4
Education	89.2	95.7	98.8	100.4	104.2	108.1
Health	19.9	21.8	22.0	22.8	23.6	25.0
Private Domestic Services	98.6	100.1	101.0	102.0	102.4	102.1
Other	57.6	62.5	61.7	68.8	71.2	73.7
Total	1 052.5	1 081.1	1 085.1	1 131.2	1 166.7	1 192.2
<i>Annual Growth %</i>	<i>1.6</i>	<i>2.7</i>	<i>0.4</i>	<i>4.2</i>	<i>3.1</i>	<i>2.2</i>
Employment Index	88.3	90.7	91.0	94.9	97.9	100.0

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Agriculture	304.2	300.6	323.6	329.4	334.0	347.0	355.1
Mining	50.9	50.2	47.7	52.5	59.0	59.8	59.1
Manufacturing	205.5	197.2	187.7	199.7	185.9	183.5	197.8
Electricity & Water	8.9	8.2	7.9	8.6	9.5	12.4	13.1
Construction	81.0	89.5	90.5	85.2	71.8	77.5	78.1
Financial Services & Real Estate	18.2	18.6	20.2	21.9	21.1	22.2	26.3
Distribution	100.7	99.3	95.9	105.1	100.6	101.4	106.3
Transport & Communication	56.4	52.6	49.8	52.5	50.9	50.3	51.3
Public Administration	94.9	93.4	89.0	76.9	77.0	70.9	67.1
Education	109.5	109.9	111.3	112.8	115.6	127.1	137.0
Health	26.5	25.8	25.7	25.9	26.0	26.6	27.0
Private Domestic Services	102.1	102.1	102.1	102.1	102.1	102.1	102.1
Other	85.3	89.0	88.4	91.0	86.1	92.9	103.1
Total	1 244.1	1 236.4	1 239.8	1 263.6	1 239.6	1 273.7	1 323.4
<i>Annual Growth %</i>	<i>4.4</i>	<i>0.6</i>	<i>0.3</i>	<i>1.9</i>	<i>1.9</i>	<i>2.8</i>	
Employment Index	104.4	103.7	104.0	106.0	104.0	106.8	111.0
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Agriculture	345.1	337.70	325.00	290.2	259.13	231.38	206.6
Mining	61.0	59.50	44.60	42.7	40.66	39.17	37.74
Manufacturing	207.6	200.70	181.40	178.6	167.16	160.86	154.8
Electricity & Water	15.5	17.10	11.20	9.3	10.69	11.79	12.99
Construction	79.1	69.20	53.80	41.3	42.90	43.61	44.34
Financial Services & Real Estate	27.9	31.00	34.90	28	29.60	31.4	33.31

Distribution	112.9	115.30	103.30	100.2	114.99	123	131.56
Transport & Communication	51.0	44.90	43.90	42.2	45.15	46.76	48.43
Public Administration	66.2	62.50	58.50	61.4	70.91	75.96	81.37
Education	146.4	134.90	139.70	148.1	125.84	115.84	106.63
Health	28.2	28.00	27.90	31.7	30.02	28.25	26.58
Private Domestic Services	102.1	102.1	102.1	102.1	102.10	102.1	102.1
Other	105.4	113.20	110.80	107.8	92.71	86.91	81.48
Total	1 348.4	1 316.1	1 237.1	1 183.6	1 131.9	1 097.0	1 067.9
<i>Annual Growth %</i>	<i>5.9</i>	<i>2.4</i>	<i>6.0</i>	<i>4.3</i>	<i>4.4</i>	<i>3.1</i>	<i>2.7</i>
Employment Index	113.1	110.4	103.8	99.3	94.9	92.0	89.6

Source: Labour Statistics, CSO, October 2004 and Unpublished CSO Data.



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