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AFRICANUS is an annual journal published for the Department of Development Administration by the University of South Africa. It seeks to publish articles, research reports, book reviews and bibliographies on subjects relating to developmental problems and strategies in the Third World.

The attention of contributors is drawn to the *Note to contributors* printed on page 2.

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STATEMENT BY THE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

The values underlying our teaching of our subject are as follows:

- We are dedicated to upholding human rights, an open society and social justice.
- We want to move our subject to a relevant position abreast of the contemporary sociopolitical situation in South Africa and the rest of the Third World.
- We affirm a pragmatic and human view of development administration and we reject a technicist approach to development.
- We want to direct attention to the sociopolitical climate for change and the rules of the game within which development at the local level takes place.
- We affirm that development occurs when social forces are generated at the bottom of society.
- We see development as a popular process not under the control of external structures.
- We want to engage with the popular development process in the larger society and, within that framework, with administration-related topics.

With the above values, we wish to approach our subject of development administration primarily through the study of the dynamics of society in its sociopolitical context.

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Contributions to *AFRICANUS* are welcomed and should be submitted in English. The length of an average *article* is 4 000 words, *research notes* 2 000 words, and *book reviews* 500 words, but in exceptional cases longer contributions could be accepted.

Africanus aims to be a conduit between the academic debate on, and the practice of, development. Therefore, contributions should reflect

- practice (case studies dealing with practical aspects of development)
- theory (debate and reflection on development theory in respect of the Third World in general but Southern Africa in particular) – in other words, the application and interpretation of theory in the Third World and particularly in the Southern African context.

Contributions are subjected to peer evaluation. The manuscript should be typed in one-and-a-half or double spacing. One hard copy and one electronic copy of the manuscript, preferably in WordPerfect 6.1, should be submitted.

This journal uses the Harvard reference technique. This technique involves inserting, in the text, the author's surname, the year of publication of the source and the page number(s) on which the information appears. An alphabetical list of sources consulted should be provided at the end of the article, containing *all* the relevant information such as the author's surname and initials, date of publication, full title of the book or article, place of publication, and publisher. Contributors are requested to follow the format indicated below.

Direct quotes from books, edited contributions and periodical articles used in the manuscript:

“Ignorant of the law, without legal advice, competing for employment and services with others in a similar condition, the household is an easy victim of predation by the powerful” (Chambers 1983:110).

Paraphrasing or indirect references:

Chambers (1983:110) points out that poor households are powerless and vulnerable.

Example of a list of sources consulted:

Chambers, R 1983. *Rural development: putting the last first*. London: Longman.

Griffen, K 1986. Communal land tenure systems and their role in rural development, in *Theory and reality in development: essays in honour of Paul Streeten*, edited by S Lall and F Stewart, London: Macmillan.

Rogerson, C M 1992. Feeding Africa's cities: the role and potential of urban agriculture. *Africa Insight* 22 (4).

Contributors of articles, research notes and book reviews accepted for publication will receive two copies of the number.

All contributions, books for review and other editorial correspondence should be addressed to the Editor, *AFRICANUS*, Department of Development Administration, University of South Africa, PO Box 392, Pretoria, 0003, Republic of South Africa.

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Stephan Treurnicht & Neels Botha

This issue of *Africanus* places a very strong emphasis on Southern African issues with particular emphasis on Mozambique and Zambia.

Prof Mwelwa Musambachime in his article looks at how the Zambian Government has handled the privatisation of state owned enterprises (SOE's) and at the prospects and constraints faced and at the success and failures registered so far.

Dr Sonja Schoeman examines and analyses some educational developments in post independence Mozambique (1975–1998) in order that the various stakeholders in South Africa's educational transformation process can obtain an idea of what should be done on the one hand, and avoided on the other, to ensure that South Africa's educational transformation is a success.

On the issue of local government performance, in Zambia, Royson Mukwena argues that the presence of accepted performance measures is crucial to the success of the operations of any organisation.

Neels Botha and Stephan Treurnicht explain in an article what Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) means and try to promote its further application in South Africa.

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Stephan Treurnicht is a lecturer in Development Administration at Unisa who has done extensive research on Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA).

Privatisation of state-owned enterprises in Zambia: 1992–1998

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In today's global economy, Zambia cannot expect to sit alone. We need the partnership of International Investors to get our economy ticking again ... Privatisation will help attract real long term investment in Zambia and in our future. Privatisation means prosperity.

(Zambian Privatisation Agency 1996)

To the maximum extreme practical governments should rely on the market mechanism – on private enterprise and market forces – as the principal determinants of economic decision.

(Nyong 1994: 129)

Competitive markets are the best way yet found for efficiently organising the production and distribution of goods and services. Domestic and external competition provides the incentives that unleash entrepreneurship and technological progress. A consensus is gradually forming in favour of “market-friendly” approach to development.

(World Bank 1991: 1)

* Data for this article was collected from libraries in Zambia, Malawi, the United Kingdom and Namibia. I am particularly grateful to Mr Raston Kaluba, currently with the Zambia Privatisation Agency (ZPA), for his valuable assistance in securing publications by ZPA. Earlier drafts of this article were discussed at the Annual General Conference of the Zambia Chapter of the Professors World Peace Academy, in Livingstone, Zambia, in 1994 and in seminars at Chancellor College, Zomba, in Malawi in 1995, and at University of Namibia, Windhoek, in 1997. I am very grateful to the people who found time to comment on the drafts. I further wish to record my thanks to Dr K K Mwenda formerly at Warwick, now with the World Bank in Washington DC and Dr B Mbenga, University of the North-west, South Africa, for their comments on an earlier draft. I am also grateful for the editorial assistance given by an anonymous person. I am responsible for any errors of fact and judgement.

1 INTRODUCTION

These quotations reflect a new approach to the management of national economies. The guiding philosophy, encouraged and promoted by the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), financial institutions and donor agencies, has been to liberalise national economies. This involves the divestiture of the state from running enterprises and allows the private sector to run them according to market forces (Friedman 1980). Drawing on the experience of 26 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, the World Bank (1994) demanded that three important principles should guide African governments in the management of their economies:

- Get macroeconomic principles right, leaving smaller budget deficits and realistic exchange rates.
- Encourage competition through domestic deregulation, trade reform, and privatisation of public enterprises.
- Use scarce institutional capacity wisely to minimise government involvement in marketing by abolishing marketing boards, privatising of public enterprises and replacing imports restrictions by tariffs.

The second and third of these guidelines stress the importance of privatisation of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) as being *crucial* and *central* to the success or failure of the liberalisation programme in any country. The term SOEs is used broadly to include industrial, commercial, transport, agricultural, service rendering undertakings, and financial institutions such as banks and insurance, controlled partially or wholly by the government. According to Shirley (1982: 2) SOEs are expected by the state to “earn their revenue from the sale of goods and services as a self accounting, separate and individual legal entity”. Many of the SOEs, however, were unable to sustain themselves and became a burden on the treasury by contributing to budgetary deficits (Kikeri et al 1994: 241–271).

In recent years privatisation of SOEs has attracted a lot of attention from the media, academia, governments and financial institutions. This reflects a worldwide interest in reducing the role of the state in the management of national economies while enhancing the scope of private ownership and the private sector (Clausen 1993). The growing appeal of privatisation embraces both the ideological desire for a smaller government and the strong belief in the superior economic performance of the private sector. It has come to be accepted as a panacea for achieving a stable, efficient and well-managed economy.

The shift from SOEs to privatisation and the private sector was underscored by the publication of the Berg Report of 1981, commissioned by the World Bank, which later in the year published it as a document entitled *Accelerated development in sub-Saharan Africa: an agenda for action*, and the Bank's own annual *World Development Report* of 1983 which incorporated a special review of the role of public management in development (World Bank 1981; 1983; *Economist* 1986). These documents argued that development performance in Africa had been distorted by inappropriate policies which resulted in over-extending the role of the state by undertaking administrative and financial roles. They recommended that ways of scaling down this role to manageable terms should be found in the interests of macroeconomic efficiency – to create a bigger role for market forces and the private sector to underpin and sustain efficiency.

To encourage this new policy the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), United States International Agency for Development (USAID) and donor agencies made privatisation a condition for lending money or giving aid to developing countries. Virtually all countries in Africa, parts of Asia and Latin America abided by this requirement. They were joined later by the countries of the former Warsaw Pact, and indeed by some Western countries such as Spain, and Portugal who were attempting some degree or form of privatisation as part of their efforts to liberalise the economy (Schwartz 1995: 1731–1736; Due & Schmidt 1995: 50–57; Saasa 1994: 30–34; Hanke 1987; Jones 1985: 3; Kello 1994; Aharami 1991: 73–83).

Although privatisation became widespread in Africa in the 1990s, it is actually an old concept going back to the early 1960s. Few countries were engaged in the process initially (Callaghay & Wilson 1988: 179–200). Now almost all countries, including South Africa under the government led by the African National Congress, are engaged in some form of privatisation (Kello 1994; *Finance Week* 1998). One country where privatisation is a big issue is Zambia. About 280 SOEs are to be privatised during the period 1992 to 1998. The programme is not entirely new. Although it began in the mid-1980s under President Kaunda and the ruling United National Independence Party (UNIP), it was only after 1992 that it was given new impetus by the government led by Fredrick Chiluba and the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) which came into power in 1991. The liberalisation of the economy was the guiding philosophy of the MMD economic policy (Movement for Multiparty Democracy 1991: 4–5). President Chiluba has been on record as stating the “the Zambian economy could only grow through privatisation” (*Times of Zambia* 1997). Zambia's privatisation

programme has been described as “impressive” by World Bank and many investors such as Milton Ward, the chairman and chief executive of Cyprus Amax Mineral Company of United States of America (*Times of Zambia* 1997). The Zambia Privatisation Agency (ZPA), which was given the task of overseeing the programme, hoped that it would succeed and become “a model for Africa” (Zambian Privatisation Agency 1995: 2).

In the programme to liberalise the economy, Zambia worked out a plan to sell off 28 SOEs all over the country, ranging from bakeries, crocodile farms, tourist (safari) lodges to breweries and companies engaged in milling and in producing dairy products, textiles, cement and fertilisers. It also included the sale of the giant mining conglomerate, the Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines (ZCCM), which provides the bulk of exports and revenue. (See the spread of the SOEs in Zambia on the map.)

The programme started in 1992 and was initially scheduled to run for five years until the end of 1997. This was later extended to the end of 1998. Valentine Chitalu, chief executive of the ZPA (Zambian Privatisation Agency 1995: 7), explained the guiding philosophy in this exercise in the following words:

We believe companies run better as private businesses than in the state sector, so the overriding objective is to transfer state companies to the private sector. But we hope at the same time to promote investment, encourage growth of capital markets and in the longer term increase employment.

This article, then, looks at how the Zambian government has handled the privatisation of SOEs and looks at the prospects and constraints and the success and failures so far. I propose to discuss this subject under three headings: background to the concept of privatisation, the origin and failure of nationalisation of industries, and the current privatisation programme from 1992.

2 BACKGROUND TO THE ORIGINS OF PRIVATISATION AS AN ECONOMIC POLICY

After World War II, many governments in Europe and that of the United States nationalised a number of key and strategic industries in manufacturing, trading, transport, tourism, telecommunication, energy production and distribution and broadcasting to save them from bankruptcy and to

provide a wide range of services and public goods for a fee, price or free (Friedman 1980: 62–81). These industries and services were taken over by government and termed corporations or parastatals. Each was established by an Act of Parliament or Congress as “revenue generating enterprises owned and controlled by the State” (Van de Walle 1989: 601). According to Bethel (1993) SOEs were created by various governments for the following reasons:

- It was widely thought that they would provide government access to much-needed revenues – generated by profits – to finance investments.
- Local entrepreneurs were in short supply and did not have access to adequate capital.
- It was ideologically favourable to help overcome critical bottlenecks and was seen to be in the interest of national security.
- It was expected that they would provide political patronage.
- It was aimed at lessening regional inequalities and enhanced employment creation.

Each government invested a substantial amount of public funds in each corporation – especially during the establishment phase. In addition, SOEs received financial aid from the state in the form of parliamentary grants, appropriations and subsidies (Utt 1993: 4). SOEs became an attractive form of economic strategy for development which was widely embraced by developed and developing countries. In the 1960s and 1970s the number of SOEs increased rapidly and became the most important sector of the economy (Utt 1993:5).

The circumstances and characteristics under which the SOEs operated varied from country to country. They often existed in a centrally planned economy with various degrees of monopoly power or competitiveness. In Africa the reasons for creating SOEs were associated with historical, economic, social and political considerations. Some SOEs were inherited from the colonial era. Others were based on political ideologies. In others, the apparent absence of the indigenous private sector led governments to create SOEs to bridge the “entrepreneurial gap”. In addition, politicians were attracted to establishing more SOEs because they used them as a patronage mechanism to distribute jobs to loyal supporters (Shirley 1993: 193).

In the 1970s reviews of the performance of SOEs in Europe, America and Africa led to the conclusion that their performance was poor. Their earnings

and rates of return were generally low. Each year usually they incurred heavy losses. Nellis (1986) observed that:

Far from contributing to government revenues [SOEs especially in Africa] have more regularly become a burden on already strained budgets, do not generate sufficient revenue to cover operating costs, depreciating and financial charges. A good percentage do not cover operating costs at all.

Investigation revealed that the poor performance of the SOEs in general was attributed to many factors. The first was because of unclear and contradictory objectives, and excessive political interference in issues and decisions made by boards of directors or/and the chief executives. The second was the excessive rotation of management by the appointing authority. This was for several reasons: partly to ensure that none of them built empires or practised nepotism, ethnicity, regionalism, and/or political favouritism; and also because of the shortage of competent and efficient managers. In very few cases chief executives left because there was a lack of incentives to retain them or because they were tired of political interference. The third was the incompatibility of civil service procedures with commercial operations, which ultimately resulted in inefficiencies and heavy losses. Fourth, the inappropriate investment decisions that emanated from lack or non-existence of economic and feasibility studies contributed to poor performance. Fifth, the existence of poor reporting systems, weak accounting methods and inefficient, incompetent and non-professional boards of directors had adverse effects on the performance of the SOEs. Sixth, there was insufficient autonomy and inadequate measures for judging performance. And another reason was the inappropriate pricing policy and under-capitalisation of many of the SOEs coupled with high debt/equity ratios. The shortage of funds was aggravated because large amounts of working capital were tied up in inventories. Further more, many SOEs had a largely unskilled, inefficient and unproductive labour force. Many workers were engaged on political grounds. As a result of these and other weaknesses, the SOEs generally became a burden on the treasury and a major contributory factor to the annual budget deficits (Utt 1993: 5–6; Tadesse 1994: 2).

The first country to tackle the problem of the SOEs was the United States under the Carter administration. Soon after taking office in 1976 the administration instituted a series of measures to curb government spending by introducing zero-based budgeting and pushed for deregulation of large corporations so that the private sector could operate them on a profit basis.

Both tactics were aimed at reducing government expenditure and making the economy more efficient by broadening the sphere of economic activity, directed by market force (Nyong 1994: 123–139; Shirley 1983; Hanke 1987; Bethel 1993: 1–2). And between 1980 and 1988, the Reagan administration expanded the Carter initiative to include a broad range of deregulation to break up large monopolies and allow competition and divestiture (Golal 1991; Public Service International 1989: 14–15).

In 1979 Margaret Thatcher and the Conservative Party came to power in Britain on the promise of privatising SOEs. The argument was that under public ownership there had been constant political interference in the management of SOEs. They argued further that:

The government of the day had a wide ranging power to interfere in the running of the industry. The Government appoints the members of all bodies that run the [public industries]. All capital expenditure plans have to be approved by the Government which also determines the industry's total borrowing limit. The management of the industry does not have the same freedom to manage in the same way as in the private sector (Great Britain 1985: 5).

It was also argued that private ownership would emancipate and create incentives for management if government interference was replaced by the private sector mechanism of control by consumers through the product market. As a party, the Conservatives wanted

... industrial and commercial decisions to be determined by the market and not by the state. We believe that consumer choice and the disciplines of the market lead to more stable prices, improved efficiency and high quality service (Fround et al 1996: 119–134; Great Britain 1982:1).

Based on these arguments, each privatisation of a service or utility was prepared and justified in Green and White Papers. The government began the programme with the successful privatisation of British Telecommunications in 1982 (Great Britain 1982). This was followed by the sale of buses in 1984 (Great Britain 1984), water in 1986 (Great Britain 1986) and electricity in 1988 (Great Britain 1988). By July 1987 around £80 billion worth of public assets had been sold, rising to £200 billion in 1990. More assets were privatised in the period 1990 to 1996. According to the Public Sector International (PSI) (1990: 14) privatisation “permeated all of the British economic activity”.

The success of the privatisation programme in Britain became a good model for other European countries to follow. Western Europe was the first, followed later, after the fall of Communism, by the countries which had belonged to the Warsaw Pact. Canada and the Latin American countries followed in the 1980s.

The success of the privatisation programme in the United States and Great Britain encouraged the World Bank and the IMF to adopt privatisation as part of their lending policy. In turn, they encouraged Asian and African countries to adopt it as part of their economic policies. Recipients of their loans were pressurised to enact austerity programmes, forcing them to privatise SOEs. USAID followed suit. According to Fitzgerald (1989: 39), in one important policy statement it defined its role as being aimed at

... promoting economic self-sufficiency in recipient countries, encouraging them to adopt policies to increase food production and [liberalise the economy to be driven by] market forces by privatising costly and unproductive state-owned enterprises ... Recipients must undertake internal reforms eliminating government subsidies, price and wage controls ...

For developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, and the countries of the former Soviet block which formerly operated communist (or socialist) economies, privatisation became a test of their commitment to restructuring their economies from centrally planned with ever-bulging deficits to a liberalised market economy. For these countries, privatisation involved more than just a change of ownership of individual companies, it involved creating an environment which was conducive to the development of private enterprise.

Various factors accounted for the shift in the development of new policy orientations. First, many SOEs in Africa failed to generate investable surplus for government. Instead they became a burden on government budgets as they continuously collected grants and subsidies. This had to stop. Second, economic stagnation and debt crises crippled development efforts. And third was the response to the fiscal and austerity measures demanded by the IMF, the World Bank and donors as part of the conditionalities (Hemmingway & Mansour 1989: 31–32; Jones 1991; International Monetary Fund 1986: 16; Nyong 1994: 123–139). One of the aims of the privatisation policy was to take advantage of productivity from increased incentives for managerial performance imposed by responsibility

to private shareholders. The IMF, World Bank and aid donors were interested in privatisation as an integral part of the structural adjustment programmes. Underlying the policy prescription was the belief in the superiority of the neo-classical market-oriented view of the development process (Cook & Kirkpatrick 1991).

3 DEFINITIONS

Privatisation has been given several definitions by various writers who see it as a reflection of a new policy initiative geared to altering the balance between private and public sectors. For Hemmingway and Mansour (1988: 31–32) privatisation is “the transfer of public sector activities to the private sector”. To Dunleavy (1991:18) privatisation is “strictly the permanent transfer of services or goods production activities previously carried out by public corporations (or parastatals) to private forms”. And to Stuart Butler (1991: 17) it is “the shifting of a function, either in whole or in part from the public sector to the private sector. It is the increased reliance on private actors and market forces to pursue social goals.” In the extreme form privatisation represents a self-conscious effort to “shrink” the government apparatus and “roll back” the boundaries of state responsibilities (Feigenbaum & Henig, 1989:185). Scott and Wellons (1995: 1049–1050) give a definition that in general attempts to summarise the views of many who have commented on the subject:

Privatisation is the process of transferring operations and assets from the public to the private sector. Broadly defined in this fashion, privatisation is more than the selling of an enterprise to the highest bidder, as it includes contracting out leasing, private sector financing of infrastructure projects liquidation, mass privatisation, etc ... There is no single best approach to privatisation; the appropriate path depends on the goals that the government is seeking to attain, the individual circumstances facing the enterprise and the [social], economic and political context of the country.

Privatisation is thus both an economic concept and measure and an economic and political process which changes the distribution of power within a given society. It is a process in which the government removes itself from involvement in the economic sector to do what it knows best – to govern and create an enabling environment for the private sector to invest and expand.

Narrowly defined, privatisation can be viewed as a strategy involving the transfer and ownership of productive activities of services undertaken by the state through the public sector to the private sector. Such transfers can be effected in a number of ways including the direct sale assets; the sale of part of or all of the equity; leasing; management contracts or contracting out of functions; management buyout or outright liquidation of loss-making enterprises (Hemmingway & Mansour 1988: 6–7; Young 1986: 235–252; Tangri 1991: 523–536; Ninkani 1990:13–45; Anonymous 1992: 11). Many countries in Africa, Latin America, Asia and the former Soviet block use a combination of two or more of the above (Utt 1993: 4–6; Feigenbaum & Hening 1994: 195; Tangri 1991: 523–536).

Privatisation can also be seen in much larger and broader terms. It can be defined as a process by which efforts are made to circumscribe the role of the state within the economy while at the same time enlarging the scope of market forces. Appropriate measures for this might include policies defining the scope of the role of the state in discharging SOEs, requiring them to perform according to the criteria set by private enterprise – that is to achieve efficiency and profitability; or reduce the impact of regulations on the market economy as in the United States during the Reagan period (Utt 1993: 4–5).

In turning to privatisation, government has three principal objectives. The first is to seek improvement in the functioning of economies, improve living standards, and increase productivity because a country's prosperity is directly linked to it. The more goods and services produced, the greater the reward. It is believed that by privatising SOEs, resources will be used more efficiently and the quantity and quality of production will rise. Second, by transferring the ownership and management of commercial enterprises from governments, they will then concentrate their resources on the provision and improvement of vital social services. And third, by privatising SOEs, governments hope to reverse their increasing budgetary expenditures and stem inflation (Savas 1982).

In shifting responsibilities from government to market forces, privatisation potentially alters the insitutional framework through which citizens normally articulate, mediate and promote their individual and shared interests. Privatisation is therefore an intensely political phenomenon (Utt 1993:4–5). The motives for privatisation may be divided into five different categories as follows:

- introducing a market economy
- increasing economic efficiency by promoting competition
- boosting state revenues and reduce budget deficits
- removing political interference in commerce
- establishing a political system based upon private property rights and individual freedoms (Feigenbaum & Henig 1994: 186).

The outcome of privatisation policies, however, usually involves a combination of all five. Privatisation can take the form of selling equity shares or selling physical assets to foreign or domestic buyers. The former option implies the existence or simultaneous creation of markets (such as a stock exchange) in which ownership rights are tradeable among shareholders and it addresses the legal and financial structure of enterprise. The latter option is more popular and preferable.

Whatever format is chosen, the problem is to produce “quality privatisation”. This means that the new owners or shareholders must be “good” and that the enterprise is sold at the “right” price and the whole process is completed rapidly. However, it is difficult to control all three variables – time, ownership and price – simultaneously. Trade-offs are inevitable. If one sets the time limit in which to complete the process, the other two have to be left more or less unrestricted. The same will apply to the other two categories. In Zambia the speed of privatisation is of major concern. This implies striking a balance between two extremes: an easily controllable but very slow one-by-one approach or the quick but administratively and socially disruptive “big bang” solution (Schwartz 1989: 1733). Zambia chose the former.

4 NATIONALISATION OF INDUSTRIES 1964–1991

At the time of independence the economy of Zambia was largely in the hands of foreigners. Local (Zambian) participation and entrepreneurship were relatively absent. The government wanted to redress this, and decided to participate in all major sectors of the economy on behalf of the people. In taking this position, President Kaunda and his government believed that, apart from providing an opportunity for indigenous Zambians to participate in the economy, government intervention through the establishment of SOEs was the best, fastest and surest way of accelerating economic growth. In their opinion, “political independence without ... economic independence [was] meaningless” (Kaunda 1968, 1969). This

policy was not unique; it was being pursued in other parts of Africa as well (Chileshe 1981: 81–120; Kello 1994).

With this in mind, President Kaunda set the ball rolling. In April 1968 he announced the first set of economic reforms at Mulungushi, just north of Kabwe (formerly Broken Hill), through which the government took over majority share-holding in over 26 expatriate-owned companies in the field of wholesaling, retailing, building materials and transportation. In addition, expatriate businesses were restricted to prescribed urban areas. The second set of reforms, which came in August 1969, detailed the takeover of the mines. The third, which came in 1970, related to the formation of a government-owned bank to compete with foreign-owned banks. And the fourth covered the takeover of building societies and insurance companies. To run these and other companies which were acquired, the government expanded the role of the Industrial Development Corporation (Indeco). It was now supported by the Mining Development Corporation (Mindeco) in charge of the mines; the Finance Development Corporation (Findeco) to run financial institutions and the Zambia Industrial Corporation (Zimco) which became the holding company. To President Kaunda's government, this was the best response to the "practical needs" of the people (Kaunda 1969).

The SOEs, termed "parastatals", achieved rapid growth and came to occupy a central position in the national economy. They comprised about 80 per cent of the economy. Indeco's assets increased from K49,9 million in 1966 to K1 009 million in 1973. Between 1973 and 1979 they employed one third of the workers in the formal wage employment – numbering about 25 000 in the urban and rural areas. Over 50 per cent of the total gross domestic product (GDP) per annum came from the public sector. By 1980 the percentage had increased to about 40 per cent of the total labour force (Mengistu & Haile Mariam 1988: 4–7). In 1985 the SOEs were only contributing about 35 per cent of the GDP, but consumed 56 per cent of the domestic investment and provided only about 34 per cent of the formal wage employment. In the same year they accounted for 13 per cent of the country's external debt. However, their subsidies accounted for 19,5 per cent of the government revenue (Due & Schmidt 1995:53). According to the ZPA, between 1985 and 1989, SOEs cost the government US\$455 million in hidden subsidies against dividends of just US\$22 million. In 1991, when the MMD government took power, the average rate of return on SOEs assets was less than 5 per cent when inflation was well over 200 per cent (Zambian Privatisation Agency 1995: 7; 1998: 2).

The operations of the SOEs faced numerous constraints. Among these were:

- a run-down service sector, industry and state shops;
- scarcity of consumer goods. Where and when they were available, they were of shoddy quality and sold at controlled prices;
- declining productivity and low capacity utilisation;
- an over-staffed road, air and water transportation sector which was heading for a total collapse. Many of the companies in this sector were finally liquidated;
- a risk of losing thousands of jobs;
- chronic shortage of foreign exchange. Access was governed by a number of cumbersome procedures. As a result consumer goods were scarce and subjected to a price control regime;
- widespread corruption, nepotism, incompetence and inefficiency.

The SOEs were also subjected to government bureaucracy. In their operations they were characterised by lack of quality control management, inefficient leadership and political interference in their day-to-day operations. There was a very high turnover in the appointment and removal of the chief executives by the president, who was the appointing authority. This was done without due or prior consultation with the boards of directors. The president was not obliged to give reasons for his actions, but the boards of directors were expected to endorse appointments or dismissals. Rotation was partly because of the shortage of competent managers, inefficiency, and a move to stop chief executives from building their own empires. Appointments were a reflection of the loyalty of individuals to the president and the ruling party. Dismissals indicated that the victims had, for various reasons, fallen out of favour. There was no opportunity for appeal or for the victim to exculpate himself or herself.

Appointment of boards of directors was a prerogative of the president. Most of those appointed were politicians – many of whom were not competent in this field and knew little or nothing about the operations of the SOE. They were interested largely in their seating allowance. These are the people who were expected to approve or reject all strategic and business plans of the SOEs. Often, professionally devised plans for the SOEs were rejected by government because the board members lacked business entrepreneurship or because the chief executive was not rated highly politically.

Senior politicians also exercised pressure on the location of industries because they wanted to create jobs in their constituencies to gain the

approval of the electorate and be re-elected. The best example is the late Humphrey Mulemba, then Secretary General of UNIP in the 1980s. He pressurised the government to site a steel project at Mumbaji, in North Western Province where he came from. After the government had spent hundreds of millions of Kwacha (the country's currency) on putting up the infrastructure, the project was found not to be economically feasible (Burdette 1985: 85; Tangri 1986: 113).

The other weakness arose from the incompatibility of civil service procedures with commercial operations. The civil service to which the SOEs were answerable was poorly trained and motivated, lacked initiative and was slow in decision-making. It was also interventionist (in day-to-day operational decision-making) even when it did not possess skills suited to promoting businesslike behaviour (Kapita 1994: 22).

Under these circumstances, many SOEs became poor performers. In spite of having well-developed plans and objectives, some SOEs were deviated by politicians because of profit maximisation objectives. This tendency was encouraged by the realisation that SOEs operated in sheltered markets and when they faltered, as many did, they were guaranteed subsidies and grants. This in itself had a heavy bearing on corporate efficiency (or inefficiency) and performance. The SOEs, therefore, became a burden on the taxpayer. However, in spite of the overwhelming evidence of poor performance in many SOEs, the government, which faced numerous industrial strikes and food riots in 1986 and 1990, did not feel encouraged to privatise about 280 SOEs for fear of a political fall-out (Nellis 1986).

5 THE PRIVATISATION PROGRAMME SINCE 1992

Following the election of the MMD in October 1991, the new government under President Chiluba embarked on an ambitious and aggressive programme aimed at liberalising, restructuring and reactivating the economy "by focusing on the engine of growth being through private initiative and private sector development" (Movement for Multiparty Democracy 1993). The programme was guided by the party's economic policy as outlined as follows in an election manifesto of 1991:

The MMD is determined to bring about a new era of opportunity of economic policy realism which rewards and motivates initiative. The MMD is committed to the creation of a stable economic environment by pursuing positive macro and micro economic policies.

The MMD is committed to creating an enabling environment for economic development in Zambia by implementing a balanced structural adjustment programme specifically suited to Zambian conditions.

In order to bring about a suitable climate in which both the private sectors and public sectors will flourish, the MMD will formulate and implement suitable monetary and official policies, create a positive system of administrating investment incentive schemes, abolish monopolies and provide a free market-system; ensure free collective bargaining, institute market determined allocation policies: stimulate positive growth-oriented international trade policies, mobilise domestic savings and develop a capital market, and rationalise government regulating measures.

The party was committed to privatisation in order to optimise resources utilisation, enhance the profitability of the public sector and assist the reduction of the government deficit ... The current role of the government as a central participant in business shall cease. Free market will become the foundation stone upon which the economy ... shall operate.

The package of measures constituting the recovery programme under the broad conceptual framework of structural adjustment was explained in the *Economic and Financial Policy Framework Paper* approved by Cabinet in March 1992. The programme included the following objectives:

- scaling down of government direct initiative in economic activities and correspondingly its administrative load;
- reducing budgetary costs arising from subsidies and capital expenditure;
- promoting competition and improving the efficiency of the operations of the enterprises;
- encouraging ownership of shares;
- promoting growth of capital markets;
- minimising the involvement of government bureaucracy in enterprise operations;
- stimulating both local and foreign investment; and
- deriving capital incomes for the treasury.

In the months which followed, the government introduced and passed the Privatisation Act of 1992 (or Act Number 21 of 1992). Among other things, the Act provided for the privatisation and commercialisation of the SOEs

and the establishment of ZPA as an independent statutory body. It defined its composition and functions as being to:

- recommend privatisation policy guidelines to Cabinet and implement programmes approved;
- oversee all aspects of the implementation of the privatisation programme and monitor progress;
- prepare and submit to Cabinet for approval of the long-term divestiture sequence plan;
- recommend to Cabinet the most appropriate method of sale of each SOE to be privatised;
- set pre-qualification criteria for the selection of potential buyers or investors of SOEs to be privatised;
- evaluate offers from potential buyers with regard to:
 - price;
 - ability and commitment of the buyers to develop the enterprise; and
 - the track record of buyers and their expertise in the type of enterprise on offer.
- ensure that monopolies are not created in the process of privatisation. Prepare or cause to be prepared the relevant documentation necessary to effect the privatisation of the SOEs;
- seek potential investors for the SOEs;
- maintain records, safeguard information and establish administrative procedures to ensure confidentiality of information;
- maintain close liaison with all the relevant institutions in the process of privatisation;
- publicise the activities of the privatisation programme (such as advertising in the press companies to be privatised, evaluation reports on bidders and their bids, final buyers, and provide a schedule on the privatisation dates).
- undertake independent valuation of assets (plant, equipment, land, buildings, movable assets such as furniture, office equipment, vehicles, etc) and liabilities and to ascertain the price to be paid for these; and
- do all such things as are necessary or coincidental or conducive to the better carrying out of the functions specified in the Act.

According to the Privatisation Act of 1992, Section 22 (i), the ZPA had statutory powers to employ the following modes of privatisation:

- public offer of shares;
- private sale of shares in a SOE to reduce government shareholding;

- offer of additional shares in SOE to reduce government shareholding;
- sale of the assets of and business of the SOEs;
- recognition of the SOE before the sale of the whole or part of the SOE;
- management or employee buyouts in SOEs;
- lease and management contract; and
- any other method the agency may consider appropriate.

It was important that before a SOE was put up for privatisation the ZPA carried out detailed feasibility studies to provide the buyer with information on the company. It also had to find out whether the buyer possessed a high degree of managerial experience and technology and whether the new management had the resources to provide high-quality goods and services more efficiently.

The programme of privatising over 200 SOEs was scheduled to run for five years from 1992 to 1997. It was later extended to 1998. The executor of this programme, the ZPA, was an independent statutory body headed by an independent board of 12 members drawn from the Chamber of Commerce, Labour, Federation of Employers, the Law Association of Zambia, Copperbelt University, the churches and nongovernmental organisations. The members elected their own chairman and vice chairman. To facilitate the privatisation process, the government passed laws for the establishment of the Lusaka Stock Exchange where companies would be floated and the Investment Centre (Mwenda 1995: 42–44).

As soon as the ZPA became functional, it took an inventory and evaluation of the SOEs to determine the value of the assets and liabilities. Based on this information, the ZPA (Zambian Privatisation Agency 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998 a, b, c, e) grouped the SOEs into three tranches as follows:

Tranche 1 – comprising 16 small companies

Tranche 2 – comprising 32 medium-sized companies such as Zambia Breweries and Chilanga Cement

Tranche 3 – composed of 112 large companies such as the Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines and Nitrogen Chemicals of Zambia.

The idea behind this move was the hope that the sale of SOEs would proceed in tranches. The Privatisation Act of 1992 provided that companies should be sold based on their market value. The concept of a market value referred to the price at which a willing seller would sell to a willing buyer

where both had knowledge of facts and each party was acting in its own self-interest. To obtain the market price, ZPA adopted the tender method of allowing prospective buyers to bid. The final sale depended on the bid and the proposed business plans outlined by the buyer.

Within the government and ZPA circles there was a great deal of hope that once companies had been evaluated they would sell off quickly (Kapita 1994:29–30). This was not the case because of a depressed economy, high interest rates and the poor state of some companies in which asset stripping had taken place. Zambians were also not aware that wherever this process had taken place, as the World Bank (1991: 195) noted, privatisation proved to be “an arduous [and very slow] process”. Of the 16 companies listed in the first tranche, 11 were sold by the end of 1994, bringing in a total of K6 billion, about US\$8 million at the prevailing exchange rates (Kapita 1994: 27–32; Anonymous 1994). Few companies were sold on the second tranche. Negotiations for the sales were slow, protracted and often disappointing. During the sales a number of former owners of some SOEs such as BP, Shell Mobil and Unilever came back. In others minority shareholders who had the first pre-emptive right bought majority shares. In others new owners such as Lonrho appeared. In three cases – Chilanga Cement, Zambia Sugar and Zambia Tobacco – shares were floated on the Lusaka Stock Exchange for the public to buy (Zambian Privatisation Agency 1998, a, b, c, d, e).

To accelerate sales, ZPA scrapped the tranches and opened the sale of all SOEs. The response from investors was tremendous. By the end of 1996, 145 companies had been sold to 30 foreigners, 88 Zambians, and 22 former owners of the companies before they were nationalised. The sales included Chilanga Cement, which was sold to the Commonwealth Development Corporation for US\$15 million; Zambia Breweries (Lusaka Depot) was sold to South African Breweries, a subsidiary of Anglo-American Corporation (AAC) for US\$15 million; Zambia Breweries (Ndola depot) was sold to Namibian Breweries for US\$10 million; Zambia Metal and Fabricating Company (Zamefa) and Kapiri Glass were sold to German investors, and National Milling company was sold to Namibia Milling. Hotels were mostly sold to management buyouts. Only the Pamodzi was sold to the Raj group of India. Motels scattered throughout Zambia were sold to management buyouts and individuals. Lodges and state farms were sold mostly to individuals – some of them ministers in the current government (Kapita 1996: 22; Mundakufa 1997: 3; Zambian Privatisation Agency 1996, 1997, 1998, a, b, c, d, e)

The sale of SOEs generated wide debate – mainly voicing complaints and accusations from most of the business community and the general public. Before it was dissolved, Zimco publicly complained about the sale of companies in tranche I. In its view, which was echoed widely by the business community and the public, these companies were grossly undervalued by ZPA. On its part, ZPA accused Zimco of interfering in its work and of mismanaging the companies under its responsibility by allowing the pilfering of equipment, stripping of assets and a general run-down in many of the companies. These quarrels prompted President Chiluba to intervene. He issued a statement, which was carried by the *National Mirror* for the first week of June 1994, stating that:

The concept of market value simply refers to the price at which a willing seller would sell to a willing buyer where both have knowledge of facts and each party is acting in its self-interest.

The differences between Zimco and ZPA are not welcome. I urge the two bodies to come to a compromise over prices. I blame the slow pace of privatisation on the non-compromising attitudes of both parties and selfish motives by some members of both groups when pricing the [SOEs]

It is also important to state here that in some cases privatisation has met with resistance from trade unions and the workers. In one instance, workers at Cleanwell Dry Cleaners sought a court injunction in the High Court to stop ZPA from selling the company because of alleged rampant corruption and malpractice in the way the sale of this company was handled. They believed that the process was being manipulated to prevent them from buying the company. The court agreed to apply an injunction. Later ZPA allowed a management buyout.

The sale of the giant mining conglomerate ZCCM was considered crucial to the success of the programme and to the resuscitation of the Zambian economy. In fact, according to government and business sources as well as the ZPA (1995: 7) the large-scale foreign investment that Zambia needed was waiting for the successful privatisation of ZCCM. Once it was done, it would have “a huge effect on the economy”. According to Valentine Chitalu, chief executive of ZPA, “This is the one that [would] have an impact on the lives of each and every Zambian, so we better do it right” (Zambian Privatisation Agency 1995: 7). The director of the Zambia Investment Centre, Mrs Margaret Mwanakatwe agrees. In her view, the sale

of the mines would build investor confidence and “Zambia would be poised for an economic boom” (*Times of Zambia* 1998).

ZCCM was not entirely state owned. The government owns 60,3 per cent of the shares, while Anglo-American Corporation (AAC) has 27 per cent. The remaining 12,0 per cent is owned by foreign institutions and individuals. Over the years a combination of low production and depressed copper prices on the world market due to over-supply and an increasing number of substitutes has meant low earnings. Coupled with escalating costs of production, production has steadily dropped over the past decades from a high of 755 000 tonnes in 1996 (when the mines were privatised) to 313 000 in 1994, improving slightly to 350 000 tonnes in 1996. The decline resulted in a reduction in earnings for ZCCM and revenue for the government. More importantly low returns resulted in little or no investment in the industry and low efficiency levels. Efforts to restructure the industry failed because of low capitalisation. Over the years it became clear that the industry needed massive investments to improve efficiency and productivity. This could only be done by a private-sector led consortium which could also bring in new expertise and technology to make mining more efficient and cost-effective. The government had to come up with a rational method of selling off ZCCM.

Like the sale of other SOEs, the sale of the ZCCM has generated a lot of heated debate in Parliament, the newspapers and political circles. Many people felt that it would be disastrous to sell the “golden goose” on which Zambia’s economy depended. Others felt that there would be no “sacred cows”. ZCCM would have to go. There were also arguments about the method of disposal. Some argued that it would be beneficial to sell the company as a single unit. Others, who included two deputy ministers, felt that the most logical approach would be to sell off individual mines. President Chiluba was not amused. He fired the two deputy ministers although they remained back-benchers. After the November 1996 election, in which the MMD was re-elected with a larger majority, they were reappointed as deputy ministers. To the public, this was a vindication of their stance over the sale of ZCCM.

After initiating a considerable number of studies on the mines by local and foreign consultants, in 1996 government finally decided to sell ZCCM in the form of packages over a period of 22 to 24 months (November 1996 to either September or November 1998) as follows:

- Konkola Mine Concentrates together with the Mufulira concentrator, smelter and refinery;
- Nchanga Mines (underground and open pits) tailings leach plant and concentrator together with Nkana Mines (Nkana and Mindolo), concentrator, smelter and the cobalt plants;
- Baluba and Luanshya Mines concentrator, the decommissioning of the Luanshya smelter and Ndola Copper refinery and the Chambishi Cobalt plant and electric transmissions distribution and generation assets managed by Power Division of the ZCCM.

Konkola Deep with a proven ore body of 30 million tonnes at 2,5 per cent copper has attracted investments from two consortia: Avmin Limited of Australia and the AAC of South Africa. The two have pledged to pump in over US\$100 billion (with AAC footing US\$600m) to develop the mine. Konkola North with a proven reserve of 60 million tonnes of ore at 8,6 per cent copper has attracted investments from Phelps Dodge of Canada, Anglovaal of South Africa, Gencor and Australian West Mining Company of Australia. The companies pledged to spend more than US\$800 million in developing the mine. Currently negotiations with the Kafue Consortium and other interested companies are taking place to finalise the sale of Nchanga and Nkana mines. The sale of all the mines to private investors is crucial. It will enable Zambia to access foreign investment, which will help the economy to recover. Apart from these mines, others were offered for sale. Kansanshi Copper Mine in North Western Province near the border with the Congo Democratic Republic (formerly Zaire) was sold to Cyprus Amax of America. The company will spend US\$300 million on developing the mine, which has a proven reserve of 3,33 million tonnes of ore at 2,5 per cent copper (*The Post* 1998). There are also hundreds of mineral outcrops and semi-precious stones scattered across Zambia that are waiting for investment and development (Sumaili 1996: 19; *Zambian Privatisation Agency* 1995).

6 CRITICISMS OF THE PRIVATISATION PROGRAMME

In Zambia the privatisation programme has been widely criticised because of its policy, its manner of implementation and the consequences arising from it. Some critics regard it as a deliberate move by the World Bank, IMF and donor agencies to “roll back” the achievements of the public sector. Others argue that privatisation leads to a take-over of SOEs by former multinational corporations and monopolies, a tendency that is likely to

aggravate internal transformations, economic reconstruction and poverty alleviation (Anonymous 1994: 14–15). In Zambia privatisation has led to a loss of control of key and strategic industries to foreign control and management. This is seen as a danger to national security and sovereignty. Judging from the results already seen, many are arguing that as privatisation proceeds the country has become a dumping ground for cheaply produced goods, mainly from South Africa and Zimbabwe, which are often subsidised by multinationals and other foreign companies. This has led to the “death” of the local manufacturing base and initiative.

Another argument is that some of the companies that are privatised used to produce exports which earned the country a substantial amount of foreign exchange. They were also large employers of labour. The earnings of the workers created a multiplier effect in the economy. This is no longer the case, because privatisation has led to a massive retrenchment of labour. This in turn has raised the level of unemployment.

The labour movement sees privatisation as a sure cause of unemployment. Their argument is supported by figures issued by the Ministry of Labour and Social Services. For example, according to a statement issued in November 1994 over 92 000 jobs were lost. By 1996 the number had risen to over 150 000 following the dissolution of Zambia Airways and United Bus of Zambia and retrenchments in a number of companies (Simutani 1996: 825–839). The sale, restructuring or closure of so many companies has added thousands of people to the unemployed.

Other critics argue that privatisation replaces service with a profit motive. Critical services such as transport and banking services that are needed in most rural areas cannot be offered by private enterprise because of logistical and infrastructural constraints which are likely to affect the profitability of the operations. The consequence is that remote and marginal areas will not be provided with some necessary services. Where goods are supplied, they are on average very expensive. They attract more admirers (window shoppers) than buyers. This affects turnover and profitability. Most economic activities concentrate on the urban areas where they have easier access to banking, transport, communication and other facilities (Kapita 1994: 27–32).

7 PERCEIVED MERITS OF PRIVATISATION

From various studies it has undertaken or initiated, the ZPA is convinced

that privatisation has brought a substantial number of changes that are beneficial to the economy. For example, in Zambia it has

- created confidence in the private sector in the efficacy of economic liberalisation;
- increased competition, resulting in better provision of quality goods and services at competitive prices. Competition gives consumers a greater choice of goods and services that can be acquired or purchased;
- brought in major investments into the economy;
- allowed new entrepreneurs to become actively involved in the economy. In the long run, this will contribute to economic growth;
- increased the number of Zambian shareholders in private companies;
- provided initiative in research and development and ensured that scarce resources are utilised more efficiently;
- imposed greater discipline on firms;
- ensured the absence of political interference in decision-making in industry;
- stopped all forms of subsidies;
- benefited employees through a raise in employment levels, higher earnings which often include performance bonuses and through the increase in the price of shares owned in the enterprise;
- helped to preserve jobs in relative terms;
- enabled the government to use revenues from the sale of the SOE's for social upliftment such as education and health care, road construction and maintenance.

8 CONCLUSION

So far, Zambia's privatisation programme has won praise from the World Bank, IMF, donors and investors. In a recent report the World Bank commended Zambia for putting up "the most successful privatisation programme in sub-Saharan Africa". According to Mudakufumba (1997: 3), the Bank went to state that the country had

... created one of the most attractive investment climates in Africa, demonstrated by several big companies which took advantage of the exercise to expand their interest in sectors previously dominated by government. These include Lonrho, Anglo-American Corporation and the Commonwealth Development Corporation.

In no other country in the African region has a government had the

confidence to place complete responsibility for privatisation [of SOEs] in the hands of one entity [this being ZPA].

The privatisation programme has had a significant impact on the Zambian economy which is felt more in urban areas than in rural ones. It will take some time for this to be felt and fully appreciated in all parts of the country. The programme has faced formidable obstacles. The levels of domestic support have been limited and largely unenthusiastic, mainly because of the high number of redundancies which have contributed to an increase in unemployment levels. In spite of these negatives, all analyses agree with the government that privatisation is a key component of the economic policy. They stress that the aim of privatisation is to reverse the losses incurred by the SOEs and turn them into privately managed profitable ventures. As more investments are pumped into the country the economy will improve (Shafik 1995: 1143–1156; Zambian Privatisation Agency 1998a).

It is important to note that not all privatised companies will become profitable or efficient. Profitability and efficiency would be dictated by the quality of the product, consumer preference and competition from available alternatives. Some companies will even fail, close, or sell to other entrepreneurs.

As privatisation is redefining property relations and determining the provision of employment, great care has been taken to ensure that the programme is socially acceptable. The government and ZPA were quick to learn that selling off SOEs cheaply was neither economically desirable nor socially acceptable (Dempsey 1990). But at the same time they bore in mind that when you overprice, you are reducing the chances of selling the SOEs. Andrew Sardanis, a Zambian industrialist and banker advised that “even if the government does not get full value for the companies, privatisation will still be beneficial as it will improve productivity and provide services to the Zambians” (Anonymous 1992: 11). A balance was struck to ensure that losses are minimised and, where possible, full benefits were assured and maximised. ZPA realised that the ultimate goal of privatisation was not only to create new owners, but more importantly to obtain new investments and acquire new technological and entrepreneurial skills.

The establishment of a stock market in Lusaka was important in that it reallocated capital efficiency and provided an environment for competition. It also struck a balance between the interest of foreign financiers and investors, the growth and development of a domestic financial industry.

According to the World Bank (1991:144–145), privatisation is highly desirable although it is time consuming. It goes on to warn that privatisation must not be seen as an end in itself but as a means to an end – to bring about a liberalised economy. The acid test is not in legislation, but in the ability to attract potential buyers. These are few and are looking for favourable incentives from government, economic viability and potential in the companies offered for sale. Competition for the buyers is fierce. Some companies will not be bought even if the asking price is very low.

So far, Zambia's record in privatising SOEs has been impressive. However, a lot remains to be done to attract investors in the mining sector and to sell off the remaining SOEs in telecommunications, banking and insurance to private investors. The country has worked hard to provide a good enabling environment, incentives and terms for investors. On their part, investors have been looking at the profitability of the SOEs for sale, tax concessions, rate of inflation, security and levels of crime, political stability, state of the transport infrastructure and information technology, the cost of importing inputs, raw materials, labour and exporting finished products. Judging from the track record set by the ZPA, Zambia has certainly done well in its privatisation programme. In some quarters, including the World Bank and the IMF, the success of its programme has been a "model" for other countries such as South Africa, to follow (*Sunday Times* of South Africa 1998).

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Transforming education in South Africa: lessons from the Mozambican experience

S Schoeman

1 INTRODUCTION

In April 1994 South Africa changed from white minority rule and apartheid to a non-racial democracy. The values and attitudes of most South Africans were formed in the old divided South Africa. Education has been seen as the key to changing many old commonly held values and beliefs. Therefore, education in South Africa needs to transform. A great deal of change is already taking place in education, but the South African educational system needs a transformation to break down class, race and gender stereotypes, and to make high-quality education available to everyone in order to raise thinking, competent and active future citizens (Department of Education 1997: 2). One of the ways of ensuring that this educational transformation is successful is to learn from case studies of other, similar processes. For the purpose of this article, the case of Mozambique is going to be studied.

Mozambique had a change of regime with independence in 1975. At independence Mozambique inherited an inequitable and underdeveloped educational system, heavily dependent on, and geared to, the needs of the Portuguese population and Portugal as a colonial power. The educational system was incompatible with the new People's Republic based on Marxist principles, and sweeping changes had to be introduced. The educational system was massively expanded, rethought and redesigned. But today (1998), 23 years after independence, Mozambique's educational conditions are still among the worst in Africa (African Connexion 1990: 28; Cherinda 1997: Interview, Maputo).

The purpose of this article is to examine and analyse some educational developments in post-independence Mozambique (1975–1998) in order to provide answers to the following questions:

- What types of reforms were introduced after independence?

- What values underpinned the government's efforts?
- Were the objectives of post-independence education too ambitious, abstract, ideological and idealistic, and therefore too difficult to operationalise at the practical level?
- What are the key elements of a successful educational strategy?

By answering these questions, the various stakeholders in South Africa's educational transformation process can obtain an idea of what should be done, or avoided, to ensure that South Africa's educational transformation is a success. The procedure involved is thus, first, the presentation of an outline of educational developments in post-independence Mozambique (1975–1998), and then some conclusions.

2 CASE STUDY: EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN POST-INDEPENDENCE MOZAMBIQUE, 1975–1998

2.1 Introductory remarks

Mozambique was a Portuguese African colony for several hundred years. To obtain its freedom and independence from Portugal, a liberation movement, the *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (Frelimo), was founded in 1962. During the National Liberation War (1964–1974) Frelimo regarded education as of prime importance. Everywhere in the liberated areas schools were established to prepare the students for the freedom struggle, as well as life thereafter (Frelimo Party Central Committee Information Department 1987: 6). On 25 June 1975 Mozambique became independent. Frelimo transformed itself into a Marxist vanguard party, and declared that its long-term goal was to establish a Marxist Mozambique (Smith-Morris 1994: 595). As the nature of the form of government generally determines the character of education, the Marxist doctrine of education became the blueprint of the educational system (Harber 1989: 3).

2.2 Educational developments prior to the introduction of the Nova sistema du educação¹ (NSE), 1975–1983

After independence, two distinct yet related paths were followed simultaneously: building on the educational practices developed in the liberated areas during the war; and attacking and dismantling the educational system inherited from the colonial era (Cherinda 1997: Interview, Maputo). In this article only the latter is described. Some of the most important reforms

implemented (of interest to the South African educational transformation process) were the following:

2.2.1 Eliminating illiteracy and providing education for all

One of the greatest problems facing the new government in Mozambique was illiteracy and a lack of educational opportunities for all. If education was to be tied to the interests of the workers' and peasants' alliance, it had to be available to everyone. The general view was that illiteracy could be eliminated by means of natural alphabetisation campaigns, such as the central market in Maputo closing down at one o'clock each afternoon for workers to have literacy classes together with students from a nearby high school (Frelimo Party Central Committee Information Department 1987: 7–8).

Primary schooling was also made freely available to any child and this had serious results. Classes grew enormously and many teachers found themselves with classes of more than 100. Their inability to cope made the educational content of such classes completely inadequate (Popatlal 1997: Interview, Maputo). It was decided as a temporary measure to shorten the classroom sessions drastically and operate a shift system (three sessions a day) in the schools. The classes were meant to have a maximum of 35, and a teacher was expected to teach two sessions a day (La Belle & Ward 1990: 101–102).

2.2.2 Developing a new curriculum to replace the colonial curriculum

The assault on the colonial curriculum came in early 1975 during the transition to independence, as teachers decided to discard the colonial curriculum and textbooks. They were thus forced to rely on their own resources, and to work together with Frelimo education cadres to develop new curriculum units and lesson plans stressing Mozambican culture and history. Curriculum development and textbook writing were done in each subject area. The teachers spent half the day teaching in a local school and the other half writing new curriculum materials. Assigning curriculum developers to work in the schools helped to ensure that they were aware of the realities of the classroom and that curriculum planning did not occur in a vacuum (Musgane 1997: Interview, Maputo).

The task was extremely difficult because under colonialism little information was available on most aspects of life in Mozambique (La Belle & Ward

1990: 98, 102–103). A major problem was also how to draw on universal fields of knowledge and scientific principles in a way that had meaning for Mozambique's needs and future goals. The new government slowly developed alternative teaching materials: reading books in Portuguese had stories and poems about Mozambique and other African and revolutionary struggles; plant science included Mozambican flora; Mozambique's past and present social arrangements were included in the study of history and social sciences; knowledge and wisdom growing out of the everyday lives of the people and practical experiences at work were considered important sources and materials (Barnes 1982: 411–413).

2.2.3 Altering the teaching methods

Curriculum developers in Mozambique had not only sought to introduce new content into educational programmes; they were putting considerable energy into altering teaching methods as well. The colonial model was described as a “banking” system of learning, where students were seen as passive consumers of the knowledge teachers impart in their lectures or present in written notes on the blackboard. The new government was concerned that students did not remain passive recipients in an educational process about which they had little to say. Several teachers' conferences and meetings analysed the sources of student passivity and studied ways to engage students more actively because the new person would evolve out of new social practices and not out of the heads of political leaders and educators (Barnes 1982: 413).

2.2.4 Choosing an international rather than an African language as language of instruction

Portuguese was chosen as the official language of Mozambique as it had been the international language in some areas of Mozambique for several hundred years. Although the system of Portuguese colonialism was severely attacked, the role of Portuguese in Mozambique was accepted as part of history (La Belle & Ward 1990: 99, 103). The commitment to economic advancement, drawing on scientific and technical knowledge from the outside world, necessitated the use of an international language rather than an African one. Furthermore, at least ten major unrelated languages were spoken by a large number of the people. During the armed struggle and in the first years of independence Portuguese was an important instrument of national unity, enabling Mozambicans from all parts of the country to

communicate with one another. If development was to be mass based and mass directed, rather than in the hands of a small group of highly trained experts, then the masses had to learn Portuguese (Cherinda 1997: Interview, Maputo). The consequences of the decision were significant. Portuguese created special learning problems at primary level and for adult literacy. At independence fewer than 20 per cent of the people spoke any Portuguese at all. Progress at school was slowed down because Portuguese was the language of instruction at all levels above the equivalent of kindergarten, and most children began to learn Portuguese as soon as they entered school (Barnes 1982: 412).

2.2.5 Altering the role of the teacher

The role of the teacher was altered in profound ways. Teachers had to learn to work collectively, to share their ideas with one another and even teach jointly. Teacher cooperation, within schools and between schools was encouraged. They had to become facilitators rather than transmitters of knowledge. These new work methods often did not come easily, particularly for teachers trained to function in a highly individual manner. Some of the teachers went through profound personal and political changes to accommodate their new role (Barnes 1982: 416–417; Musgane 1997: Interview, Maputo).

2.2.6 Democratising the schools

Organisational improvements had been an important priority since independence. The government adopted a strategy of tight central control at the top, but much more involvement by local people at lower levels. Fully democratic schoolwide decision-making structures covering all aspects of school life were introduced. This meant setting up democratic structures within individual schools through student work groups, class councils and committees, and establishing means for communication and the exchange of ideas between individual schools, as well as between the schools and the several levels of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The small groups of students that formed the basis of these democratic structures would also be responsible for each individual student's personal and social welfare by providing support, assistance and criticism (Barnes 1982: 413–416; La Belle & Ward 1990: 101).

The above measures were in preparation for the design and implementation

of an educational system which would totally break with the colonial inheritance, ensure equality of opportunity for all and best serve the overall aim of Frelimo to construct a society based on Marxist principles (Carr-Hill 1982: 225). During 1980 the plans for the NSE were being prepared by, in the main, technocrats from East Germany (DDR) and Russia (USSR). These plans were published in June 1980, and the NSE was announced in 1981 and initiated in 1983 (Frelimo Party Central Committee Information Department 1987: 9).

2.3 Introducing the NSE, 1983

The NSE's main aims were threefold: to eradicate illiteracy; to provide free compulsory schooling over a seven-year period; and to train the cadres essential for Mozambique's social and economic development, with emphasis on the science and technology that such development demands (Frelimo Party Central Committee Information Department 1987: 9). The role of education was to ensure that men and women were able to effect their own transformation when they were equipped with a scientific, objective and materialist outlook and had absorbed the values of the Marxist society (Cherinda 1997: Interview, Maputo).

The NSE, while comprising various subsystems (general, adult, technical, teacher training, university) and levels (literacy class, degree course, full-time, part-time, accelerated education, the child and the adult, working life, continued study) was conceived as a single entity. No stage or course led to a dead-end that would prevent the citizen from combining production and self-improvement.

The general education subsystem was the central axis of the whole, and may serve to illustrate the broad characteristics of the NSE. It provided for the age group from 7 to 18 (adult education was for those from 15 upwards, and university courses for the 19 to 24 age group). The primary level covered seven years: in the first stage, the initial five years were seen as a pedagogical unit and the same teacher would accompany the students throughout. The second stage in the sixth and seventh year would prepare the student for secondary or technical education, or to join the labour sector where he or she would receive vocational training. The secondary level provided a three-year course which broadened the student's ability to think and act logically and critically, but also prepared him or her for future needs of production skills. The secondary school student might also move on to a two-year pre-university, or technical or teacher training course.

The NSE came into effect with the 1983 academic year for the first grade of primary school, and has added a grade in each succeeding year. New teaching methods in such basic subjects as Portuguese, mathematics, and the geography and history of Mozambique were implemented. In the first two years of primary schooling, Portuguese and mathematics were the core disciplines, natural science was added in the third year, history in the fourth and geography in the fifth.

The natural sciences introduced in the third year were used for lessons on the human environment and how the human being could control and change the environment. The teaching of Mozambican history began in the fourth year with the student's own village or neighbourhood environment and the basis of this immediate identification was gradually broadened to encompass more remote events and general principles. Similarly, the study of geography in the fifth year was closely linked to the environment familiar to the student. The NSE's innovations ruled out the use of imported teaching texts. The educational authorities and research institutions in Mozambique had prepared, edited and published classroom texts and teachers' manuals that were highly specific to Mozambique's requirements and methods. In this integrated approach as stated, Portuguese was the language of instruction. The methodology according to which the language was introduced responded to the fact that for many students it must initially be taught as a second language, and in the early stages therefore placed special emphasis on oral skills (Frelimo Party Central Committee Information Department 1987: 11).

2.4 Educational developments in Mozambique since the introduction of the NSE in 1983

Frelimo was not allowed many years of peace and continuity to see the fruits of these new initiatives, or discover their flaws, before forces of resistance intervened. From 1976 onwards national life in Mozambique was increasingly dominated by the effects of an escalating political crisis that eventually resulted in a sixteen-year-long civil war between Renamo (*Resistência Nacional Moçambicana*, an organisation established by the Rhodesian government intelligence organisation to oppose the Frelimo Marxist government by means of military force) and the Frelimo government (Frelimo Party Central Committee Information Department 1987: 12). The civil war also affected Mozambique's educational system (Hermele 1990: 26; Musgane 1997: Interview, Maputo). In the rural war zones, schools and teachers, as symbols of the government's progress, were

primary targets. The conflict also forced hundreds of thousands of Mozambicans to flee the countryside to the cities, straining already fragile social services, especially the schools (Ayisi 1990: 44; Modi 1997: Interview, Maputo).

If economic development had been going well there would have been resources to develop education, but because a large percentage of the resources had to go on defence, education suffered a great deal. Nearly 60 per cent of the country's schools were destroyed or closed between 1983 and 1991. Adult literacy education, which at its height in 1980 turned out 100 000 students, since 1983 had been reduced to fewer than 20 000 per year. Mozambique's educational system, once the cornerstone of Frelimo's efforts to bring literacy to a population ignored by the Portuguese colonialists, was near collapse owing to the civil war (Papatlal 1997: Interview, Maputo).

The real test for Mozambique's educational system, however, came when the war was ended with the signing of the peace agreement in October 1992 (Leistner 1994: 58). In the countryside many schools had to be re-equipped from scratch. Others had to be constructed, particularly when the estimated one million Mozambican refugees returned from neighbouring countries, and four million internally displaced people returned to their areas of origin (Leistner 1994: 73). Yet the mammoth reconstruction task in the countryside could not mask the simmering problems in the congested cities: poor learning conditions, high drop-out rates, low pay for teachers, incompatibility between home and school culture, poor health and nutrition, etc (Musgane 1997: Interview, Maputo).

The current situation regarding education in Mozambique is to a great extent a reflection of the adjustment and reconstruction process in Mozambique. A number of technical commissions were set up to study specific problem areas, and their recommendations formed the basis of a Basic Education Master Plan which is currently in preparation (Woodward et al 1996:18; De Wet 1997: Interview, Maputo).

3 CONCLUSIONS

After independence (1975) Mozambique had to deal with the legacy of under-development left by some 400 years of Portuguese colonial rule, and was one of the few countries in Africa to have adopted Marxism officially as its model of development. The experience of the armed struggle convinced

the government that the fight for freedom did not mean merely changing the skin colour of those in power. Rather it meant initiating fundamental changes in the social institutions, including the schools. Re-examination of premises of education brought substantive change in term of access, curricula and the running of schools.

Frelimo's seizure and nationalisation of the educational system, and their attempt to turn it into a unified Marxist Mozambican one which would respond to completely new political, economic and social policies and to a general popular demand for education, resulted, among other things, in the following:

- Expanded school enrolment and reduced adult illiteracy. However, this rapid expansion of educational provision resulted in shortages of textbooks and writing materials.
- Educational objectives (the moulding of the New Man and the establishment of the classless Communist society) that were very abstract, ideological and idealistic. As it was out of touch with the real world, it was difficult to operationalise at practical level.
- Vestiges of the old system still remained. The imposition of new curricula and teaching methods without sufficient preparation of teachers and administrators resulted in teachers lapsing into the methods they knew at school.
- Dissatisfaction with the quality and results of education, as centrally initiated changes were superseded by others without proper assessment or follow-up. The experiments in local school democracy sometimes resulted in anarchy. Difficulties with the image of society presented in the material were also experienced.
- Educational drawbacks owing to the acceptance of the colonial language Portuguese as the official language and language of instruction (Cherinda 1997: Interview, Maputo).

The reforms (NSE) introduced in 1983 have been short-circuited by war, destabilisation and an economic crisis caused by the war, and the Mozambican government's dedication to the Marxist model of development which almost destroyed the country's economy. The setbacks to educational programmes were severe. The Mozambican government was slow to recognise and correct policy mistakes. But as part of the peace and democratisation process there is an urgent need to bring the educational system into line with present realities. The new proposals represent a clear departure from previous ideological and educational ideas.

The lesson to be learned from this Mozambican case study is that if new educational strategies are to be developed in South Africa, the following aspects will be key elements in their success:

- *Pedagogical outcomes only:* Educational reform is usually designed to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of schooling. However, it can be much more global, reflecting major ideological, political, social and economic change in which education plays a key role. The above can be viewed as educational reforms constructed to meet the needs for new kinds of citizens and to support a new or revised ideology immediately following a transformation. Education is thus expected to play a crucial role in changing attitudes, and become part of an act of political will. Although educational reform is intertwined with political decision-making it may, under no circumstances, have non-pedagogical outcomes, and be made subservient to governmental interests. Pedagogical interests must be the most important consideration at all times.
- *Efficient and dedicated personnel:* The successful introduction of any new system relies on the active engagement of the existing workforce. An ill-qualified, disaffected teaching force will not be effective in implementing change. Sufficient preparation of teachers is therefore of prime importance: from on-the-job training in a school setting to distance learning and participatory workshops. Furthermore, to impose change without consultation and commitment will lead to a negative response and a demoralised workforce.
- *Ample facilities and teaching materials:* The rapid expansion of educational provision must go hand in hand with the ample provision of facilities and suitable teaching materials so that if children go to school, they actually learn something. To realise this goal, more financial resources are needed.
- *Concrete life situation acknowledged:* Education has to be tied to the concrete life situation of the students. If its contents are irrelevant to the experience of the students, denigrate their culture or ignore their language, they are unlikely to stimulate their interest or assist achievement, and will not be effective.
- *Economic growth:* Education is closely linked to economic growth. Economic crises and recession create a vicious circle for education as few financial resources are available for education, and more and more graduates are without jobs. Therefore, educational systems should provide training in skills directly relevant to employment and the development of the national economy. However, narrow definitions of “human capital” as labour skills will not lead to desired results.

- *Social and political development of society*: Educational systems are not linked simply to economic growth but also to the broad political and social development of society. Education is inextricably bound up with people's aspirations for change, and with the nature of the political system. A particular society expects education to achieve certain ends, such as social equity or a more democratic society. Although education is one of the key ingredients in the achievement of the above goal, it cannot be achieved by education alone.
- *Peace and political stability*: War or political instability can leave a legacy of educational deficit, or a "lost generation" with little or no education.
- *Evolutionary change*: Change is an essential part of any educational system. Any educational system which remains locked in the past fails both its present and future students. However, educational change should be an evolutionary, rather than a revolutionary, process and change should grow out of existing good practice.

NOTES

- 1 This refers to the New System of Education, known as the NSE, introduced in 1983 as a total break with the colonial inheritance and to replace the provisional measures of the early years of independence. When referring to the New System of Education in the paragraphs that follow, this abbreviation (NSE) will thus be used.

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Can local government performance be measured? Lessons from Zambia

*Royson M Mukwena**

SUMMARY

In this article the author argues that the presence of accepted performance measurers is crucial to the success of the operations of any organisation. Unfortunately, it is generally difficult to measure the performance of a public institution, such as local government. This is partly because a public institution exists to provide public services and goods which cannot be easily measured using an objective criterion, such as the conventional “profit-loss” or the efficiency and effectiveness criteria. The author also highlights other constraints in the context of a developing country – such as lack of resources required to assemble the necessary data, poor monitoring, reporting and record keeping systems – which make it difficult to measure local government performance. In view of these constraints, the author suggests the use of two alternative approaches to the measuring of local government performance, namely assessing performance in terms of the officially stated objectives of local government and the ability of a local authority to mobilise substantial resources and provide a reasonable level of services relative to other local authorities in the same country. The author, however, contends that these alternative approaches can only be feasible if, among other measures, systems of monitoring, reporting and record keeping are improved.

THE MEASUREMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

The presence of accepted performance measures is crucial to the success of the operations of any organisation. With accepted performance measures, it becomes relatively easy to establish the achievable objectives of an organisation, which in turn provide the basis for setting priorities, allocating scarce resources, organising personnel, and evaluating programmes. With-

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out accepted performance measures it would be difficult for any organisation to undertake these activities. Indeed, in the absence of accepted performance measures, it would be extremely difficult for any organisation to establish achievable objectives and evaluate programme implementation.

The performance of any institution, public or private, is related to the business in which that institution is engaged. More precisely, performance is related to the degree to which desired ends have been achieved at a manageable level of cost. Because a local government is in business to provide services that satisfy the needs of individual citizens, the performance of local government can be defined in terms of the extent to which public officials in a community deal with stated economic, social, or environmental objectives within the expenditure levels that they have available (Rappand & Patitucci 1977).

Stated economic, social or environmental objectives means the objectives within a community that citizens, through their elected representatives, have indicated they want their local government to achieve – though these objectives may well include those that are derived from central government policies and directives. The expenditure levels referred to above should be understood within the broad context of inputs needed to provide services, and not just as referring to financial resources; thus inputs in this discussion refer to all the relevant resources required to provide a service, including staff, buildings, equipment, and consumables (Carter, Klein & Day 1992: 36; Flynn 1986: 393). Further, the time taken to accomplish a project or programme requires special mention among the list of resources because time has direct implications on the project costs and also on the impact of changes in community conditions. Indeed, as Henderson-Stewart is able to observe, “the key performance indicator for many council services is how promptly the service is provided – for example the average time taken to respond to fire calls, to determine planning applications, to relet council houses, or to undertake repairs” (1990: 111).

Performance has two key dimensions by which it can be measured: effectiveness and efficiency. Thus, the analysis of the actual role of any system of local government needs performance measures for both efficiency and effectiveness (Flynn 1986: 393). Performance is effective according to the degree to which a stated condition is achieved. On the other hand, performance is more or less efficient depending on the quantity and quality of resources expended in the effort to achieve a desired condition. Optimal local government performance, therefore, must combine effectiveness and

efficiency (Rappand & Patitucci 1977). In turn, local government performance must be related to changes in community conditions, not solely to the outputs produced by local government activities. For example, one would hardly give a waste-collection crew high marks for performance if they increased the tonnes of garbage they collected each day yet left the streets littered with paper and debris. In the view of Henderson-Stewart (1990), relating local government performance to meeting users' needs or achieving its underlying purpose is the most fundamental aspect of performance that needs to be reviewed. The volume of resources devoted to a particular service have virtually no importance unless the desired impact is achieved.

We should point out from the outset that it is generally difficult to measure the performance of a public institution such as local government – which ideally exists to provide services whose importance to the community cannot be simply measured across a field of conventional “profit-loss” indicators. This difficulty reflects the limited agreement which exists over accepted and quantifiable criteria for measuring performance in this sphere. Indeed, as Henderson-Stewart observes, “performance review is obviously harder in the public service than in the commercial sector” (1990: 107). In private business there are generally accepted measures of performance. In addition to the basic measure of profit, there are other useful measures available such as volume of sales, output per employee, sales growth, earnings per share, changes in stock price and return on investment. On the other hand, with the exception of commercial ventures, there is little agreement, in the case of local government, about which measures of performance are actually appropriate to use. Indeed, as Aye has observed, “the methodology of performance measurement of decentralization is an extremely complex and controversial one and has therefore defied universally agreed upon set of criteria” (1996: 31).

The absence of accepted performance measures in local government has three principal causes. First, the overall purposes of local government may lack precision and clarity to the extent that they may be perceived quite differently by different groups of people. Second, political leaders are often resistant to the establishment of measures that can be used by their constituents to hold them accountable (Rappand & Patitucci 1977). Third and not least important, local authorities provide “public goods” which are often not amenable to narrowly defined performance criteria.

As argued earlier, the absence of accepted performance measures makes it

extremely difficult to establish the achievable objectives and evaluate programme implementation. Without accepted performance measures, it is difficult to determine which investment – for instance more street cleaners or more garbage collectors – will provide citizens with the highest return on their tax money (Rappand & Patitucci 1977), or in turn to evaluate objectively the performance of local government personnel.

Yet while the concern to provide more rigorous measures of efficiency and effectiveness that Rappand and Patitucci (1977) and other scholars such as Cater, Klein and Day (1992), Flynn (1986) and Henderson-Stewart (1990) have raised is useful in offering a point of departure here, such concerns are perhaps more applicable to Western settings than to developing countries. It may be more readily feasible to measure local government performance using efficiency and effectiveness criteria in Western countries because of the far greater availability of the information required for such purposes. In developing countries, the task is likely to be far more daunting given that local authorities very frequently lack the resources necessary to generate the data required to systematically measure performance using such criteria. Given this constraint, one compromise that might be proposed would be to assess the performance of any one local authority in terms of the officially stated objectives for local government in a particular setting (Ayee 1996) – though anchoring an assessment of the performance of local government to officially stated objectives would nonetheless require fairly detailed information on service provision targets and levels of activity in the implementation of various local government functions. Information on targets would need to be compared against levels of activity and inferences made as to whether a particular local authority was successful in achieving its set targets or undertaking the officially stated objectives. This approach is of course open to substantial subjective judgement on the part of the researcher.

Another approach would be to assess the performance of any one local government by taking into account its ability to mobilise substantial resources and provide a reasonable level of services relative to other local authorities in the same country (Olowu & Smoke 1992: 4–5). This approach, as Olowu and Smoke observe, also “leaves room for substantial subjective judgement on the part of individual researchers, but such a situation was unavoidable due to the impossibility of finding accurate and comprehensive data that were comparable within and across countries” (1992: 4). According to Olowu and Smoke, indicators of ability to mobilise substantial resources should embrace the following:

- The budget balance sheet – a successful local government should have more surpluses than deficits over the previous five years.
- Major local revenue sources (direct local taxes, user charges or intergovernmental transfers) should generally show growth relative to inflation and population.
- Local expenditures, both recurrent and capital, should support a range of significant social and infrastructural services and grow at a reasonable rate.

With regard to indicators of service provision, Olowu and Smoke (1992) point out that these should hinge on the quantity and quality of services provided – though information on these is likely to be generally unavailable.

ZAMBIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Before we discuss the issue of performance measures in Zambian local government, it is imperative that we give a brief account of its context. Local government in post-independence Zambia can be divided into three phases: the first covering the period from 1965 to 1980; the second the period from 1981 to 1991; and the third from 1991 to date.

Phase one: 1965–1980

The local government system that operated in Zambia between 1965 (a year after independence) and 1980 was based on the Local Government Act, 1965, which came into operation on 1 November of that year.

The 1965 Act provided for three types of local authority: two urban (municipalities and townships) and one rural. It should also be noted that the president of Zambia was also empowered to confer the title of “city” on a municipal council. The city status did not, however, have any administrative or legal effect.

The municipalities and township and rural councils were divided into wards, each of which elected a single councillor who served for three years. However, the minister responsible was empowered to appoint persons to a council provided that the number of appointed councillors did not exceed three (or if a municipality adjoined a mine township, did not exceed five). The Act also permitted a municipal council to appoint to the dignity of alderman any person who had been a member of that council for not less

than ten years provided that the number of aldermen was not more than a third of the whole council.

For each municipal and city council there was a mayor and deputy mayor, and for each rural and township council there was a chairman and vice chairman, elected annually by councillors from among themselves. All local authorities had departmental chief officers under the control of a chief executive (a town clerk for municipal councils and a secretary for township and rural councils). The chief officers for municipal and township councils consisted of a deputy town clerk (for municipal councils) or deputy secretary (for township councils), treasurer, engineer and medical officer; while rural councils had three senior officials – a secretary, treasurer and public works officer (Zambia 1965).

In 1970 the 1965 Act was amended to give the responsible minister powers to appoint the mayor (and deputy mayor) of every municipal council and the chairman (and vice chairman) of every township and rural council from among councillors. This amendment was repealed in 1975, and from 1976 the pattern reverted to the pre-1970 position (Mukwena 1998).

Phase two: 1981–1991

In January 1981 the Local Government Act of 1965 was replaced by the Local Administration Act of 1980. The major reason given for the repeal of the 1965 Act was that under that Act local government proved ineffective because of lack of integration and cooperation between different levels and institutions, such as the state administration, party organs and local councils. Officially the 1980 Act had three principal objectives. The first embodied the publicly expressed desire of the government and the ruling UNIP to decentralise power to the people. The second objective was “to ensure an effective integration of the primary organs of local administration in the district” (Zambia 1980: 127). The rationale behind this integration under one body – the district council – of local party units, local offices of central ministries and local government agencies themselves was to escape the problems of lack of coordination and duplication of efforts and resources that had characterised local administration and local government hitherto; district party and council structures were fused as part of that process. The third objective was to enable district councils to play a more direct and substantial role in the development process than they had been expected to undertake in the past.

Following the passage of the 1980 Act, all existing city, municipal, township and rural councils came to be known as district councils. If districts had both township and rural councils, the two were merged to form new district councils.

As stipulated in the Act, each district council consisted of:

- the district governor as chairman;
- the district political secretary;
- two district trustees appointed by the (UNIP) provincial committee and approved by the (UNIP) central committee;
- all chairmen of (UNIP) ward committees in the district;
- all Members of Parliament of the district;
- one representative from each of the (officially constituted) mass organisations operating in the district;
- one representative from each of the trade unions operating in the district;
- one representative from each of the security forces;
- one chief elected by all chiefs of the district (Zambia 1980: 105).

The district governor and district political secretary were appointed by the president. The chairmen of UNIP ward committees were elected by UNIP members; and to be eligible to stand as a candidate in UNIP ward elections one had to be a UNIP member. The representatives of mass organisations, trade unions and security wings were chosen by their respective organisations.

The district governor as chairman of the council was responsible for the overall administration of the council, and in particular for “the supervision of the day-to-day functions of the council ... [and] the efficient and proper operation of all public institutions and parastatal organisations in the district” (Zambia 1980: 106). He was accountable to the appointing authority (the president).

The Act also established a secretariat for each district council under the supervision of a district executive secretary. The secretariat consisted of an administrative secretary; a financial secretary; a social secretary; a development secretary; a commercial and industrial secretary; a legal secretary; a security secretary; and a political secretary. For unexplained reasons, the government chose not to introduce the latter two posts in all councils. Thus, the council consisted of the following departments:

administration, finance, social, development, commercial and industrial, and legal – each headed by the appropriate secretary.

Phase three: 1991 to Date

Following Zambia's return to a multi-party political system in December 1990, a new local government Act (the Local Government Act of 1991) replaced the 1980 Act in December 1991. The major changes that came with the 1991 Act were the clear institutional divorce of party structures from the council, the abandonment of the integrative role of the district councils and the reintroduction of representative local government based on universal adult suffrage.

Under the 1991 Act the responsible minister is empowered to establish in any district a city council, municipal council, district council, township council or management board, provided that a township council or management board can only be established on the recommendation of the appropriate city, municipal, or district council (Zambia 1992a). In addition, by statutory proclamation the president can confer the status of a city on any municipal council (Zambia 1991).

The council (the governing body) consists of Members of Parliament (MPs) from the district and the number of elected councillors (representing wards) that the minister may prescribe (Zambia 1992a). The term of office for elected councillors is three years (Zambia 1993a). The Act provides for a mayor and deputy mayor for city and municipal councils and a chairman and vice-chairman for district councils, who are elected by the council from among elected councillors (Zambia 1991; Zambia 1992a). Such council leaders are elected annually, with no person allowed to hold such positions for more than two consecutive terms (Zambia 1991).

District councils have three departments: administration, finance and works. The administration department is headed by the deputy secretary, finance by the treasurer, and works by the director of works (Zambia 1992b). Municipal and city councils, on the other hand, have six departments: administration, finance, engineering, housing and social services, legal services, and public health; all these departments are headed by directors (Zambia 1992b; Zambia 1992c). The town clerk is the chief executive for a municipal or city council, while the council secretary is the chief executive for a district council (Zambia 1992b; Zambia 1992c). The

heads of departments together with their chief executives (town clerk or council secretary) constitute the council secretariats (Zambia 1992c).

Measuring performance in Zambian local government

The task of measuring the performance of Zambian district councils is indeed difficult, given the poor state of record keeping and maintenance of account books and the lack of resources for assembling data that affect most of them. At times, because of inexperience, lack of training, or lack of motivation, officers have failed to produce reports to their councils covering their activities, as was the case with health officers in Gwembe Central and South, who failed to furnish the council with reports of their activities during the year 1986 (Gwembe District Council 1987:3). Given such conditions, it is difficult, for instance, to make comparisons between inputs and outputs, between budgets and actual monies spent, among similar district councils. The absence of employee performance appraisal in most Zambian local authorities compounds the difficulties of assessing local government performance.

Furthermore, the poor monitoring and reporting systems in use in Zambian local government would not actually provide the kind of information needed to enable the analyst to effectively measure the performance of local authorities. Within a district council, the following formal reports would conventionally be in use:

- a report by the council secretary (usually prepared by another senior staff member on his/her behalf) to each meeting of a council committee;
- a report by the council secretary to each meeting of the full council;
- presentation of an up-to-date receipts and payments account by the treasurer to the finance committee.

In addition, each council would be required to send to the parent ministry:

- an annual receipts and payments account;
- an annual report;
- copies of all committee and full council meeting minutes.

One major problem with the reports that were in use was that, with the exception of receipts and payments accounts, there was no accepted format as to the manner in which the reports were to be presented. Thus, the reports tended to dwell on administrative matters concerning the way in which

council affairs were run. There was a corresponding failure to report on the council's success or otherwise in performing its primary functions of providing services to the people living in the district (Zambia 1993b:3). Further, the reports made under the first two categories above were usually concerned to cover quite specific areas of activity, and often focused on action taken on resolutions passed by the various meeting of the council or committee concerned (Zambia: 3). Very few councils prepared annual reports – in 1988, as few as 13 out of a total of 52 district councils did so (Zambia:5).

Furthermore, the reports commonly focused on how a council or department was doing its job (inputs), rather than on what it was actually producing or delivering to the community. Thus, the reports might give information about the number of meetings conducted or the amount of money collected, without directly addressing the results of this activity – what output had been produced through the use of these resources (Zambia 1993b:4). Indeed council reports could be quite misleading. A council might be able to demonstrate an extensive level and variety of inputs, thereby creating an impression of effective performance even though the results of its actions were negligible. For example, it might employ a full and well-qualified establishment of staff, keep an assortment of vehicles on the road, and raise a good deal of revenue, but these would not automatically translate into meaningful results (Zambia 1993b: 4).

Again, the budget and final accounts of councils which were supposed to provide indicators of service provision proved unreliable because they did not supply sufficient data to enable senior officials (and researchers) to identify all forms of costs included in actual service provision. According to Tyrie (1994), there are four principal reasons for this. In the first place, the widening gap between the services which many councils felt they ought to be providing and those they were in a practical position to deliver encouraged them to include an arbitrary figure for a particular service in their budgets in the knowledge that little or no work was likely to be done under that heading; hence budget figures were of little relevance as indicators of actual service provision, let alone of service provision cost. Second, for years, most councils had been engaged in what is termed incremental budgeting; in other words, these councils had merely been making arbitrary adjustments to the figures of previous budgets without any serious calculations as to the actual amounts required to undertake various council activities. Thus, amounts budgeted did not bear any true relation to the actual cost of service provision. In any case, most councils did not maintain records of actual

physical provision of service, showing only expenditure allocated to cost centres. Thus, it is not possible to compare the kwacha spent with the quantity of service provided, or to deduce service provision cost estimates. Fourth, most councils' receipts and payments accounts were often far out-of-date. In many cases, the most recent audited accounts were years old and were often prepared some years late (Tyrie 1994).

The failure by Zambian district councils to set performance targets at the beginning of the financial year also made it difficult to provide any realistic assessment of council performance. Only when compared with targets could the measurement of results become meaningful. On the basis of existing reports it is not possible to determine what actually constituted a satisfactory, good or poor level of performance. All one might find in council reports and minutes were, for example, numbers of boreholes sunk or repaired, wells dug, roads graded or revenue collected, without any indications of the performance objectives originally set.

To be able to properly assess the performance of any local council, we need to be clear about the factors which might affect the performance of local government. A range of factors might need to be taken into account. In Zambian local government, these would include:

- political leaders – that is, councillors, Members of Parliament (MPs) and other national leaders.
- council officials – that is, the town clerk/council secretary and heads of departments (known as chief officers); these had significant management responsibilities, not least in supervising subordinate employees and controlling council funds.
- council employees – that is, local government employees other than chief officers.
- management tools and analytical support – that is, methods, systems and devices used to generate and interpret the information required by political leaders, town clerks/council secretaries and chief officers in order to make informed decisions.
- financial practices and procedures – that is, the ways in which local governments obtained their financial resources and controlled, directed and restricted their use.
- internal governmental structure – consisting of formal (legal) relationships among individuals and functions of local government, as established by central legislation and administrative regulations.
- intergovernmental relationships – that is, the assignment of responsi-

bilities to and the conduct of functions by the several levels of government involved, and the relationships among these levels.

- citizen involvement – that is, the activities of residents of a local government area seeking an opportunity to influence those government decisions that might affect the quality of their lives.
- exogenous elements – that is, external forces and conditions such as geography, location, chance, natural disasters and the like that might affect the ability of public officers to get things done within a local government, or which might constrain the potential for improving its performance.
- the media – newspapers, television, radio and periodicals which might have an important shaping role on the environment in which Zambian local government had to function.

There are several ways to classify such factors so as to enhance our understanding of each and illuminate their interrelationships. But they may perhaps be most simply grouped in terms of internal versus external factors. Internal factors in this case would refer to those which exist within or derive from the legal, political, and administrative structure of local government. Examples of internal factors would include political leaders, council officials, council employees, management tools and analytical support, financial practices and procedures and internal governmental structure. External factors, on the other hand, refer to those existing outside the structure of local government – for example intergovernmental relationships, citizen involvement, “exogenous elements” and the media.

The factors that affect local government performance may also be classified by the ways in which they affect performance. A factor may have a direct impact on this performance (as, for instance, political leaders and council officials making decisions that might directly affect how resources are used to achieve community objectives). Alternatively, a factor may have an indirect impact on local government performance, in that its influence is mediated through the action of other factors. For example, the media do not directly make decisions that determine what a local government does or how it does it, but nevertheless are extremely important because they can have a significant effect on the decisions and performance of political leaders, council officials, and even council employees. The importance of any of the above factors depends on local conditions that may affect council performance, which may indeed vary between among local councils.

CONCLUSION

Our discussion has shown that it is difficult to measure the performance of a public institution, such as local government, which ideally exists to provide public services which cannot easily be measured using the conventional “profit-loss” indicators. The discussion has also highlighted the fact that the difficulty in measuring local government performance partly arises from the lack of agreement over accepted and quantifiable criteria for measuring performance in local government. Further, the difficulty in measuring local government performance in a developing country, such as Zambia, has been compounded because local authorities very frequently lack the capacity and resources necessary to generate the data required to systematically measure the performance of local government using the efficiency and effectiveness criteria.

Given the difficulties involved in measuring local government performance using the efficiency and effectiveness criteria in developing countries, this author contends that it may be more readily feasible for developing countries to assess local government performance in terms of the officially stated objectives for local government in a particular setting. Alternatively, local government performance in a developing country, such as Zambia, could be assessed in terms of its ability to mobilise substantial resources and provide a reasonable level of services relative to other local authorities in the same country.

It should, however, be pointed out that the alternatives to assessing local government performance in developing countries that have been suggested do not necessarily provide easy solutions to measuring local government performance. They would also require fairly detailed information on service provision targets and levels of activity in the implementation of various local government functions. As illustrated by the Zambian case, given the poor state of the monitoring, reporting, and record keeping systems in developing countries, it would be difficult to assemble the kind of data required to assess the performance of local government using the alternative approaches suggested above.

For the suggested alternative approaches to the measuring of local government performance to be feasible, systems of monitoring, reporting and record keeping will need to be improved; and, adequate resources will have to be provided to enable local authorities to assemble the required data to be used in the assessment of their performance. Further, local

government staff will have to be adequately trained to enable them to produce meaningful reports on the activities of their local authorities.

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Participatory learning and action: challenges for South Africa

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1 INTRODUCTION

For close to two decades participatory learning and action (PLA), more popularly known as participatory rural appraisal (PRA), has made a substantial impact on the development debate in various parts of the Third World. In many cases it has given the poor a voice in an urban and a rural setting and it has also had a dramatic impact on research methodology. It has proved that local people can conduct very valid research on their own areas and use this information immediately for development action. PLA has been successful in many countries, generating networks in industrialised and developing countries. These networks share and spread the information on PLA that have been generated. However, for various reasons this practice theory has had little impact on the development debate in South Africa thus far. The most important reason is that the development community in South Africa paid a heavy price for political and academic isolation during the apartheid era. These barriers are being removed and there seems to be some progress in overcoming the backlog that started with South Africa's exclusion from the international community. However, PLA is not so new to the South African development scene, as a variety of PLA initiatives have already been tried over the last decade and some of them are continuing. The practice theory of PLA has undeniably had limited exposure in this country.

There is another reason for the limited impact of PLA on the development debate. The new political dispensation has brought in its wake high expectations from the wider South African population, focusing on redistribution and service delivery. The PLA framework, however, makes it a grass-roots practice theory that emphasises issues such as maximum devolution of power, self-reliance, and optimal use of all local resources. PLA philosophy emphasises the use of local knowledge. The overall PLA sentiment is not so much on redistribution as on self-reliance. Currently these issues are largely being ignored in the development debate in South

Africa. PLA does not exclude redistribution and may therefore enter the development debate. Its methodologies can even be very useful tools in addressing this problem.

The purposes of this discussion are twofold: simply to provide broad clarity on the meaning and characteristics of PLA; and to reflect on the challenge for South Africa to put PLA into the mainstream and to impact meaningfully on the development debate. The content of this debate is complex and comprehensive and goes beyond the scope of this article.

2 THE MEANING AND PHILOSOPHY OF PLA: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

PLA is an umbrella concept for various participatory development approaches, which are often very different from more conventional ones.

The first steps towards what is best known today as PLA were taken when rapid rural appraisal (RRA) was conceived by participants at a Thailand conference at Khon Kaen University (Khon Kaen University 1987). RRA began as a better way for outsiders to learn (Engel & Van den Bor, undated: 12) and was also an attempt to look for more cost-effective research methods that would deliver results far more quickly without compromising the quality of the research (Chambers 1992a: 6–77). The point of departure for RRA was basically to generate information for researchers from outside, and it became clear that some techniques of RRA alienated people from the research process.

Since the late 1980s RRA has frequently been criticised for its extractive, elicitive nature (Engel & Van den Bor undated: 12). Chambers (1992b) points out that with PRA the focus has remained the same, but “the outsiders’ role has become that of facilitator and local people become active participants in information gathering, analysis and use of the results”. The local knowledge of people therefore becomes more meaningful for all participants in PRA. The shift to PRA was an attempt to move away from what became known as rural development tourism (Chambers 1983: 10 & Chambers 1994: 97). This is characterised by brief and superficial visits by researchers and academics to rural areas in their attempts to gather data and help rural people.

Several important aspects of PRA come to the fore (Chambers 1994: 97–105):

- PRA philosophy makes it clear that local people should claim ownership

of the research process and the development process as a whole. They should determine the direction of the process and determine if and when alterations should be made. The assumption is often made that PRA is non-interventionist in terms of outside intervention. This is a complex issue that goes beyond this discussion, but raises the rhetorical question of “Who initiates the development process?”

- PRA emphasises the importance of collective action and attempts to mobilise the knowledge of the people at grass-roots. Mass participation, the local culture and the indigenous knowledge of the people are important points of departure of PRA. Self-reliance and optimal use of resources are important concepts in the PRA vocabulary. The local people are regarded as professionals on their areas because they have co-evolved (Norgaard 1994) with their social and ecological systems.
- PRA approaches development as an open-ended process that embraces error. Open-ended learning is part of the process and everyone involved should be able to benefit from the experience in the development process. This includes outsiders and the so-called development experts. Sharing and spreading experience and information is part of the process. It is important to note that a large quantity of the material on this topic is available free of charge and without any copyright. The point of departure is that more and more people should be exposed to and be able to learn from one another in terms of what have been achieved thus far.
- PRA attempts to promote a shift in power relations by giving the poor and destitute a voice in the development process. Various biases (Chambers 1993: 13–22) are addressed in the process. Traditionally the development process is being hampered by elitism, urbanism, gender and various other biases such as those favouring literate people only. PRA is therefore very much a grass-roots practice theory that emphasises the uniqueness and the contextual nature of development needs.
- PRA uses conventional and non-conventional channels to address development needs. Where there are local government structures, information regarding local needs may be channelled through them. Alternatively, a combination of other channels may be used, depending on which will serve the purpose. Local elites or traditional leaders may also be an option to communicate local needs.
- Some supporters of PRA realised that this practice theory is moving beyond a rural focus and is also much more than mere appraisal. The most recent term to describe this practice theory is therefore participatory learning and action. PLA is perhaps a better description of what the

theory really involves. PRA is still by far the more popular description of this practice theory.

3 ASPECTS OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Because PLA is part of action research, combining research with development action, the emphasis is on tools and techniques that can generate adequate information fairly quickly (IDS 1996a & 1996b). The people involved are not drawn into a lengthy research process that may alienate some of them from the development process. The emphasis is therefore on what needs to be known rather than what is nice to know. Tools and techniques can also be changed continuously to adapt to conditions. There is also a concerted effort to give research a more informal character without compromising on the quality of the information.

Because PLA is merely a broad category of participatory approaches which emphasise development research and action an endless list of tools and techniques fall into this category (Pretty, Guijt, Thompson & Scoones 1995) and new techniques are constantly being added. Many of these techniques are quite radical because they often fall outside a typical Eurocentric research framework with a Newtonian flavour. Examples of tools and techniques that have been very effective in specific situations follow. However, it is important to emphasise that different conditions necessitate the use of different tools and techniques, depending on what the local people favour and with what they are familiar. Various techniques may be used to supplement one another to promote the quality of the information. Pretty *et al* (1995) encourage people to adapt techniques to meet their own particular requirements. They say it is even better to invent one's own techniques and find one's own way of doing things. There are three basic groups of methods in PRA: semi-structured interviewing, diagramming and visualisations, and ranking and scoring methods.

3.1 Semi-structured interviewing

In PLA the emphasis is on qualitative research techniques such as semi-structured interviewing. Brainstorming, the Delphi technique, sequence analysis, and interview context analysis are examples of semi-structured interviewing techniques. People should be able to do these themselves or with help from somebody whom they trust. However, PLA does not exclude the use of short questionnaires if they do not cause the exclusion of some people. A big challenge for the researcher is to record the interview in such a

manner that it reflects the content, context and spirit of the event without leaving the locals out of the process. Sensitive interviewing is essential and the following points are very helpful (Pretty *et al* 1995: 76):

- Prepare as a team.
- Use a checklist or interview guide.
- Be sensitive and respectful to everyone involved.
- Use visualisation methods to enhance participation and dialogue.
- Listen and learn.
- Ask open-ended questions.
- Probe responses carefully.
- Judge responses.
- Verify through triangulation.
- Record responses and observations fully.

3.2 Diagramming and visualisations

Diagramming techniques and community modelling and diagramming are extremely popular for generating information about various aspects of peoples' lives. The advantage of these techniques is that many people can contribute to the information-gathering process and lots of information has been generated fairly quickly in this way. However, it is quite a comprehensive task to document the information, especially when maps and models are analysed in great detail. Neighbourhood and village maps, mental mapping, transect walks, seasonal calendars, Venn diagramming, flow diagrams (for impact and systems analysis), and comparative diagrams analysis are examples of diagramming techniques. Literacy skills are not required for diagramming since those who cannot read are usually visually literate (Pretty *et al* 1995). It is always important to crosscheck the diagrams with different social groups in the community and to analyse what the process has brought forward. Do this with the local people. Symbols, pictures, drawings and other visualisation techniques can be used, on their own, to describe a specific situation or they can be part of a community map. It is interesting to see how a beer bottle or a paper cup gets new meaning on a community map.

Historical transects, Venn diagrams, and ranking and scoring of problems may all be very useful in practice to obtain information varying from consumption patterns to power relations in a community. Experience has shown that Venn diagrams may be particularly useful in some settings and particularly useless in others.

3.3 Ranking and scoring methods

Ranking and scoring techniques are used to explore people's perceptions, elicit their criteria and understand their choices regarding a wide range of subjects from resource allocation and selection to wealth and wellbeing assessment (Pretty *et al* 1995:83). Preference ranking or pairwise ranking, matrix scoring and wealth ranking are all examples of this group of PLA techniques. The final matrix is less important than the discussion and the knowledge that is shared. The use of these methods tends to take the attention and focus of the locals away from the outsiders and investigators, towards the analysis itself. This is very helpful in making people less aware of the presence and influences of outsiders; and in stimulating debate among the local community and participants. There is a shift from "interviewing the farmer" to "interviewing the matrix" (Pretty *et al* 1995: 85).

3.4 Using high-tech equipment in PRA

High-tech equipment such as video cameras can also be used to collect data, but these should be approached with extreme care, because people may be alienated from the research process. High-tech equipment has a tendency to grab the attention of the operators and participants. PLA has spilled over successfully from poor to industrialised countries where PLA practitioners are experimenting with the use of video cameras and so on. Equipment of this nature may be very useful where adequate infrastructure and backup are available and people are used to and familiar with the technology. Making videos of PLA exercises can be very helpful in training and also in analysing interactions and the manifestations of power relations in communities.

4 SOME PROBLEM AREAS OF PLA

There are numerous problem areas, depending on the particular situation. PLA is by no means a panacea for development problems but is merely a different approach to development with its own dynamics and challenges (Chambers 1997). The following are some of the crucial issues that are central to the debate on PLA.

4.1 The outsider/insider problem

Many supporters of PLA claim that outsiders should "hand over the stick"

(Chambers 1997:157) to members of the local community. This is by no means easy, especially where there are no local people who are fairly at ease with PLA. The initiative towards change and development must be taken by an outsider (somebody from outside the community) or by someone from the inside. Experiences in the Rust De Winter, Richtersveld and Wintersveld communities have shown that this is a complex matter and differs between communities. Who should take the initiative is a somewhat delicate and blurred ethical question and an issue that has not been solved yet. What has become clear is that whether an insider or outsider takes the initiative does not make the task less complex and easier.

Adequate support for the initiative taker is of crucial importance. A dependency relationship may result and the initiative can fail after key individuals have withdrawn. Therefore care has to be taken to ensure the long-term sustainability of the initiative.

4.2 Rushing

PLA initiatives are more informal than rushed. Consultants and government officials are pressed for time and are therefore inclined to rush certain processes without giving the local people time to gain confidence in and take control of the process. Consultants are also inclined to spend insufficient time with the people to allow for adequate trust to develop. Rushing is against the philosophy of PLA and impacts negatively on its outcomes.

4.3 Participation

Participation is an elusive concept and the topic of many academic debates. There have been numerous international contributions, for example Stiefel & Wolfe (1994), White, Nair & Ascroft (1994), Hamilton (1995), and Narayan (1996). Several local contributions have also been made, for example Botha (1996), Botha & Treurnicht (1997), Wetmore and Theron (1997), and De Beer and Swanepoel (1998).

The issue of participation is central to PLA, but the participation of some may lead to the exclusion of others. Others may choose to join or leave the process. Flexibility is the important issue here and there should be space for people to join or leave the process as they wish. It is always difficult to reach the really poor and it should be a challenge and a specific goal to get them involved. However, limits to participation surfaced with the use of PLA, for example time-related factors, formalism, power distribution complications,

conflict, bureaucracy, over-complicating instructions, and assuming across-the-board acceptance (Botha & Treurnicht 1997: 92–93). Other problems may be of geographical, political, class, or ethnic nature, and the five contentious assumptions about the community described by Wassermann and Kriel (1997) are also applicable. South Africa is known for its huge diversity in peoples, cultures and geography. Agriculture is the livelihood of many poor people and the politically seeded dualism in South African agriculture has been described well (Van Rooyen & Botha 1994), showing that the notion of participation is appropriate, but difficult.

Experience has shown that with PLA the best results are achieved by working with small groups. In their normal day-to-day activities and throughout their lives people are involved with small groups. Group cohesion is a powerful force in small groups which bears on individuals' behaviour. PLA taps into, influences and alters this internal dynamic group force.

4.4 Conflict

Conflict in information gathering and development action is ever present but never simple. Ironically the use of PLA can create conflict, but PLA methodologies can also be used to solve conflict (Rodriquez 1998). However, there are no recipes for managing the process. Appropriate attitudes and behaviour of outsider and insider may prevent much of the impetus for conflict.

Experience has shown that people may be inclined to draw their own maps of a particular area and prioritise issues in their own particular way and they should not be pressurised to work together if they choose not to do so. The informal nature of PLA activities has shown that it can reduce the conflict potential drastically, if it is applied correctly. Gender inequalities have been shown to create friction and conflict and by changing the attitude of the men towards the women the conflict can be resolved (Chambers 1997: 219).

4.5 Quick results and high expectations

It happens fairly regularly that expectations are high when PLA initiatives are launched, because people have hope that their conditions are going to improve. Chambers (1997) calls this “rousing unmet expectations”. This process has to be managed with great care so that unrealistic expectations are not created when people realise that they will have to do things by

themselves and that there are usually no quick fixes for development problems and ensuing needs. There is scant and only passing reference to this issue in the literature (Chambers 1997: 214) and this is one of the lacunae in the general debate on participatory development. The quick results required by the donors or the outsiders are well documented and debated (Chambers 1983).

4.6 Attitude and behaviour

In good PRA, participatory behaviour and attitudes matter more than methods (Chambers 1997: 212). Not much has been documented about behaviour and attitude in PRA. The literature focuses strongly on training towards these crucial aspects of PRA. It has been shown that an individual's values, norms and attitudes form the basis of and directly influence the individual's behaviour. Of the three, values are the most difficult to alter. When altered, behaviour change can be expected to be permanent. The values (what is right and important) and norms (what are acceptable ways to behave) are influenced by an individual's perception of things of relevance to the issue at stake.

The causes of the behaviour of outsiders and insiders are important in development, participation and PLA. Psychological perspectives show that behaviour is predominantly influenced by an individual's perceptions (Düvel 1974). This includes perceptions of the meaning and ultimate goals of development, people's own roles in the development process, and what they regard as right and important in terms of development and those who go through the process. Therefore many believe that outsiders should have a good philosophical base to work from. Chambers (1997: 236) counters this by saying: "So what? Do it!"

The psychological perspective may be relevant up to a point, but then lacks explanatory power. Anisur Rahman (1993: 224) combines this perspective with a valuable sociological perspective by saying: "People's behaviour is governed both by the rationality of individual interest and the rationality of solidarity with, lets say, 'social neighbourhoods' – family, kinship group, community, etc." These influence the behaviour and socio-cultural environment of the community and should never be underestimated. The attitude and behaviour of both the insider and the outsider must reflect a deep respect and understanding of those forces and interactions since local people are sensitive towards attitudes and behaviour regarding this "solidarity", as Anisur Rahman (1993) called it.

For the outsiders, training is very important, and a critical self-awareness of outsiders and insiders may be even more important in terms of behaviour and attitude.

4.7 The issue of empowerment

Long and Villarreal (1993: 160) point out that this issue forms part of the neo-populist discourse by popular authors such as Chambers, Korten and Uphoff. There are still interventionist and managerialist undertones in development work, despite the popularising of participation, development from below, PLA and so forth (Long & Villarreal 1993).

De Beer and Swanepoel (1998:23) equate popular participation, empowerment and control, and show that the debate on community development has shifted from a definition of empowerment to stressing the principles or characteristics of the process. In this sense they indicate the following:

Empowerment

- addresses concrete and abstract human needs
- is a learning process
- is collective action
- is action at grass-roots level
- releases people from the poverty trap.

PLA and participation have to do with a shift in power from the outsider to the insiders. When this shift begins, the process of empowerment has started. If power is reassumed by the outsider, the process of empowerment stops and the process of disenfranchisement starts. The first shift in power is absolutely necessary since it is directly linked with responsibility. "The point of locating power is to fix responsibility for certain consequences held to flow from the action, or inaction, of certain specifiable agents" (Lukes 1974:57). PLA seeks to empower local people through its involvement in co-learning and in the process responsibility for development is transferred to the local people. Therefore the following may be added to De Beer & Swanepoel's (1998) contribution. Empowerment is (also):

- transferring of power and therefore responsibility to local people.

Let us be the first to acknowledge that this standpoint also has undertones of Long and Villarreal's interventionism and managerialism. We add

transfer of power and responsibility to the meaning of empowerment because South Africa, like many other poor countries, is in a situation where government targets the poor, tries to reach them through interventions of different sorts and has to manage the resources that go with the intervention. We are well aware that our argument may seem to imply that:

- The outsider (non-poor) has the power.
- The insider (poor) is powerless.
- Power must be transferred to the insider by the outsider.
- Acceptance of power will be good for the insider.
- The insider has the capacity and will use the power responsibly and for the good of the broader community.

The argument is simplistic and lacks dimension, but for this discussion we will concede that: “Reversals (of power) would be absurd if pushed to anarchy, dismantling the state, abolishing bureaucracy, removing all rules and controls” (Chambers 1997: 211). However, there seems to be very little debate on these issues and the overarching issue of empowerment at the moment. The links and interactions between PLA, participation and empowerment are therefore one of the lacunae in the development debate. Such a discussion will probably not be met with great enthusiasm in the current socio-political climate of re-distribution where there is little philosophical and practical coalescence of democracy and freedom, and responsibility and accountability.

5 PLA: THE SOUTH AFRICAN CHALLENGE

We are convinced that PLA has much to offer in the South African context. It is silly to parrot wisdom from abroad, just as it is silly to ignore the inputs that the international community can make to the South African PLA debate and practice. Many African countries copied Western administrative structures and bureaucracies to their own detriment after they gained independence of their colonial masters. South Africa could consult with the international development community at large, but should come up with its own style of practising PLA and making its own locally bred contributions to the local and international development debate. It is in the spirit of PLA to freely participate, discuss and design and shape our own development setting. The initiative to make something of all the issues surrounding PLA lies with South African academics and practitioners who do need empowerment and who have the ability to take responsibility for the required processes.

There are plenty of challenges for South Africa regarding PLA. Thus we will focus only on the obvious, the important and main issues concerning PLA. We hope this will stimulate debate and enthuse academics, students and practitioners. We do not include the insiders in this list since most have no access to these specific or similar articles.

- The isolation of South Africa from mainstream debates on development in general and PLA and participation in particular has to be broken down further. Deliberate efforts need to be taken to meaningfully get the voice of the South African tripartite of development academics, practitioners and clients on international development debate forums. It is important to document properly and distribute all field experiences, research results and relevant discussions at local, national, regional and international levels. Attending international seminars, workshops and conferences is important. Perhaps even more important is to share what has been learnt and experienced abroad at all levels when the individual returns. Too much valuable information goes to waste otherwise. This attitude contributes to keeping intact South Africa's and the region's isolation.
- There seems to be a general lack of debate about the themes of development, PLA and participation. Debate should be initiated where possible and stimulated in the few places where it is still happening. There is a sad lack of intra- and inter-institutional as well as inter-disciplinary academic discussion in South Africa pertaining to development, PLA and participation. The academic climate and healthy discourse seem to be eroded by increasing competition between institutions of higher learning for dwindling resources as well as an academic inferiority complex of many South African academics. This complex is helped along by academics from industrialised countries who happily keep southern academics out of significant publications, at the same time selling their own publications and services in South Africa. This contributes to South African academia's national and international isolation and academic impoverishment.
- There is a strong need for stakeholders to debate South Africa's current development praxis. The debate between development academics and practitioners must be stimulated. Development theory and praxis needs to be discussed and debated frequently, progressively and continuously.
- The third but most important party in the development tripartite, the client, is also in serious need of debating development issues. Inter- and intra-level discussions and debates of development, PLA and participation between and among academia, practitioners and clients are important to foster joint learning and understanding. There are many

reasons that this may seem impossible, but it is urgently needed. It is important not only to break the isolation from international debating, but local, national and regional isolation must also be broken.

- The development debate concerning participation has a number of lacunae that need urgent attention. These important but neglected aspects of development are:
 - issues concerning power and power relations pertaining to development, participation and PLA
 - gender inequalities in general, and gender and power specifically, and how they relate to and impact on development
 - ethnicity and its role in development, participation and PLA
 - questions such as: “Who has the initiative?”, and how they relate to development outcomes
 - the current socio-political climate of redistribution and its influence on and inter-relations with development, PLA and participation in terms of theory and praxis
 - the issue of raised expectations and the capacity and commitment to delivery, and how those impact on development, participation and PLA
 - the question of increased dependencies and how those relate to development, participation and PLA.
- Development theorising and praxis in South Africa should be depoliticised. The South African government tends to politicise these for party political reasons and advantage. The support and commitment of politicians and the government of the day is extremely important to create a climate conducive to development, the use of PLA and participation. However, political interference and grass-roots involvement is seldom to their advantage.
- NGOs seem to be keeping PLA to themselves and out of the reach of academia and other development practitioners. PLA does not have ownership of any kind, and making it inaccessible to others is against the true spirit of PLA. The NGO community should be encouraged to open ranks and break their reservations. PLA seems to be good business in South Africa, which may partly explain the reticence of the NGO sector.
- Participation and PLA must be kept free from bureaucratisation and from becoming a means in itself.
- Technocratism goes against the deliberation philosophy of development, participation and PLA. Development is complete only when and if it is accompanied by appropriate technologies. These have to be invented if

they do not exist, through close collaboration between the relevant communities and technical specialists. Very often these processes are facilitated and helped along by development practitioners of different kinds, for example community development workers, agricultural extension workers, home economists, social forestry staff, and social workers. Technologists need to be freed from technocratism which does not take into account the human side and needs of development and overaccentuates the technical aspects of development. Technicians and technologists should be brought into a proper understanding of development, participation and PLA. They should understand the notion of joint learning.

- Techniques under the PLA umbrella and the PLA philosophy have a strong focus on countries in the South for example South East Asia, Latin America and Africa. Countries such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Mainland China are also relevant. Most of the contact between southern countries goes through the northern (industrialised countries) which act either in a coordinating capacity or as source of development, participation and PLA material distribution. There is a strong need for greater South-South collaboration concerning matters of development, participation and PLA practice and theorising.
- Training for PLA has been very successful elsewhere and the issue should receive considerably more attention in South Africa. We are referring here to the training of government and NGO officials in PLA techniques. Donors should also make it possible for more and more villagers to attend courses of this nature. Universities and various other institutions should offer courses to share and spread the message.
- Informal seminars and discussions can go a long way towards stimulating discussion on PRA, but these will have to feature more prominently at training institutions to stimulate discussion on PLA.
- Networking has been one of the more effective ways of sharing and spreading the PLA message. A network can help to determine training and project priorities. It can help to identify donors, and more importantly it can help to identify a core group of people who can spread the PLA message through contacts, materials and a database. Experience has shown that the most effective networks are small and they need few resources to operate effectively.

6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

There is no doubt that PLA has tremendous potential to make a meaningful

impact on the development debate in South Africa. However we should be careful not to have unrealistic expectations. The battle to establish PLA in government and major training institutions is not going to be easy, because it questions and even contradicts many existing assumptions in those institutions. The development debate and the topics of participation and PLA should be made into mainstream debates and the lacunae in the participation debate should be addressed. Development theory and praxis should be discussed and integrated more intensely and with greater purpose in South Africa.

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