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KDYTAF001

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: T. B. Kadyamatimba Date: 05 November 2012

Dedication

To my family who have always been my inspiration; muri chishamiso changu, ndinokutendai nerudo rwenyu. For the people of Zimbabwe who are 'survival experts' in their own right.

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For all the support and encouragement I received from various family members, friends and colleagues, I am truly thankful.

I am very appreciative to the University Of Cape Town (UCT) for providing me with the opportunity and challenge to study International Relations. It has helped me comprehend the issues facing Africa and the world at large. Writing this paper, I came across a lot of research material that was interesting and therefore made myself more conversant with the issues of food security, insecurity, hunger and malnutrition that is being experienced on the globe today. This experience has elevated my knowledge and has been an inspiration.

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ABSTRACT

Zimbabwe has not maintained a strategic grain reserve policy since the late 1990s and the monoculture of maize has remained vulnerable to fluctuations in weather patterns particularly that of moisture. The country has been faced with sporadic droughts that have resulted in the risk of food insecurity. The shifts in the weather patterns increased the frequency of these dry spells and declined the rain fed agriculture. The political instability of the country has only further exacerbated the food crisis. Economic challenges and an unstable political environment in 2008 led to food shortages and a closure of most rural shops. Some humanitarian organisations inadvertently increased vulnerability of some households by the use of ill conceived screening methods and flawed relief aid targeting. Increased migration and a negative impact on the education sector have been experienced all throughout the country. My study focused on secondary literature as the major research method. It was conducted to assess the causes of food insecurity in Zimbabwe. The study looks at the background of food insecurity in Zimbabwe and analysed the problem from the perspective of human security. The thesis reveals the policies that were introduced and how communities manipulated them to their advantage. It concludes that the causes of food insecurity in Zimbabwe have been the result of both environmental and political factors. The study makes recommendations for ensuring better food security in Zimbabwe

ABRIVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ART	Anti Retroviral Therapy
CFSAM	Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission
CHS	Community and Household Surveillance
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CRS	Catholic Relief Service
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
FTLRP	Fast Track Land Reform Program
GLS	Grain Loan Scheme
GMB	Grain Marketing Board
HIV	Human Immune Virus
HPI	Human Poverty Index
HS	Human Security
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development

IHL	International Humanitarian Law
LDC	Less Developed Countries
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OVC	Orphaned and Vulnerable Children
PAP	Public Assistance Programme
PWP	Public Works Programme
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SGR	Strategic Grain Reserve
UDI	Universal Declaration of Independence
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
WFC	World Food Conference
WFP	World Food Program
WFS	World Food Summit
WTO	World Trade Organization
ZEFS	Zimbabwe Emergency Food Security Assessment
ZESA	Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority

ZimVAC

Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee

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CHAPTER I: Introduction

1.0 Background

The last 15 years have seen Zimbabwe experiencing overwhelming food shortages (CWFS, 2007). Production levels deteriorated over this period, and in some years agricultural produce has been insufficient to cater for the population. Zimbabwe has also been prone to drought and climate change that is highly susceptible to vicissitude of weather patterns (National Civil Protection Coordination Committee, 1993:31). Zimbabwe conducts a census every 10 years and the most recent was conducted in August 2012. However, the results have not yet been released. Nonetheless, in 2007 Zimbabwe had a total population of 12.5 million (UNFPA, 2007). According to the World Bank Report of 2012 the population of Zimbabwe is 12.8 million (World Bank, 2012). According to the Committee on World Food Security (CWFS), the rural population constituted of 64% and about 80% of the total population was totally reliant on agriculture for survival and livelihood. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), in 2007 the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Zimbabwe was US\$1.437 billion, while the actual growth rate of Zimbabwe was -6.1% (IMF, 2007). With an economic meltdown on this scale, all the other sectors like industries were insufficient to sustain the country's economy, let alone feed the nation. Paradoxically the former breadbasket of Southern Africa has experienced serious ongoing food insecurity since 2000, while at the same time being home to more than 40 minerals including gold, silver and platinum. The implementation of the Fast Track Land Reform Program (FTLRP) in 2000 caused a rift in the agricultural sector and destabilized the political and economic systems within the country (Gilpin, 2008). One of the unanswered questions is why the media has propagated the FTLRP to the detriment of both the economy and food security.

1.0.1 Agriculture

At independence in 1980, Zimbabwe inherited a dual agricultural structure (Ilfiffe, 1990). This structure comprised of large-scale commercial farms specializing mainly in cash crops such as tobacco, cotton, maize and wheat (ibid). The other agricultural structure was that of the small scale commercial farms that specialized in the production of maize, as well as some cash crops. The smaller farms were communal areas where production was mainly subsistence and basically

fed individual families. However, with the resettlement program implemented from the time of independence, the nature of the agricultural structure has shifted. Of the total population over a third now resides in urban areas, while the rest continue to practice small-scale agricultural activities in the rural areas (Government of Zimbabwe, 2009). Whether taking place in an urban or rural area, farming was, and still is to a great extent the major economic activity.

Given that agriculture is the heart of the Zimbabwean economy (Sachikonye, 1992, p. 90), favourable climatic conditions are essential to maintaining Zimbabwe's food security (National Civil Protection Coordination Committee, 1993:31). In past years, the climate has been mostly sub-tropical, with rains throughout the period November to March. However, there has been a shift in the weather patterns, temperatures have been increasing and the droughts have intensified (Moser & Satterthwaite, 2008). In the 1980s, the agricultural sector alone made up about 18.5% of the total GDP, 40% of exports coming from cotton, tobacco and other cash crops (Central Statistics Office, 2009). However, according to Biti (2009), the agricultural sector heavily underperformed during the period 2000 to 2008, shrinking by an annual average of -7.1%. He states that the cumulative agricultural yield decreased by -79.4% between 2002 and 2008 (ibid, p.14). A combination of factors could be pin-pointed as the causative factors to this collapse of the sector; the political (land reform), environmental (droughts) and economic (inflation) challenges that the country experienced during this period.

Agriculture employs about 66% of the total labour force and is dominated by women (CSO, 2009). To add to these statistics, about 60% of the raw materials needed in the industrial sectors come from agriculture (GOZ, 2009). This interdependence of agriculture and other industries has had a significant influence on the economy of Zimbabwe. Since 2000, food production dwindled to below subsistence levels. The main agricultural products are maize, wheat, sugar cane, peanuts, millet, soya beans, sheep, pigs, goats, tobacco and cotton. In the last decade, for various reasons, the production of these products has fallen into a state of neglect, which has in turn affected overall productivity (FAO, 2008). As a result of this shrinkage of the agricultural sector, investors have pulled back, adversely affecting the development and sustainability of agricultural research (GOV, 2009).

Various factors have influenced the decreased agricultural productivity in Zimbabwe. The combination of which has made a significant impact on food security. Poor electricity supply, together with inflated oil and fuel prices and shortages, has made it difficult for farmers to continue productivity (USAID, 2009). This in turn has resulted in interruptions and delays in the normal agricultural cycles (*ibid*). In addition, there has been a deterioration of the infrastructure necessary for agricultural activity due to a lack of the foreign currency required for farmers to acquire even the basic necessities for farming.

The land is deteriorating due to loss of the nutrient content of the soil structure. The encumbrance of government price controls and the deterioration of irrigation systems all resulted in poor living standards and increased unemployment within the country (FAO, 2008). This in turn has resulted in the prevalent shortage of goods and services. In addition the procurement, in availability and lack of purchasing power, of essential agricultural supplies such as fertilizer, seeds and other chemicals, is posing a serious challenge to agriculture (Gandure & Morongwe, 2006). As a result of all these factors, food insecurity becomes a major challenge to the Zimbabwean government. This once self-sufficient nation has become vulnerable and is now reliant on food aid and forced to import grains to supplement low food production.

1.0.2 Economic Structural Adjustment Programme

In the early 1990s the country undertook the implementation of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), intended to increase economic growth, encourage foreign investment, and expand local employment, as well as facilitating the reduction of government expenditure through economic liberalisation (GOZ, 1995). Economic liberalisation was meant to alleviate some of the government expenses incurred by food subsidies. Unfortunately, ESAP did not bring forth the desired results and the drought of 1991-92 further exacerbated the decrease in growth of the economy and of unemployment (Tekere, 2001). Government targets were not met and many projects in the country were halted due to escalating prices. The failure of the ESAP resulted in further increases in unemployment and food insecurity, excavating poverty, and minimal access to social services (Scoones, *et al.*, 1996). This decline in growth in late 1997 and into 1998 resulted in increased discontent forcing the government to introduce the Fast Track Land Reform Program (FTLRP) (United Nations Development Program, 2002) to try and appease the disgruntled population.

1.0.3 HIV/AIDS

The prevalence of HIV/AIDS from the 1980s on had an additional negative impact on agriculture, further exacerbating the level of malnutrition and food insecurity in rural areas (Bender & Smith, 1997; Byron, *et al.*, 2006). A significant section of the adult population was lost to this disease and most families lost their major breadwinners, resulting in reduced productivity at the household level (Piwoz & Preble, 2000).

1.0.4 Climate change

The change in climate patterns and conditions has exacerbated food insecurity, as the resulting change in the agricultural seasons has distorted the planting schedules/patterns (Thornton, *et al.*, 2008). The early termination of the rains in 2001 resulted in Zimbabwe's experiencing severe crop failure that yielded poor harvests and in comparison to the harvest yield during the 1992 drought, this was by far the largest shortfall in food production (Sachikonye, 2003). These shortages escalated into a famine and a humanitarian disaster that affected people in both rural and urban areas (ZimVAC, 2002). According to the Zimbabwe Emergency Food Security Assessment (ZEFSa), the period between September 2002 and March 2003 required food aid of about 486 000 tonnes to meet the food requirements of 6 700 000 people (ZEFSa, 2003). Of that population two thirds were located in the rural areas. As per the World Food Program (WFP) report, 70% of the rural population was at risk of famine-induced starvation (WFP, 2002). The amount of food aid required at this time to adequately feed the population was unprecedented for Zimbabwe, especially since it had formerly produced surplus food, and provided food aid to other nations in need at the time, such as to its Southern African Development Community (SADC) counterparts, even including countries as distant from Zimbabwe as Ethiopia.

In recent years new farmers, who were the recipients of the redistributed land have been accused of being inexperienced and lacking the resources required to make adequate use of the land and to increase its productivity (Murwira, *et al.*, 2000). This is as a result of Zimbabwe experiencing low production outputs since the year 2000, when the FTLRP was implemented. As the new farmers struggled to settle on the new land the food crisis worsened, leading to the total unavailability of food-stuffs within the country (UNDP, 2002). An estimation of the level of

national food insecurity was made in 2011 by the Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZimVAC). The committee predicted that by October 2011-March 2012 more than a million Zimbabweans would not have access to adequate food (ZimVAC, 2011), regardless, of maize production improving from a low of 400,000 metric tons in 2010 (WFP, 2011). Zimbabwe keeps struggling to meet its annual grain needs of 2,100,000 metric tons. The Crop and Livestock Assessment Report in 2011 indicated that the production of maize had decreased due to adverse weather conditions and poor agricultural performance which had led to a lot of land being “written off” in terms of productivity.

The thesis focuses on tracking the interconnection on the food insecurity that has arisen over the last decade in a country experiencing high levels of poverty, environmental degradation, socio-economic problems and political crisis (Tibaijuka, 2005; Ziervogel, et al., 2008). As such Human Security has been used in a bid to find a way forward for Zimbabwe as a theoretical framework. Though the concept combines safety from hunger and disease as well as sudden and harmful disruption in daily life, it is highly contested especially in Africa.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

There is an urgent need to address the problem of poverty and hunger for the people of Zimbabwe. The World Food Programme (WFP) figures for 2002 showed the alarming extent of the numbers of the population experiencing food insecurity in both the rural and urban areas (WFP, 2002). According to ZimVAC between January and March of 2013 an estimated 1.6 million people will be food insecure (WFP, 2012). In Zimbabwe critical food insecurity has gone on for more than a decade against a background of an on-going global economic recession. It is unconscionable that a whole nation should continue to be deprived of one of the basic human rights, the right to adequate food in both quantity and quality (Henk, 2005). In a state that embarked on the ‘equitable’ redistribution of land, supposedly to alleviate pressure on communal lands, it should be expected that the greater proportion of the population has land available to till and to ensure increased productivity. Given Zimbabwe’s reputation of having a 92 percent literacy level (UNDP Statistical Digest, 2010), it should be possible to have awareness campaigns on climate change, and to educate and train people in the technological

advancement of the new genetically engineered seeds and fertilizers, so that the main focus of the state would be the economics of farming (Hammer, 2007).

However, there has been very little done by the government of Zimbabwe to address the long term tenure and legislative requirements pertaining to land acquisition. The legislative requirements of land redistribution have not been adhered to, especially with regard to the payment of compensation to war veterans (ibid). This has led to the contention that galvanized to the implementation of the FTLRP and the resulting corruption, which affected the manner in which the land was, redistributed (UNDP, 2002). The main requirement for qualifying to receive land was that of being a Zimbabwean citizen; agricultural knowledge and skill was not seen as a prerequisite. The redistribution process was ill conceived and did not take into account that the nation is still in need of export *trade* for foreign currency in order to be able to sustain the economy. Thus the government's actions and its failure to contain the food crisis situation have discouraged both local and foreign investment and possible growth of the commercial agricultural sector (USAID, 2009).

The negative effect on subsistence agriculture of the disruption of rainfall patterns has been affected by climate change (Moser & Satterthwaite, 2008). Subsistence agriculture is the main source of livelihood and food for 80 percent of the population (GOZ, 2009). A poor year can result in large-scale crop failure, food shortages and, in extreme cases, famine. Rainfall patterns, the frequency and intensity of drought cycles have negatively affected the region's eco-zones, with the result that people often have to trek for long distances in search of water (Moser & Satterthwaite, 2008). The lack of water affects every aspect of the environment, health and human activity. The cycle of drought results in overgrazing, leading to further degradation of pastures and arable lands, in turn leading to further desertification and environmental degradation (Rukuni *et al.*, 1994). Poor or failed harvests due to poor farming methods, lack of seed and fertilizer, deepen the crisis. Although evidence suggests that the country has had a history of recurrent droughts and land degradation from years before independence (Iliffe, 1990), and that food insecurity in Zimbabwe in the past decade is due mainly to land reform, it has been argued that land reform is not the only reason for critical food shortages in the country. Thus the key research question is:

- What are the key factors accounting for food insecurity in Zimbabwe?

1.2 The Purpose of Study

The absence of hunger and starvation are crucial both to increased production levels in a country and to a healthy population. A population that is well nourished is protected from the contraction of petty illnesses that can hinder production rates (World Bank, 2005a). While Zimbabwe's neighbouring countries are enjoying relatively improved food security and access to services, many people in Zimbabwe are faced with the options of either migrating to the Diaspora or being forced to make ends meet by 'hustling' for jobs in an economy that does not have much to offer in terms of employment or a healthy lifestyle (SADC, 2008). Thus, food security must be at the forefront of any efforts on the part of the government, to bring increased productivity and economic security to Zimbabwe. The agricultural sector is the main source of employment and income for about 60-70% of the total population (CSO, 2009). This includes those industries that rely on the raw material from agriculture (Government of Zimbabwe, 2009). As a result, a fall in the level of agricultural activity and production inversely affects all the other aspects of the economy which is essential.

1.3 Methodology

The research is focused on the agro-ecological region III-V that experience sporadic droughts. This makes rain-fed cultivation highly unpredictable, sometimes subjecting the communities to seasonal droughts and in worst case scenario famines (FAO, 2006; and Hicks, 1993).

Table 1: Agro-ecological region III-V characteristics

Natural Region	Characteristic
III	67 690km ² - Between 650 and 800mm of precipitation per year - Sporadic heavy storms, though characterized by mid-season dry spells - Semi intensive farming - Best suited for livestock production and fodder crops - 39% of the 7.3million hectares is communal land
IV	128 370km ² - Between 400 and 650mm of precipitation per

	year - Semi-extensive farming region - Subject to seasonal droughts (and always vulnerable) - Mostly suitable for livestock production and drought resistant crops - High proportion of the region is communal land (62% of the 14.8 million hectares)
V	112 810 km ² with 45% of the 10.4 million hectares being designated communal area - Below 450 mm per year (erratic rainfall) - Extensive farming - Irrigated sugarcane is one of major crop projects in south-eastern low-veld - Mostly suitable for cattle and game ranching

Adapted from Auret (1990) and Hicks (1993)

However, it also encompasses the regions in the country that were redistributed in the land reform program. This research applies the available literature on food security in Zimbabwe specifically and elsewhere in Africa. The use of television news channels such as BBC, CNN and Aljazeera were an added dimension and source of information, as well as government reports, newspapers, books and journals.

1.4 Objective of study

The research will be mainly qualitative as it will be exploring and assessing the links between the various causes of food insecurity in Zimbabwe. It will seek to do the following things:

- i. To identify and discuss the actual causes, or combination of causes, of food insecurity in Zimbabwe.
- ii. To examine the impact of food insecurity on the population of Zimbabwe, focusing on the availability, access and utilization of food.
- iii. To investigate and gauge the effects of malnutrition on productivity.
- iv. To define and differentiate the nature and extent of food insecurity in terms of the rural and the urban population of Zimbabwe.

- v. To assess whether, or to what extent, the causes of food insecurity can or should be seen as interlinked or as independent of each other.

1.5 Significance and value of the study

Since the future of any country is dependent on the health of its population, if the population has poor nutrition, the people of that country will be rendered weak and vulnerable to various diseases (ZimVAC, 2006). This will make it virtually impossible for the people to be agriculturally productive or to build their nation. With the health of a large sector of its society compromised, the future of the nation is compromised and the country and its economy in danger of collapse (Maxwell, 1996). It should be a matter of grave concern to Africa, and to the world when the former bread basket of the region can no longer manage or afford to feed its citizens. It is hoped that the findings from this study will provide strategies and a way forward in addressing this critical situation.

1.6 Relationship between the concepts ‘Human Security’ and ‘Food Security’

1.6.1 Human Security

As mentioned earlier, the idea of Human Security (HS) is gaining popularity in Africa. This is because, as an umbrella term, it describes and includes all the issues to do with the welfare of the people of Africa that affect the continent, such as tribal conflicts, poverty, disease and hunger. The concept of HS allows for all the issues that affect a particular nation to be put in the same bracket in order to come up with a common agenda to bring about change, and as a call to action. The concept of HS is highly contested by both academics and governments, as answers to questions such as, who is being made secure, from what, by whom and how, are not uniform amongst the different stakeholders. Once these questions have been addressed in context will determine whether it is an effective or sufficiently useful concept to describe or relate to food security in Zimbabwe. This is because the prevailing argument is that food security is not achievable in Zimbabwe and in Africa in general, due to the poor governance and increased corruption.

The HS benchmark as set by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) lists seven features that challenge the wellbeing of individuals globally. These features of HS are food

security, political security, environmental security, community security, personal security and health security (Henk, 2005:93). This definition is inclusive of all the aspects of human security under threat in almost all parts of the world and has various combinations. HS as a concept, defined by the UNDP, has been widely accepted by organizations, governments and researchers as being of value and relevance, particularly to developing countries.

HS as a concept is particularly appropriate in relation to the various threats posed to welfare and security, including food security, of a population in a given country. However, HS in the African context and is not defined in the same way by western countries. 'Security' in Africa, whether HS or food security, is not seen in terms of a particular national framework; some states have porous borders, and have an official government and citizenry, as well as rebels and refugees and displaced persons migrating from one country to another. Hence security and the various threats to security in Africa can best be described as an issue for individuals and communities within a country rather than as a national phenomenon (Cilliers, 2004:20).

Poku, a lecturer in Security studies department of Politics at the University of Southampton., argues that the progressively more interrelated nature of social, economic and political interaction on a global scale has transformed the approach in which the state interacts internally (Poku, 2001). Beforehand, the state acted as a safeguard between the civil society and political and economic environment internationally. However, globalisation has become a catalyst in which the state has become an actor which attempts to shape the domestic environment to suit the political and economic environment of the international arena (ibid, p21).

Researchers have criticized the concept of HS as a problematic analytical tool. The concept incorporates all the security challenges/threats as perceived by a country. This multiplicity of 'securities', has posed problems for both policy makers and academia, as the concept is difficult to analyse with any specificity. The claim made by Paris (2001:91) that HS can back up any given hypothesis makes the concept somewhat irrelevant for analysis as it can support any argument. Paris argues that the HS paradigm does not illustrate a hierarchy of policy priorities (ibid, p92). Supporters of the concept suggest that HS can be polished and refined in order to solve these analytical problems. Henk goes further with his criticism of the concept: with a lack of proper implementation the concept lacks significance and impact (Henk, 2005:100). Poku

(2001) argue that globalization has resulted in the exploitation of the weaker states in the global arena because of marginalization.

Nevertheless, other academics posit that HS as a concept does have its usefulness. It has encouraged the cooperation of the various sectors of a nation's security in the common interest. Thus Paris (2001) is of the opinion that HS should not be regarded as an analytical tool or label with special reference to non-military threats, but should include all threats to humanity and to basic human rights.

1.6.2 Human Security and Food Security

The feature of HS which is the concern and focus of this thesis is food security and how it can be achieved in Zimbabwe. This involves an in-depth analysis of the umbrella concept of HS. Theorists argue that the concept of HS should be assessed as a complete component and any analysis should include the interlinked aspects of all the seven features.

Food security, one of the seven features of HS, is defined by Mwaniki as "A situation in which all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active health life" (Mwaniki, 2001). He shows how food insecurity can reach appalling levels because of its link with poverty and goes on to argue that in sub-Saharan Africa about 70% of population in the region, located mostly in the rural areas, experiences critical food shortages as they reside below the poverty line. Thus, to ensure food security in the rural areas, efficient and effective changes are necessary (Mwaniki, 2001:2). Mwaniki argues that there are three aspects to food security: availability, access, and utilization. The food supply ought to be sufficient in terms of both quantity and quality, and this should correlate with the ability of people to purchase it (Mwaniki, 2001:2).

Several factors contribute to food insecurity and poor levels of agricultural production in Africa. The general lack of technology and underdevelopment of the agricultural sector in African countries is one of the main causes of food insecurity in the continent (Poku, 2001). Climatic conditions also affect food production as the majority of crops produced in Africa depend heavily on regular rainfall and irrigation for plentiful harvests (Thornton, *et al.*, 2008). Not only weather conditions affect production, but also the limited inputs in the form of finance to pay for the necessary technology, fertilizers and seeds for adequate production levels, resources that

most African small farmer cannot afford. Other factors contributing to low agricultural productivity include the degradation of soil by salination due the poor use of irrigation systems, to overgrazing, and to loss of soil fertility as a result of the reduction in the number and length of fallow periods (Mwaniki, 2001;3). When agricultural produce does make it onto local markets, farmers do not receive appropriate access to the markets, or do not receive the full payment for their produce. In addition poor infrastructure has made transport of produce to willing buyers expensive. The agricultural policies in place, together with a general lack of information, make it difficult for farmers to compete on local or international markets. International markets are not within the reach of most African farmers as international standards for imports vary, and export costs for Africa are high (Mwaniki, 2001:3).

American and European agricultural goods are highly subsidized within the international markets in a globalized and liberalized market system, which makes exporting agricultural produce a challenge for LDCs, particularly those in Africa, to compete. LDC government policies do not have or offer protection of their local produce and labor force in transnational companies. Such protection would go a long way towards internally channeling the profits made in the LDCs rather than benefitting the motherlands of the transnational companies.

1.6.3 The issue of security

Food security has become of vital interest to the international community and one closely related to human security. In areas where there is war, food insecurity has become an 'invisible' weapon of war and one that has proved very effective as people tend to be willing to do anything to survive. Land grabs can also be used as a food security strategy, with the stated intention of the land invaders to preserve long term production. In this context the idea of human security becomes highly applicable as it denotes the security threat at both the national and international level in terms of threatening 'freedom from fear' and 'freedom from want' (Paris, 2001). In this context food insecurity can disrupt both interstate security and internal security at a human and a humanitarian level.

Paris, a researcher on Human security, argues that traditionally countries have been mainly concerned with security from the aspect of Realism, being primarily concerned with territory, military defence and the interests of the State (Paris, 2001). Throughout the world, food has

been used as a means of leverage, regardless of the laws of *jus ad bello* and *juc ad bellum* that are supposed to protect civilians from war. From this perspective, in a present-day sense, land grabs can be viewed as a threat to national territory and in essence a threat to domestic food production. However this was not the case in Zimbabwe, where the threat was seen as one to local territory from ‘generational foreigners’, as some of the settlers, those who were ‘second generation’, were Zimbabwean by birth. Rumours of rising tensions within Zimbabwe multiplied with the failure of the ESAP that aided in the escalation of poverty and hunger leading to desperation on the part of the citizens. There was also the growing risk of disrupting commercial agricultural production. However, there remained some hope of a long term viable solution to food insecurity.

In terms of global threats; war and conflict are not the only areas that are causes for concern; other issues such as food security, energy supply, epidemics, and the availability of fresh clean water are of growing concern (Bondansky, 1998). Actors in the international community are attempting to meet these threats by means of international aid, while governments are introducing new policies in an attempt to alleviate these crises as well as to protect those vulnerable persons within their borders. In this context the unavailability of food has become one of the crucial issues of national security. Zimbabwe has taken upon itself to implement land ‘reform’ programmes in the form of ‘land grabs’ for the sake of the long term outcome of ensuring continued agricultural production, although the initial stages of this programme have resulted in drastic food insecurity. These land grabs have significant human and humanitarian implications. Those affected are the ones in the vulnerable communities and it is they who have to face the effects of hunger and starvation (IFPRI, 2002).

1.6.4 Threats to food security in Zimbabwe

As has been described, Zimbabwe faces a range of food security threats, including reduced agricultural productivity, a lack of finances to purchase appropriate technology, the effects of globalization as described by Mwaniki (2001) and Poku (2002), and changes in climatic patterns affecting rainfall.

One of the primary aspects negatively influencing food insecurity in Zimbabwe is the pattern of rainfall is the changing climate, influenced by *El Nino* weather patterns (Wisner, *et al.*, 2004).

“*El Nino* weather patterns refer to the warm phase of naturally occurring sea surface temperature oscillation in the tropical Pacific Ocean” (Wisner, *et al.*, 2004). The drought of 2001, with the accompanying *El Nino* weather patterns, left the country in a dire situation from which it has never quite recovered (Southern Africa Today, 2010). This has markedly affected the rainfall patterns, which have metamorphosed into virtual droughts over the past 10 years. The exacerbating effects of *El Nino* weather patterns on the severe drought of 2001 left the country in a serious and ongoing situation in terms of food production. *El Niño* weather patterns, beginning in the first half of the calendar year in Zimbabwe, are strongly linked with below-normal rainfall in virtually all of the country during the rainy season (SADC, 2008). It is a reality that the semi arid and arid areas in the western part of the country experience the most severe droughts. Nonetheless, the whole country is purported to be a humanitarian disaster area, a situation which could easily have been avoided, as was the case in the 1980s and 1990s, by the maintenance of the grain reserves. It could be argued that the situation can be blamed on the inability of the government to spring into action to store up food supplies during severe drought, and as being more concerned with the size of their personal pockets (Cilliers, 2004). Whatever the reason for the threatened starvation of a large sector of the population, the government of Zimbabwe has been ineffective in its responses to the droughts which are known to occur every 4 or 5 years.

In addition the agriculture policies do very little to protect the small farmers from such exigencies as droughts, or to encourage investment in the sector (Paris, 2001, pp 93). Ongoing misallocation and mismanagement of funds in the nation has increased corruption and led to low investment in agriculture, which has had serious implications for Zimbabwe (Mwaniki, 2001). This is because the agricultural sector is the heart of the nation as it provides raw material to the industrial sector, accounts for about 40% of the GDP, and constitutes above 60% of total local employment besides providing food for its people (CWFS 2007). This situation of mismanagement has been a source of great disappointment to the Zimbabweans and to the international community, as it is obvious how much potential the country has to achieve self-sufficiency and to regain ‘food security’ (ibid).

As mentioned earlier, the government was ill prepared for the problems that resulted from the land reform programme (Hammar, 2007). The programme was intended to boost production and alleviate population density in the communal lands but in my opinion the implementation

process was not sufficiently thought through. The motives appeared more political driven than for the concerns for growth and development of the country. Thus, when ESAP began failing, and the effects were being felt economically, there was a dismaying lack of response from government in terms of salvaging the situation (Scoones, *et al.*, 1996). Unfortunately, just at that time *El Nino* hit the country and added salt to an already open wound.

Thus, poor governance and the government's poor and ineffective implementation of the FTLRP have contributed significantly to food insecurity within Zimbabwe (FAO, 2004). The question then arises in terms of Zimbabwe's urgent need to attain food security, as to whether there exists the need or the will on the part of the government to address all of the above factors posing a threat to food security in the country (Scoones, *et al.*, 1996). There is an urgent need for all the inter-related problems to be dealt with effectively by government, including environmental issues such as salination from poor irrigation practices. These problems can be resolved with increased investment in agriculture in order to arrest soil erosion, desertification, and soil degradation (Iliffe, 1990). Agricultural policies can be adjusted and improved to ensure more protection and support for new farmers and thus promote overall growth, development and increased productivity in the agricultural sector. Therefore, effective governance is a necessity. Cilliers argues that the issue of poor governance is not unique to Zimbabwe but applies to many African states. He traces the problem of poor governance to the political structures inherited from the colonial era, which left the independent African states undefined and artificially constructed (Cilliers, 2004). However, although the problems of governance in Zimbabwe seem overwhelming and insoluble, the situation is not completely without hope. Mwaniki outlined seven strategies to bring about productive changes: capacity building, nutritional interventions, coping strategies, facilitating market access, good governance, creating non-agricultural opportunities, and gender sensitive development (Mwaniki, 2001).

If these strategies are to be applied and implemented effectively by the government of Zimbabwe, the needs of its population in terms of positive growth and increased productivity, particularly in rural areas, would begin to be addressed. At the outset political will needs to drive the process. Thus human and food security can be seriously affected by poor or ineffective governance, and political security and stability can be seen as one of the independent threats to HS as well as to food security. The suggestion offered by Paris of using HS as a meaningful

label for the many and interrelated threats to human security thus becomes a vital starting point, as there is no clear separation of the features described by Mwaniki (2001), and thus makes the concept of HS impossible to use as an analytical tool as it is intended in a framework analysis (Paris; 2001:93).

1.7 Literature Review

In the 21st century various reasons have been attributed to food insecurity and hunger. The World Food Conference in 1974 defined food security as the capability of a nation to generate enough to feed its citizens (Allen, 1999:117-129). Food security encompasses consumption both physically and mentally; cultural preferences and the cultivation methods (Robertsons, 1990). In essence according to Ramakrishna and Demeke (2002), the most important aspects of food security are *food availability* and *accessibility*. Food availability refers to the supply of food (Ramakrishna & Demeke, 2002) whereas accessibility refers to the ability to obtain the necessary food either through production or purchasing power (Bahigwa, 2002:8-22). Following this definition, households will experience food insecurity without adequate physical and economic access to food. In addition, according to FAO, food insecurity includes the scarcity of nutritional food and the ability to acquire foods that acknowledged within the society to be both adequate and nutritious (FAO, 2010). Thus, food insecurity can be said to exist when there is a lack of adequate and nutritious food to sustain a healthy life.

Bickel *et al.* (1997) describe the debilitating and painful effects of sustained hunger on food deprived people as an uncomfortable, at times painful feeling which occurs involuntarily with the lack of access to food and may produce serious and incapacitating malnutrition over time. Today, hunger and malnutrition are frequently attributed to issues of supply, with ever-increasing disparities between rich and poor nations and between the rich and the poor within countries (Maxwell, 1998). These definitions, or composite definitions, are being used by academics and researchers to determine both the causes and severity of poverty-related food insecurity and hunger on both unilateral and multilateral levels (Centre on hunger and poverty, 2000).

Earlier research on food insecurity in Africa shows that the economies were able to survive large scale environmental degradation because the population of states were small and the demands on the economy limited (Lemma & Malaska, 1987). More significantly, the existing technological

knowhow was applicable by the African people and sufficient for their agricultural needs as they had learned over centuries to adapt. However, with the more recent climate changes, sustainable development is no longer a choice but an urgent necessity. Maxwell (1999) is of the opinion that food insecurity in Africa is as a result of rapid population growth, increased poverty, and an increase in prices on the international market. He suggested that in the 1970s and 1980s food security demanded action on the part of national governments, whereas more recently the focus has shifted more to the household and individual levels especially in urban areas. On the other hand there is a strong relationship between land reform and poverty reduction. Leite (2002) however argues for a strong relationship between land reform (political/governmental action) and poverty reduction. He suggests that there are significant improvements in the standard of living for the beneficiaries of land reform generally (Leite, 2002).

Whole communities are prone to environmental and economic shocks (FAO, 2002, p4-7). The food crises in several Southern African countries between 2001-3 was not as a result of climatic factors only but was exacerbated by, and inter-twined with, the effects of the environment, political conflicts, the economy, and the society (ibid). Thus, there were varying levels of food insecurity, from chronic to acute. Chronic food insecurity occurs when there are insufficient nutrients in available food for people to attain a healthy life-style (World Bank, 1986) and arises from the effects of poverty, while, acute or transient food insecurity occurs sporadically and is usually due to climatic shocks; although the shocks can also be of an economic or political nature (ibid).

Studies of individuals experiencing food insecurity on a global scale in various developed and developing countries and health systems have linked it to restricted household possessions, low disposable income and poor socio-economic status (Cook & Frank, 2008; Press, 2004). Single parent families especially those with young children, indigenous communities, unemployed people, and those with chronic illness or disability, are considered more likely to be food insecure. An example of the Maori in New Zealand and Pacific Peoples are excessively affected because they are sidelined by other population groups and reside in socially deprived areas where access to a variety of healthy foods is more difficult. For such groups, general Human Security, as well as food security is difficult to attain as these areas do not have well stocked supermarkets (Rush & Rusk, 2009). Geographical isolation from food sources may also be a feature of food

insecurity (Rychetnik *et al.*, 2003). In other developed countries such as the United States of America (US), Australia and Canada, the risk of obesity is 20-40% higher in people who experience food insecurity compared with the rest of the population (Burns, 2004). Obesity is in turn associated with chronic and life-threatening diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease and overall poor health status. Studies in the US, Europe and Australia disclose that food insecurity affects women regardless of the level of income, lifestyle behaviours', or education (ibid).

A survey conducted in 2009 at the Centre for a Liveable Future within the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health on food security on the communities in the United States (Haering & Seyd, 2009), focused more on household food security trends in cities unlike that of specific neighbourhoods. This might have minimum relevancy because of the difference in environment and people life styles. There is not much literature on community based food security available. Thus, the assessment of Zimbabwe is out of a desire for further understanding of food insecurity on a community and household level, rather than a generalized outlook on the whole nation.

1.8 Limitations of the study

Given that information and statistics on Zimbabwe are presented by various organizations, which present, configure and analyse the data according to their possible political allegiance, their perspective, the time of their research and their area of study, I see the necessity of collecting and reviewing as many of the various statistics on food insecurity as possible in order to gain a comprehensible overview and evaluation of all the various statistics for Zimbabwe. However it is not possible to gain a 100% accurate statistical overview. In addition to governmental initiatives and reports, the growing influence of humanitarian pressure groups has also had an impact on the way the economic meltdown in Zimbabwe is reported and understood by analysts and researchers. Although the topic is examined over a wide spectrum of time, it may exclude some of the history that has led to the political instability within the country.

Another limitation, or risk, with qualitative description will be that of the misinterpretation of the data. Since the research is informed by both an historical and a current perspective, the possibility of distortion arises, as the knowledge and understanding of the researcher may not be

totally accurate and thus the analysis of facts from the perspective of Zimbabwe's past may be either too harsh or too lenient, or may be a simplistic one.

1.9Chapter summary

This thesis is outlined in four inter-related chapters. The introductory chapter analysed at the significance of agriculture in Zimbabwe as well as the Land Acquisition act in the country, and the main causes that have resulted in both acute and chronic hunger in some parts of the country. Chapter 2 gives a description of the definitions of food security and contextualising them into the Zimbabwe situation. Chapter 3 discusses results in the form of debate with the literature on food insecurity, droughts and climate change. The final chapter concludes the debate by assessing the impact of food insecurity as well as giving suggestions that can help alleviate the impact.

Chapter II: Defining food insecurity in Zimbabwe

2.0 Introduction

Although food security is a basic human right that is a vital part of life, starvation has become one of the main causes of death in developing countries. In Africa alone, it kills on average more people than those dying of malaria, AIDS and tuberculosis combined (Byron *et al.*, 2008). In Africa the ratio of malnutrition sufferers is 1:3, in comparison to the 1:8 ratio of the people suffering from malnutrition worldwide (FAO, 2008). To understand fully the magnitude of the scale of hunger and malnutrition it is essential to understand the nature of food security and how it is determined and measured, since the term has various connotations and there have been many attempts to define it both in policy making and in research.

2.1 Defining food security

The notion of food security came about in the early 1970s following a global food crisis. The main issues at the time were those of food availability and the fluctuations in the prices of basic foods at both local and multilateral levels (United Nations, 1975). The crisis eventually led to the 1974 World Food Conference (WFC) that brought about new legal frameworks drawn up by the UN to both encourage food security in, and to provide information on, food security in the countries participating in the conference. As a result of this crisis, research was conducted on hunger, famine and food crises. This research brought to the surface the extent of the vulnerability to various threats of persons who were food insecure (ibid). In addition, the green revolution at the time was expected to effectively counter the food problem, help eliminate poverty, and drastically lower levels of malnutrition. However, the demands for such information by the countries present at the 1974 WFC, and their support for the idea of developing food security in their countries was low and at that time the desired results were not fully recognized in terms of the significant outcomes expected. The definition of food security, as agreed at the WFC in 1974:

“The availability at all times of adequate world food supplies of basic foodstuffs to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption and to offset fluctuations in production and prices.” (UN report, 1975).

In 1983 the Food and Agriculture Organization expanded the definition of food security to include a balance between the supply and demand to the people affected with the purpose of ensuring that all individuals have physical and economic access to their basic food requirements (FAO Director General's report, 1983). The World Bank report of 1986 focused on the changing aspects of food insecurity. The report consolidated the issues of poverty, insufficient income, and ephemeral food security due to political and ethnic conflict, natural disasters, and economic collapse. The definition was thus expanded to include the attainment of a healthy life by means of access to sufficient food by all people at all times (World Bank, 1986). By the 1990s the issue of food insecurity came to be accepted and acknowledged at national and international levels. Thus to be considered sufficient, adequate access to food came to be seen as essential to countering widespread problems of malnutrition.

Cultural and social food preferences were taken into consideration and included in the determination of the nutritional content of food. As such, nutritional content became a feature of both food and Human Security (HS), as was shown in chapter one. However, the concept of HS did not constitute a distinct framework for action, being considered a construct of social security, which included health and nutrition (UNDP, 1994). In 1996 food insecurity was further defined by the World Food Summit (WFS) as “a circumstance present with the absence of physical, economic and social access to adequate food that meets dietary requirements for a healthy life” (World Food Summit, 1996). Thus, as can be seen from the history of the process of developing a comprehensive definition, food security in itself is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. It also carries with it risks and uncertainty, as will be illustrated in the case of Zimbabwe.

The 1996 WFS definition of food security is appropriate for and applicable to, the Zimbabwe situation since it exemplifies certain prerequisites for food security: availability, access and utilisation of food. Moser, a researcher of food security strategies, mentions an added dimension to food security, that of the vulnerability of people and communities in this context, referring to “insecurity in the well-being of individuals, households or communities in the face of a changing environment,” (Moser, 1998, p 3). This particular aspect highlights the food security problems in Zimbabwe that are of the greatest concern. A distinction needs to be made between the impact of food insecurity on people in urban and on those in rural areas. In urban areas, the vulnerability of people to food insecurity and malnutrition is exacerbated due to loss of jobs,

desperate living and housing conditions, and the continuing escalation of prices (ibid), while in rural areas the problem is exacerbated by insufficient or no access to food due to its unavailability. However, for the purposes of this thesis the definition of food security used will be that of Mwaniki (2001) mentioned in chapter one and Moser (1998), as they are more apt for the situation in Zimbabwe.

2.1.1 Food availability

Food availability indicates the physical presence of adequate food. It can also refer to the availability of food in the international arena, distributed through trading systems such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) or as food aid by NGOs, whose ongoing supply is undermined by various constraints. Ultimately, sustainable access to sufficient food is dependent on a country's effective agricultural production, which is influenced by a number of other factors.

The availability of food is influenced by the domestic capacity and level of production of agriculture, trade in food, food aid, and food prices within the country. Under normal circumstances domestic production can meet a country's food demands (Sen, 1981). In Zimbabwe the staple food is mainly cereals, maize in particular. The production of maize in the communal areas showed remarkable progress since independence (Friis-Hansen, 1995), also the adoption of maize hybrids which increased yields (Mashingaidze & Mataruka, 1992). In addition, the yield for maize production also increased because there was a total increase of about 25% of the cultivated area in the country (Rohrbach, 1989:16). However, an increase in the population and continuous dry spells made the communal lands vulnerable. In 1980 the population was over 7 million and by 2003 it had increased to over 13 million (FAOstat, 1980-2003). This has had an effect on food production in terms of the overall gradual decline of cereal production without there being an increase in production to cater for the growth in the population. The food reserves, by this time, had already been dried up and the population was not resilient enough to overcome such challenges. Up until the late 1990s trade in cereals continued into the following year due to the fact that there was at the time a net surplus. In the period between 1990 and 2000 Zimbabwe exported cereals to Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa and Zambia in accordance with which country had the highest demand (Thompson,

1999). However, with low production and low yields due to failed harvests, this export market has declined drastically. Thus the following decade, from 2000 to 2010, saw Zimbabwe failing to feed its local population, let alone export surplus cereals.

The record hyper-inflation from 2004 to about 2009 and the economic collapse within the country brought most of the services to a standstill. The supply chain of goods and services was disrupted, adversely affecting trade in foreign currency. According to the Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM, 2010), the national production of cereals in Zimbabwe is at 428 000 tonnes, while the overall requirement would be at 2.1 million. Nevertheless, commercial traders have been able to close the gap thanks to the liberalisation of the local grain market (Tekere, 2001).

Food aid will continue to be a necessity in Zimbabwe until the harvests again become consistent. The recurrent droughts, high unemployment (at 80%) and the prevalence of HIV/AIDS (at 13.7%) have had a highly negative impact on food security (WFP, 2011). The crisis continues to call for humanitarian assistance. According to CFSAM an estimated 1.68 million people needed food aid for the 2010-2011 consumption year (CFSAM, 2010). International agencies, such as WFP and Save the Children have played a major role in providing food to Zimbabwe for the vulnerable people who are the most food insecure.

From independence up until 1993, the retail prices of cereals were controlled in the form of subsidies, those for maize in particular (Murwira, *et al.*, 2000). With the introduction of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) the subsidies were removed so as to make way for the creation of market set prices. During the 1980s the price of maize was usually maintained at around US\$150 per ton so that, in inverse relation to hyper-inflation, the rate was decreasing in cost (Webb, 1998). However, in the 1990s the price increased to almost US\$200 per ton due to an increase in inflation. There was a price spike in 1992 due to the drought of that year and the failure of harvests decreasing the yield to less than US\$100 per ton, and increasing to over US\$250 per ton by 1993 (*ibid*). In recent years the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) has controlled the grain prices, although in Zimbabwe the grain has been unavailable for the most part. At the onset of the crisis the prices set by the GMB for maize were at Z\$12.5 a kilogram which fell to as low as US\$9 in 2007/8 with the depreciation of the Zimbabwean dollar at the

time. Since then the GMB has increased grain prices to the USD equivalent as from late 2003 (GOZ 2005).

2.1.2 Food Access

Accessibility to food is the ability of people within a country or region to have the means to obtain access to food (ZimVAC, 2002:2). It requires both the economic and physical access to food. Economic access describes food affordability. For an adequate diet food should be affordable without compromising on any other basic needs, such as school fees, medicines or rent (ibid). Substantial access describes food availability to all, including the physically vulnerable, such as children, the sick, disabled people or the elderly. This kind of accessibility can be achieved through the strength of the purchasing power of a region's currency and the actual availability of sufficient food (Anderson & Woodrow, 1993:135). In fact, it has been found that chronic malnutrition is caused by the total unavailability of food to those who need it the most, not to a lack of food (Ilfie, 1990). In this context it should be noted that the world population has exceeded its agricultural production. Thus, according to Kline (1998) an academic researcher on Africa and the West, the distribution of food is determined by economic and political influences in order for it to reach the intended areas.

At the household level, domestic agricultural production influences and impacts heavily on the access to food (Hicks, 1993). The purchasing power of households is of importance to their survival as they would also be the main consumers of the staple crop. This situation is observed in some parts of the country, where the selling of crops has been at a very low level, such as in the dry lands of Chivi (Scoones *et al.*, 1996). In such situations, if the level of local crop production is low, individual households are forced to purchase food from other sources to meet their requirements. Mwaniki, a researcher on Human Security, argues that accessibility to food includes the 'economic means to the infrastructure available to access it' (Mwaniki, 2001). Yet the GMB is caught between a rock and a hard place as it is faced with the challenge of diverting supplies to the parallel market, or to smuggling them out of the country for profit and to obtain foreign currency.

About 60% of the nation is affected by the various problems which arise from poverty. In this context location is a determinant of food access, those people living in the dry-lands and rural areas being the most affected (Thompson, 1999).

Hyperinflation has affected a significant proportion of the urban population as it has resulted in wide spread unemployment, which in turn has affected other areas of life, such as the payment of rent, of school fees, and the purchasing of foodstuffs (FAO, 2004). Due to food and other shortages in the country from 2001-2009, access to food was very difficult for a large section of the Zimbabwean population, for instance in communal lands, poverty was linked to the unavailability of land and weather-related vulnerability (Anderson & Woodrow, 1993). It is obviously more difficult for uneducated and landless people to have access to agricultural options other than subsistence farming, especially without assets such as poultry, cattle, goats etc (Poulton *et al.*, 2002). Poor health due to HIV/AIDS, and old age, makes matters worse for the poor, as it becomes more difficult for this group of people to work and to have even the most basic purchasing power to access food, let alone produce it themselves.

2.1.3 Food utilisation

Food must satisfy dietary needs for it to be termed adequate for utilization, considering the individual's age, living conditions, health, occupation and gender (World food Summit, 1996). For instance, food is not adequate for children if it does not contain the nutrients necessary for their physical and mental development. For food utilization to be effective, it should be harmless for human consumption and should also be culturally acceptable (*ibid*). For example, food aid that is religious or cultural taboo for the recipients would not be culturally acceptable. The unavailability and access of food over the past decade have contributed significantly to malnutrition and the general decline in health of the population of Zimbabwe, especially amongst children (GOZ & UNICEF, 2006). However, this decline could also be attributable to poor sanitation, poor childcare practices, and disease. Food utilisation involves the government being able to efficiently maximize the benefits of either home-grown food or food aid to the people.

At independence the Zimbabwean government improved the health services and extended these services into the communal lands (GOZ, 2006). Nevertheless, the increase in HIV/AIDS, and budget cuts in the early 1990s, greatly undermined the health sector's progress and upgrading.

This trend was accelerated by the ‘brain drain’ of medical personnel in search of better economic conditions. As a result, by 2003 there was a shortage of suitably qualified medical staff, with about 50% of the positions remaining unfilled (Potts, 2006). In addition the quality and quantity of vaccinations and vaccination programmes is poor, and because there are not enough finances to cater effectively for immunization programmes (WHO/FAO, 2002). Nonetheless, as of 2009 the situation has improved with the introduction of dollarization and healthcare is continually improving to date.

2.2 Rights to food under international humanitarian law and human rights law

International law recognizes the right to food as a human right for all people to feed themselves in dignity, either by purchasing power or producing it. Article 25 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights acknowledged the right to food as part of the right to a sufficient and healthy standard of living. The right to food is also consecrated in article 11 of the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. It is also enshrined in regional instruments such as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa and also on other international instruments such as article 24 (2)(c) and Article 27 (3) on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and in numerous national constitutions (GOZ/UNICEF, 2006).

For production to transpire there is need to have access to land, seeds, water and other resources. As such to acquire these one would require capital and access to the market. States therefore need to provide enabling environments for people to be productive and obtain enough food for themselves and their families. The right to food also requires access to food and to obtain that one needs sufficient purchasing power. Thus, States need to ensure that income policies or social safety nets are adequate to establish the right to adequate food for the citizens. The special United Nations Rapporteur on human rights, states that the right to food is:

“The right to have regular, permanent and unrestricted access, either directly or by means of financial purchases, to quantitatively and qualitatively adequate and sufficient food corresponding to the cultural traditions of the people to which the consumer belongs, and which ensure a physical.”

For the general Comment 12 of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) the right to food is:

“The right to adequate food is realized when every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, has physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement.”

2.3 Rural food security

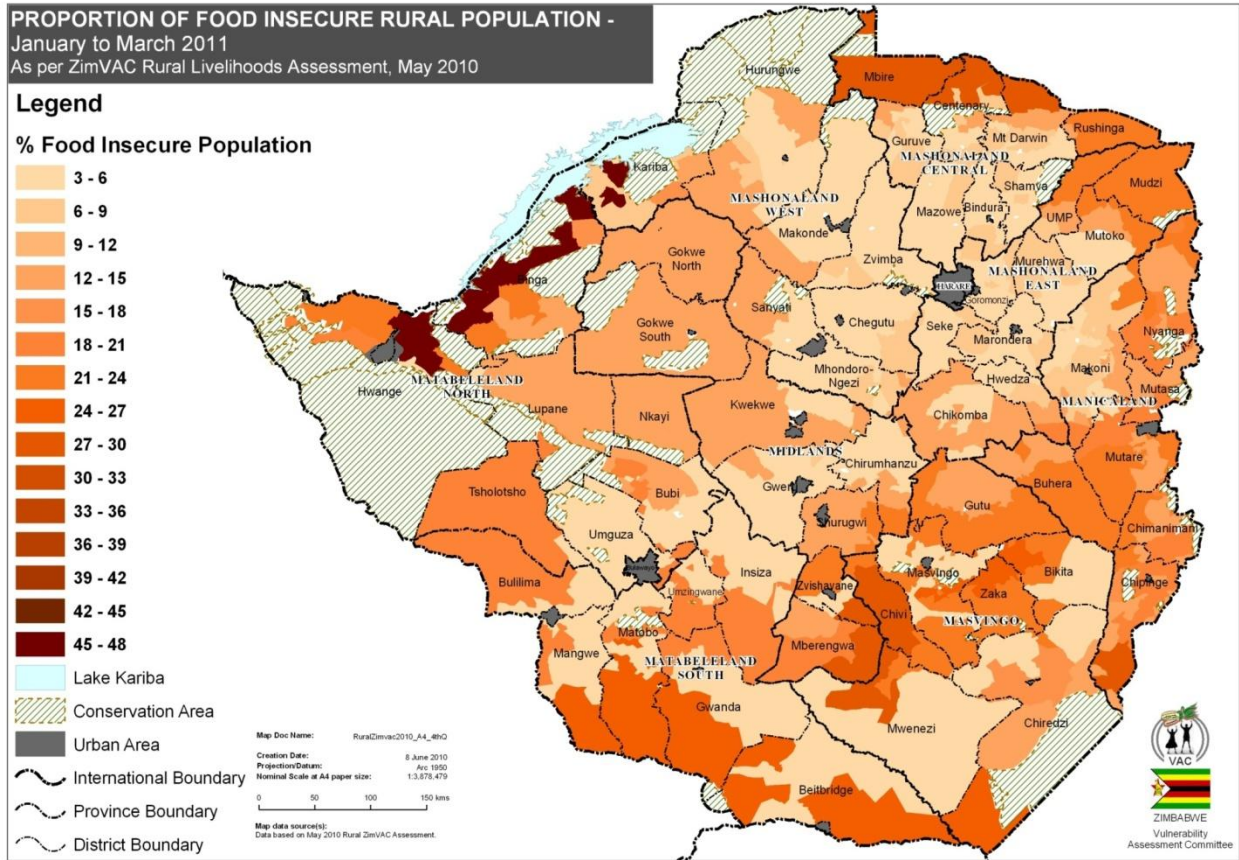
The rural population of Zimbabwe represents about 1.2 million households in the communal lands (CSO, 2009). These areas are affected by two main aspects of food insecurity. The first is that the low yields in crop production which is not sufficient to feed an individual household, and the second is the low purchasing power per capita as a result of low income as well as the lack of availability and access to food at the local markets (Sachs *et al.*, 2004). Thus households in these areas are particularly vulnerable as they are affected by both the economic and environmental factors, such as droughts, that influence and cause food insecurity (Nef, 1995).

Food insecurity predominates in the semi-arid to arid parts of the country, those areas in the natural regions IV and V (Auret, 1990:69). It is to these areas that most of the food aid is channelled. The criteria for the distribution of food aid are also determined by the most vulnerable persons, such as orphans, the elderly, the widowed, single parents, to mention a few. Although these groups are found in both rural and urban areas, those located in the rural areas are the most affected (Government of Zimbabwe, 2002). Nevertheless, the greater proportion of the total number of households in Zimbabwe is affected by the generally low yield and the inconsistency in the level of food and cash crop output (USAID, 1994). These factors influencing food security are in turn influenced by the degradation of the land, poor technology and socio-economic factors (Auret, 1990). Vulnerability in terms of food and income in rural areas is influenced by low precipitation in these areas, with an average of between 450 mm-500mm per year, especially in natural regions four and five, where most of the communal lands are located (Rukuni, 2006). These areas are also characterized by poor soil fertility and sporadic droughts. These circumstances alone would render crop productivity a precarious exercise (ibid). In addition the households in these areas are not equipped with sufficient resources to

encourage productivity, there is little variety of crops, and inadequate land and lack of finances which make it impossible for subsistence farmers to purchase agricultural essentials such as fertilizers.

In the rural areas of Zimbabwe low yield is as a result of very low agricultural inputs. Most households do not have the available technology to improve their productivity, as these resources are expensive and out of their reach (Carney, 1998). Due to the sporadic and unpredictable rainy seasons people in these regions cannot with any certainty or consistency earn sufficient income for strong buying power. All of these factors translate into high levels of food insecurity as well as income insecurity. It is not surprising that the levels of malnutrition are relatively high in these areas. In communal areas such as Binga, and most areas in Matabeleland, malnutrition is as high as 30-40% (Rukuni & Jayne, 1995). This puts food insecurity in these areas at a critical level and one that can now be described as chronic.

The map below shows the rural population that is most food insecure in their relative proportions.



Food Insecure Population January to March – 2011 (Source ZimVAC)

2.4 Urban Food security

In the urban areas in Zimbabwe, the peri-urban and high density areas are the most vulnerable when it comes to food insecurity. According to the ZimVAC (Zimbabwe Vulnerable Assessment Committee) of 2011 the prevalence of food insecurity was estimated to be about 13% in 2011 in the low-income urban communities. According to the Consumer Council of Zimbabwe (CCZ) about 1% of households did not consume foods which could be considered to constitute a balanced diet, while another 10% were consuming food constituting a poor diet. According to the Herald (17 July 2011), the economic situation within the country has not shown a significant change, urban food security has not shifted from what it was before 2011. The country's urban sector has been affected by various governmental initiatives such as the ESAP in the early 1990s, the implementation of the FTLRP and operation Murambatsvina (Operation Restore Order) (Biti, 2009). These programmes have resulted in the vulnerability of the

population of Zimbabwe, regardless of the fact that at the time the government intentions were worthy (Gandure & Morongwe, 2006). However, this was according to some, but for most it was a devastating and blatant abuse of basic human rights.

Urbanization under the colonial government in Zimbabwe played a significant role in the configuration of the country's cities today. Africans were prohibited from living in the urban centres if they were not employed as house aides or working in the streets, and this resulted in stunted and distorted urban growth (Rukuni, 2006). The communal lands and smaller urban populations thus had very limited services due to the regulations (Hammar, 2007). Poverty in the pre-independence period in the urban settlements was unheard of, especially when it came to food security. The 1965 Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) had little effect on Zimbabwe's urban situation at the time, even with the sanctions subsequently imposed, because the Smith government invested in industries to promote the creation of employment (Curtin, 1968). However, with the liberation war, the situation shifted in the 1970s as people migrated from the rural areas, where the war was raging, to the towns that were considered to be safe. This increase in urban population due to the rural-urban migration rapidly increased poverty levels, as the industry employment was not sufficient to absorb the incoming population. The gaining of independence in 1980 saw the African population migrating to the urban areas (Patel, 1984). Those working in towns would then remit food and money to their families in rural areas. However, this presented a challenge to the government as it had then to cater for the rapidly increasing urban population. There was an increase and upgrading of education of health facilities, and infrastructure for the citizens post-independence. By 1991 the government had achieved an adult literacy rate of 86%, a GDP of 7% per year, and had also registered a net primary school registration of pupils of 82% (Malaba, 2006).

However, in spite of these improvements, food security was adversely affected by the recurring droughts as stock feeds were in storage and this in turn adversely affected the earnings from agriculture to promote foreign currency. The urban sector began to fall apart with diminished employment and a shortage of housing and basic services such as water (Mbetu, 1993). This forced the government to resort to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for financial assistance to enable it to encourage growth and investment, and resulted in the introduction of the ESAP in 1991 (Biti, 2009). ESAP was intended to be the solution to the debt

crisis of the country by implementing trade liberalization, domestic deregulation and encouraging investment; these monetary policies were designed to decrease government expenditure (Chisvo, 2000). However, ESAP was not successful in meeting the intended targets and in fact contributed to the onset of the downward spiralling trajectory of the economy. Thus the results of ESAP were the total opposite of what had been expected, with the closing down of industries, retrenchment, increases in the prices of goods and services, and a reduction in per capita income (Scoones, *et al.*, 1996). For those living in urban areas, maintaining their existing standard of living became a challenge which adversely affected the rural population.

By 2000, with the introduction of the FTLRP, the country experienced an economic meltdown characterized by a GDP reduced by over 40% in a period of 6 years (Zimbabwe/UNICEF, 2006). As inflation increased, the external debt further increased to US\$4.8 billion in 2007 (Giplin, 2008). With the decrease in food security life expectancy, at 61 years in 1990, decreased to 36 years by 2008 (UN population Fund, 2007). This affected the employment levels and decreased the average income and overall per capita livelihood in the country. The FTLRP had a dramatic effect on the urban population, and, according to the Human Poverty Index (HPI), the increase in poverty levels in urban areas between 1995 and 2003 was greater than that of the rural areas (GOZ, 2006:20). Thus households in the urban areas came to be more vulnerable to poverty at a rate of 65% in comparison to rural households, with a 42% vulnerability rate.

Diaspora remittances play a major role in supporting food needs and alleviating poverty (CHS, 2009). Overall, it is estimated that a large number of Zimbabweans are abroad in search of better living conditions, estimates range from 350 000 (CSO, 2009) to 3 million. The Community and Household Surveillance (CHS) monitoring system, reported about 16 percent of households had at least one member who is currently in the Diaspora (CHS, 2009). This increased to 20 percent in October 2009 and to 23 percent by March 2010 (*ibid*). The increases were mostly found amongst households in Mashonaland, Masvingo and Mutare the arid to semi-arid regions of the country.

2.5 Extent of food insecurity

According to the May 2010 Assessment Report of ZimVAC, 1.29 million of the rural population was estimated to be facing food insecurity by March 2011 (ZimVAC, 2010). The

report stated that the total cereal prerogative gap was at 98 000 tonnes. This estimate was based on 80 percent of all food crop production estimated for household food consumption with about 80 percent of all potential income from livestock, remittances, casual labor, pensions, and formal employment and from other sources that would be converted in food entitlements (ibid). The Mission envisaged that the onset of the lean season in the 2010/2011 consumption year to be similar to the year before (ibid). The National Nutrition Survey of January 2010 established that 12 percent of rural population with poor food utilization and another 21 percent with intermediate food consumption. Thus, indicating that one-third of the rural households were experiencing food insecurity. As such predictions were given for the 2011 planting season to be as lean and dry as that of the previous year 2010 as shown in the table below.

Based on the ZimVAC report (May 2010), most rural areas based in the agro-regions V and VI as indicated in the map above, were already experiencing high levels of food insecurity in May-June 2010.

2.6 Operation Murambatsvina

Operation Murambatsvina (OM) was a programme implemented by the government in 2005, its purpose being “to enforce urban by-laws, stop illegal activities and ensure orderly urbanization” (Mugara, 2007). In fact it involved the destruction of informal businesses such as vending stalls and flea-markets in undesignated areas, as well as the destruction of backyard houses in the high density urban areas (ibid). Critics of the operation claim that the process was instigated so as to disband and disunite a disaffected and agitated urban population that was fed up with the lack of adequate service delivery, and which the government feared could encourage a revolution (International Crisis Group, 2005). This programme cost many people their livelihoods, as the homes and businesses that had become their sources of income were destroyed (Tekere, 2001). Others lost their source of income as they had to leave their backyard homes, thus making it difficult, if not impossible, to go to work in another location. Operation Garikayi (OG) was meant to be an initiative to rebuild the lives of the people affected by OM. Unfortunately, it did very little to cater for those who had been affected by OM because the government had very limited capacity in terms of resources to rebuild and re-settle all the displaced persons or to

ensure compensation (International Crisis Group, 2005). OM succeeded in making the already urban poor even poorer. The urban populace of Zimbabwe has been significantly negatively affected by the combined impact of the economic meltdown, ESAP, OM and FTLRP.

One of the purposes of Murambatsvina, according to government, was to discourage illegal street vendors (Mugara, 2007). However, informal trading is a means of income for some families, besides being a source of affordable snacks for lunch. When the government destroyed these small markets it destroyed a source of livelihood for some people. Although it's stated intention was to 'clean-up the nation', OM had a negative effect on the food security of a significant number of households (ibid). Both purchasing power and homes were forcibly taken from some citizens, leaving them without options in terms of what to do to find alternatives to their lost businesses and homes. All these factors impacted on the stress levels of those affected, thus exacerbating malnutrition amongst large numbers of Zimbabwean citizens.

2.7 The impact of AIDS

According to UNAIDS, about 2.3 million Zimbabweans were living with HIV/AIDS in 2000, of which 2 million were adults aged between 15 and 49 (UNAIDS, 2001). Those most affected were women, who at the time constituted about 1.2 million. Zimbabwe as a nation has the third highest mortality rate of HIV/AIDS worldwide and its health indicators have deteriorated at a disturbing rate. In 2008, according to the WHO, life expectancy at birth dropped to 44 years. Up until 2006, there was a steady decline in overall under-five mortality rates, however, in 2009 live births reached 94 deaths per 1000 live births (*Central Statistical Office, Multiple Indicator Monitoring Survey (MIMS) Report 2009*). Amongst the highest in the world is the maternal mortality rate which is at 1,100 per 100,000 live births. Fortunately, through HIV awareness and behavioural change campaigns, progress has been made resulting in the decline of the prevalence rate from 18.1 to 13.7 percent in 2009 (*Ministry of Health and Child Welfare*). According to the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare about 1.1 million Zimbabweans were living with HIV, while 1,090 people were dying weekly of AIDS related illness. Nonetheless, of the people living with HIV, less than 50 percent have access to the Anti Retroviral Therapy (ART) (Ministry of Health and Child Welfare, 2010).

As a result of the HIV pandemic there has been an increase in the number of households that are vulnerable to hunger and poverty. This has made a great dent and impact on the livelihood of the population of Zimbabwe especially the rural areas. Productivity and earning power decrease while health related expenses continue to rise. Due to death household lose livelihood from the main bread winners and caregivers in families, leaving children and the elderly to presume the role of sole provider. In 2009 about 77 percent of AIDS related deaths (Zimbabwe National HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan 2006–2010), resulted in approximately 37 percent of all children in Zimbabwe becoming orphans and vulnerable (OVC) (Central Statistical Office, Zimbabwe Multiple Indicator Monitoring Survey (MIMS) 2009). While the extended family provides support to this children a great number are still at the risk of leaving school and malnutrition (ibid).

It is estimated that about 9.6% of the labour force have died due to AIDS related infections (FAO, 2002). It is evident that HIV/AIDS has had an immense impact on agricultural productivity. This effect is due to the fact that the demand for food continues to increase, at the same time as there is a relative decline in the work force. At the household level there are increased costs as individuals become sick, resulting in a growing demand for special diets, the purchasing of medication, hospital bills, and transportation costs, among other expenses (Ziervogel, *et al.*, 2008). As a result household food security is at risk as an already drastically reduced income has to be spent on items and services other than food.

HIV/AIDS has a high prevalence amongst the most productive persons in the economy as this sector also falls into the most sexually active age group (UNAIDS, 2001). Since the virus is spread mainly through sexual contact it threatens household heads and creates a high risk of leaving children orphaned, this group being one of the groups most vulnerable to food insecurity as they are often orphaned as young children. This in turn affects the quality and quantity of available labour, as children are forced into the fields to work but do not possess the stamina of an adult (Sachs, *et al.*, 2004). They would also have to drop out of the education system, depleting the supply of skilled people in the country. In this dire situation in Zimbabwe, those affected resort to strategies to cope and survive in-order to have access to food with good nutrition, they may sell their assets to gain buying power, use child labour as house help or as gardeners, resorting to prostitution as a means to cope when households become child headed,

and also leaving their homes to live in squatter camps where the rentals are much lower (ibid). Unfortunately, in this context the former communal support provided by extended relatives and the community is disintegrating. Traditional family ties have been increasingly under pressure and these issues exist at both a national and an individual level.

2.8 Chapter summary

In summary, food security is a multi-faceted issue that is influenced and caused by multiple social, political, economic, and technical variables, and thus any attempt to simplify the causes of food insecurity would not contribute to a sustainable solution to the problem. This chapter has explored the various definitions of food security and insecurity and applied them to the Zimbabwean situation, in the process by differentiating between the impact of food insecurity in urban and rural areas. In the context of urbanisation, it further attempted to discuss the impact of governmental policies, OM on productivity and access to healthy nutritional sustenance for the citizens of Zimbabwe. The next chapter will discuss the political, environmental and economic influences that have affected food security within Zimbabwe. It will attempt to establish the links between these factors and show in what particular way they are linked to one another.

Chapter III: Debate of the causes of food insecurity in Zimbabwe

3.0 Introduction

This chapter will present a detailed discussion of the reasons for food insecurity in Zimbabwe which were set out in the previous chapter. It will examine the debate around the various causes of food insecurity and try to establish whether the primary causes can be said to be political (land reform), economic (poverty), environmental (sporadic droughts), or whether a combination of all three has resulted in the country becoming a humanitarian disaster.

3.1 The political factors

Various reasons have been given for the escalating food insecurity within Zimbabwe, the implementation of the FTLRP in 2000 being one of them. At the time the tensions amongst Zimbabweans had already started to surface, exacerbated by certain economic factors, as will be discussed later in the chapter. The recommencement of the FTLRP in October of 1998 resulted in the further resettlement of another 4 697 families on 144 991 hectares of arable land (Mugabe, 2001). It was at this point that things began turning sour in terms of negative attitudes towards the ZANU-PF government. The onset was the seizing of white owned farms and redistributing them amongst the indigenous black population. During the period of the implementation of the programme a total of 3 900 whites fled from the country by 2001 (Sachikonye, 2003). However the programme did not yield the expected increase in productivity, possibly due to the lack of resources in the form of finances and the agricultural equipment and farming skills required to engage in productive agriculture (Gandure & Morongwe, 2006).

Initially, in 1990, the Government of Zimbabwe (GOZ) formulated the National Land Policy with the intention of curbing the land distribution imbalances. This policy was intended to boost agricultural development and encourage maximum use of all the land in Zimbabwe (Friis-Hansen, 1995:228). The targets of land to be distributed were set in 1980 at a period of five years by which time it was planned to have resettled 18 000 families onto 1.5million hectares in the region (Sachikonye, 2003). However, with the growing confidence of the government in its power, this target was reviewed in 1982 and ratcheted to resettle 162 000 families onto 9 million hectares (ibid). This target presented a considerable challenge for the government as there was

increased pressure in the communal areas due to increase in the population and also in livestock numbers; there was also the risk of reducing the positive impact in terms of agricultural productivity of large scale commercial farming. As such there was a need to maintain agricultural productivity by means of redistributing land to the small scale farmers rather than focusing only on the rural poor, or on those in the congested marginal lands (GOZ, 1985).

Nevertheless, agricultural production levels have remained low in Zimbabwe and the country has had to resort to importing food in order to fill the supply-demand gap. However, the resettlement programme did manage to improve the production levels in comparison to those of the reserves in the previous years (Gandure & Marongwe, 2006). Thus, as has already been noted, it would be remiss to assume that the FTLRP has not been beneficial to some sectors of Zimbabwean society (Scoones *et al.*, 2010). Scoones *et al.*, goes on further to claim that there are more successful stories than those presented by the press, reports that reveal the complexities of the reform programme in terms of context, intention and effects, and provide a more balanced perspective. These reports were collected via a survey done using 400 households in 16 different sites in the Masvingo province and that showed both the successes and failures of the programme (Scoones *et al.*, 2010). Nevertheless, it is still a fact that the FTLRP, although it holds hope for the future in terms of production by the indigenous people, rather than by 'settlers' (as defined by ZANU-PF), and for economic recovery, it can be held partly responsible for food insecurity from the very beginning of its implementation. The situation in Zimbabwe in the early 2000s in terms of poverty and malnutrition was dire as there was very little food filtering into the urban centres from the rural areas (GOZ, 2005). This placed the people in urban areas in a very vulnerable position, adding to the disastrous effects of the escalating macro-economic downswing, and necessitating the import of food and food aid whose source and supply was not always reliable due to the lack of foreign currency at the time (Brown, 2000).

Nonetheless, the pervasive notion that the land grabs were ill conceived and was instigated by the GOZ as an exit strategy to regain support from the people has remained strong. In 2003 the GOZ put forward a slogan claiming 'Land is the economy and the economy is land', supported the land invasions which soon spread across the whole country (GOZ, 2005). The citizens were experiencing hunger and poverty at levels never before experienced. The purpose of this slogan was to maintain productivity and alleviate pressure on the communal lands (Sachikonye, 2003).

However, in the process the government overlooked the short term effects of food insecurity as the commercial farms played a vital role in the provision of foreign currency within the country. Meanwhile Zimbabwe was being internationally, condemned, particularly by the Western countries, for the brutal ‘undemocratic’ manner in which the FTLRP was being implemented at the same time it was being applauded by other African states, particularly those that felt themselves to be marginalized by the Western bloc, and who seemed to admire an action being taken by a country that seemed to favour its indigenous population (Hammar, 2007). Critics of the of the programme are of the opinion that the timing should have raised a red flag, as the elections were to be undertaken later in the year for a party that now had evidence in the form of the results of the referendum of its dwindling popularity and saw the programme as an opening for them to regain their power. Regardless, the land question did have some legitimacy, whether it was a question of security, both food and political, although it held the potential for serving as a political platform for the power hungry and the greedy (FAO, 2004).

Over the years food insecurity manifested in the form of famines and has been thought by some analysts to be linked to, or the result of, non-democratic political systems. It is argued that, even though droughts and famines are sometimes experienced under democratic systems, the accountability of the ruling party to the electorate, and to various interest groups, makes the experience of the devastating effects of famines rare (The Guardian, 4 June, 2008). According to this argument, in ‘non-democratic’ states, especially those going through some kind of conflict, there has been a tendency on the part of the ruling party to use food as a political weapon in order to impose its will on the citizens. Some analysts argue that food security is achievable if the general market is the international community (ibid). However, the ability of powerful nations to impose trade embargoes and economic sanctions on less powerful, usually developing, countries often results in the increased vulnerability of these developing countries. Food can be used as a weapon at a local level, with the ruling parties using food aid as a means to satisfy their supporters and/or gain support from the electorate. This strategy is especially effective amongst rural communities where political leverage is most easily obtained. However, lack of economic and political stability causes a serious disruption of the food security of a nation as is seen in Zimbabwe.

3.2 The environmental factors

3.2.1 Introduction

The environment plays a significant role in food production in the world today. In sub-Saharan Africa about a third of the total population is dependent on produce gained from arable land (Earth Encyclopaedia accessed 7/11/2012). Given that about 60-80 % of the employment in sub-Saharan Africa is in the agricultural sector, the governments of the countries in the region should be investing in agriculture and establishing agricultural policies and practices suited to their particular environments (ibid) to enable the people of the country to adapt to the varying weather patterns and to the effects of climate change, thus reducing poverty. This strategy would enable most nations to feed their citizens regardless of climate change, particularly if it is accompanied by adequate information and support to assist vulnerable communities (SADC & UNEP, 2008).

Zimbabwean agriculture and forestry in the 1990s oscillated between 13% and 19% of the GDP (Shumba, 2001:1). These oscillations were mainly due to variations in annual rainfall patterns. However there was a drastic turn of events in agriculture after 2000, with a decline in the economy, and the effects on agriculture of the *Elnino* weather pattern (Southern Africa Today, 2010). Agriculture was the sector mainly affected, with a decrease in the growth of the GDP. The agricultural sector has had to confront the crisis years both locally (due to policy decisions influenced directly by, or related to, agriculture), and internationally (policies influenced by sectorial agricultural considerations) (Rukuni, 2006). Zimbabwe experienced periods of drought during the last decade, in 2000-01, 2004-5, 2007-8, 2009-10 and currently during the ongoing 2011-12 drought. These droughts have mainly affected the agricultural zones such as Matabeleland and Masvingo (Voice of America radio station, March, 2011). Lack of adequate rainfall has resulted in insufficient production of food to cover the deficit of the preceding year and to allow the land to recover. The droughts, coming at 4 year intervals, have proved to be a great blow to a country already experiencing major political shifts and going through hyperinflation in a situation of economic meltdown (Hammar, 2007).

The country had not recovered from the steep fall in production levels in 2000, combined with the effects of the FTLRP and the *Elnino* weather patterns when it was hit by another drought in 2004 (Climate prediction centre, 2005). In 2008, the country again experienced a drought and at the same time was hard hit by a cholera epidemic (USAID, 2009). This decreased productivity further and the increasing pollution of water bodies and water sources made a further negative

impact on an already fragile environment. Productivity was also affected by a decline in soil fertility. With the increased use of soil over time, together with insufficient time for it to recover, and low inputs in terms of fertilizer and seed, productivity was declining (Friis-Hansen, 1995). Hybrid seeds and fertilizer, which were introduced at that time as the agricultural input model, became unaffordable and unsustainable especially in combination with fluctuating prices and lack of governmental support (Mashingaidze & Mataruka, 1992). The Ministry of Agriculture controls most of the agricultural inputs, leaving only marketing to the private sector.

3.2.2 Climate variations

The environment has become a focus for those concerned with the survival of the planet. The effects of the environment on the survival and health of the people on the planet have become a global concern (UNEP, 2003). Thus, all the people living on the planet are accountable for the consequences of the deteriorating environment and weather patterns. As the global population increases, so does pollution and pressure on the available resources. In the 21st century it has been a challenge for the citizens of the world to manage and maintain an already stressed environment (ibid). The implementation of the land reform programmes illustrates the extent to which Zimbabwe is concerned with land and its use (UNDP, 2002). However, there were various elements that were overlooked by those who designed and implemented these programmes in terms of ensuring successful outcomes, of land redistribution for the ordinary farmers (SW Radio Africa, 29/03/2012). The ordinary rural folk were not aware at the time of the effects of climate change and the negative results for agricultural production if these factors were not taken into account by those farming the redistributed land (The Sunday Mail, Nov 2010:21-27).

According to Mr Zhakata, the Climate Change coordinator in the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Management, maize flourishes in temperatures of 26 degrees Celsius (The Sunday Mail, Nov 2010:21-27). However, in spite of his assertion, crop growth is being compromised as average temperatures have increased by up to 3 degrees Celsius. In 2010 he reported that in some areas the yield per hectare for maize had declined by up to one tonne due to the effects of climate change (ibid). Harare, Bulawayo and Beitbridge have recorded the highest temperatures in comparison to the rest of the country. In addition, Zimbabwe has begun

experiencing more hot days and fewer cold days, and the amount of precipitation it receives is deviating from the mean more frequently (Zimbabwe Met department, 2009).

The food systems and agricultural practices also have an effect on the environment as they produce greenhouse emissions that are reflected in the change in climate. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) attributes the shift in agricultural production and patterns to erosion, deforestation and other land degrading systems that alter the use of land and account for 29% of all global emissions (IPCC, 2010). This report indicates that it is not only the economy and political contestation, that cause food insecurity in nations, nor is it simply a matter of the availability, accessibility or affordability of food; it is also a matter of managing climate change and its implications for agricultural productivity (Pimental & Pimental, 1998).

A study backed by NASA established a connection between rising temperatures in the Indian Ocean and the decrease in rainfall in Eastern and Southern Africa (Hansen, *et al.*, 2004). The results indicated that this could exacerbate food insecurity in some of the famine and drought prone regions within the continent. The research found that most rain was falling over the ocean and about 15 of the rainy season declined since the 1980s (*ibid*). Various countries have been affected including Zimbabwe. Thus sustainability of the environment is an essential aspect of sustaining food security.

3.2.3 Deforestation

Over the last 30 years Africa has been experiencing accelerated deforestation mainly due to poverty and a lack of rural electrification (ZimVAC, 2006). In Zimbabwe about 45.3% or about 17,540,000 hectares is forested. However, there was a shift in the forest cover between the years 1990 and 2000; where Zimbabwe lost an average of 312,900 hectares of forest cover per year. The average amount of annual deforestation at the time was at a rate of 1.41% (Butler, 2006). In total, between 1990 and 2005, Zimbabwe lost 21.1% of its total forest cover, which is about 4,694,000 hectares (*ibid*). Measuring the total rate of habitat conversion (defined as change in forest area plus change in woodland area minus net plantation expansion) for the 1990-2005 intervals, Zimbabwe lost 36.8% of its forest and woodland habitat (*ibid*). The country has no primary forests left, and deforestation rates have increased by 16 percent since the end of the 1990s. The table below shows the rates of deforestation in Zimbabwe from 2000 to 2005. This

was the period when the downward trend of the economy was beginning to be felt by the population.

Table 2: Deforestation rates in Zimbabwe for 2000-2005

Annual change in forest cover	-313,000 ha
Annual deforestation rate	-1.7%
Change in defor. rate since '90s	16.4%
Total forest loss since 1990	4,694,000 ha
Total forest loss since 1990	-21.1%

Source: <http://rainforests.mongabay.com/20zimbabwe.htm>

In Zimbabwe the high rates of deforestation, and the consequent loss of bio-diversity, has resulted in an increase in the number of endangered species of both plants and animals (Shumba, 2001). This in turn has impacted food security as some of the natural cycles have been disrupted and this has led to the low production of other plants, and in some areas, the absence of production. There are some plant species that protect other plants as well as protecting animals. These have been lost, or become extinct, in the deforestation process, as well as some valuable medicines derived from these plants, medicine which could benefit the health sector (ibid). Not only does the environment shift and alter with the various changes, but the process of globalization impacts on the use of land and aids in the acceleration of the rate of change in land use (Woods, 1988).

Natural habitats have been cleared, in some instances for urban expansion, and in other areas as a result of the search for a power source (FAO, 2008). With the country's electricity now undergoing increased cuts, people are resorting to chopping down trees for firewood. Temperatures fall as low as 12 degrees Celsius and without an energy source this threatens the survival of many of the poor (Met Department, 2009). In desperation, people have resorted to logging which degrades the environment and adds to food insecurity, though affecting the rainfall patterns in the area. Unfortunately, the long term effects are considerable, as this

degradation of the land affects its future capability to produce crops: in comparison to the short term gains for people seeking fuel, the long term effects are immeasurable in terms of loss of arable land and the accompanying problems (Shumba, 2001). Programmes initiated in the early 1980s, such as the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE), were meant to rehabilitate and sustain the environment and protect the biodiversity especially in the rural communities and facilitate the effective management of natural resources (CAMPFIRE Association Zimbabwe). Laws were put in place to protect the environment and to ensure punishment for those who did not comply. However, with the deteriorating economic situation, it was and still is difficult for the government to implement these laws, particularly since the people have no alternative sources of fuel.

In recent years in Zimbabwe reforestation has been lagging behind deforestation more than 30 times (World Conservation Monitoring Centre, 2011). Soon after independence, about 3.7 million hectares, mainly for the use of agriculture, were being lost annually (The Herald, December, 2008). As a result, the rate of land degradation has accelerated as deforestation takes its toll on agriculture. With rapid urbanization due to the rural-urban migration there have been more demands made on the soil and the land, which has in turn increased deforestation (Blaikie, 1985). The traditional methods of land clearance that involved the slash and burn method saw the destruction of essential fuel-wood and building material (Shumba, 2001). Even the animal manure that was once ploughed back into the soil to enrich it is now being burnt for fuel. In Zimbabwe the situation has been made worse by the failure of the government to provide sufficient electricity to meet the demand of its citizens. This dearth of fuel has forced people to cut down firewood to meet their energy needs. This crisis situation has made it difficult for environmentalists to raise crucial environmental questions because no other alternative energy source now exists (Butler, 2006).

The breakdown of the Hwange power station has resulted in frequent blackouts throughout the country. The Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA) claims that the electricity supply has dropped by 750 megawatts, which is barely a third of the 2,200 megawatts of the peak demand (ZESA holdings, 2007). It is unfortunate, but the reality is that Zimbabwe now has deserts in the making due to the people's immediate need for fuel-wood as an energy source and

to compensate for the frequent power cuts. In spite of the unavailability of an energy source, people need to eat and to be healthy (Shumba, 2001). Deforestation has become of such grave concern in Zimbabwe that various debates have arisen to try to identify the major causes of the decrease in arable land and urbanization, and their impact on food security within the country (Brown, 2000). Meanwhile environmentalists continue to exert pressure on the government to take a stance and provide policies that protect the environment. This is important not only for the protection of nature and of the land, but also for the achievement of sustained food security and development (ibid).

3.2.4 Soil erosion

Soil erosion is the loosening of top soil particles by wind and flowing water (Murwira, *et al.*, 2000). The surface runoff water, and the effects of rainfall splash, is the primary causes of soil erosion in the prevailing climatic conditions in Zimbabwe, although their impact varies from region to region, depending on the amount of rainfall, soil properties, and soil structure (ibid). For instance, where the soil particles are closely joined together it is less likely that rain will greatly affect the soil structure, unlike where the soil particles are loosely packed together and with a low organic matter content (Kline, 1998). However, there is accelerated soil erosion, due in part to growing pressures on the land from human and livestock populations (Murwira, *et al.*, 2000). Unfortunately, about 4.2 million people or three-quarters of Zimbabwe's population live within such areas with high levels of soil erosion. As such, excessive soil erosion on arable land results in losses of 40 tons per hectare (18 tons/acre) per annum are not uncommon, is threatening the viability of farming and food productivity (Chisvo, 2000). Apart from erosion's direct effects on agriculture, reservoirs are filling rapidly with sediment, which threatens both domestic and irrigation water supplies.

While the creation/formation of soil is a slow process, the process of soil erosion is a rapid one, and the impact of soil erosion is manifested in reduced crop yields, with increased rates of siltation in reservoirs (Murwira, *et al.*, 2000). Rates of soil formation in Zimbabwe are very slow (400 kgs/ha/year), whereas rates of soil erosion are much greater; estimates for average soil losses on crop lands and grazing areas on commercial farms are 5 tonnes/ha/year and 3

tonnes/ha/year respectively; the equivalent average for communal lands are 50 and 75 tonnes/ha/year (Fowler & Rockstrom, 2001). However, these rates were determined by a survey carried out on a specific single soil type in one ecological region (ibid). Thus, the reliability of these findings across a country, with high variability, in terms of the erosive and stabilizing factors, is questionable.

The consequences of this erosion are seen in general declines in crop yields and very high rates of siltation of reservoirs, especially of the smaller dams used for rural water supplies (Carney, 1998). Small dams are likely to fill with sediments within 15 years of construction and even the larger irrigation schemes are being affected adversely by siltation problems. It has been also estimated that in some areas the cultivation of maize may only be possible for another 15 years before soils become too shallow for crops growth, sorghum cultivation may be impossible within 30 years (Iliffe, 1990).

Ultimately, this impacts on the food security of the nation as agricultural production levels are affected by the structure of the soil (ibid). Siltation is a major problem as it carries the risk of reducing the depth of the topsoil, thus inhibiting the growth of crops. FAO has posited soil erosion as a vital threat to food security (FAO, 2004). While the increase in world population demands an increase in food production, there is not enough land available for the levels of cultivation required to meet this demand. Thus, the threat to food security posed by the fact that an increasing area of farmland, globally and in Zimbabwe, has become vulnerable to erosion, desertification and salinisation is a grave one (Fowler & Rockstrom, 2001).

In an increasing number of areas on the globe, arable land is turning to desert or to salt at an ever-increasing rate, reducing the hope that the food demand of the increasing world population can be met (Butler, 2006). While in Zimbabwe there is new land available for increased production due to the land reform programmes, the existing land is being lost and degraded due to these environmental factors (Iliffe, 1990). According to FAO, 75bn tonnes of soil, the equivalent of nearly 10m hectares of arable land, are being lost to erosion, water logging and salination; while another 20m hectare is being abandoned by farmers because its soil quality has been degraded (FAO, 2008). The implications of this are shocking for the imminent global threat of major food shortages (FAO, 2008). While Zimbabweans find themselves in the

situation of having to battle to grow more food on more land, they also face the increased costs of fertilizer, fuel, and dwindling water supply due to the increased droughts, accompanied by the declining quality of the soil (Fowler & Rockstrom, 2001). Thus, the part soil erosion has played in low crop productivity due to the soil's loss of water, organic matter and soil nutrients cannot be underestimated.

3.3 The Economic factors

3.3.1 Poverty

Food insecurity is intimately connected to poverty. The political and economic crisis has brought rising poverty and social decline in its wake (Moser, 1998). The Poverty Assessment Study Survey II of 2003, revealed a considerable rise in poverty. Poverty increased from 25 percent to 63 percent between 1990 and 2003. As in most countries, rural households are recorded to have higher poverty rates in comparison to that of urban households (ZimVAC, 2005). Food shortages are on the rise due in part to the vulnerability of households as most agricultural incomes and production are insufficient to cater for their needs. Remittances and emergency aid have vital part of many households in Zimbabwe (CHS, 2009). Furthermore, the deterioration of national road and rail networks has distanced rural communities from markets reducing their access to food. As regards to the road networks about 40 percent are in meager condition, water and sanitation coverage and treatment is of grave concern, and railway cargo traffic has been reduced by about half since 1990 (ibid).

Recent figures in terms of life expectancy show that, with the global economic decline, life expectancy, which reached 61 years in 1990, fell to around 36 years in 2008 (United Nations Population Fund, 2007). The Human Development Index (HDI) dropped from 0.621 in 1985, to 0.468 in 2003 (UNICEF, 2004:69), which indicates a far-reaching decline in the living standards in many countries. With the purchasing power of the average Zimbabwean in 2005 falling to the same level as in 1953 (Clemens & Moss, 2005), substantially over-riding gains made over the previous 50 years, poverty has also increased: the country's Human Poverty Index (HPI) more than doubled, from 17% in 1990, to 40% by 2006 (Chimhowu, 2009).

Compiling a definition of poverty involves measuring the level of food consumption per capita as this tends to be affected by the issues of land ownership (Gandure & Morongwe, 2006). The issue of land ownership affects productivity if the citizens of a country do not have the space or capability to produce enough food for themselves and their families (Borsotti, 1993:3). Despite the land redistribution programme, there remains the increasing problem of sufficient resources for adequate harvests. As a sector of a population that is faced with an economy that is falling apart, the poor find they spend a higher percentage of their total income on food in comparison to financially viable people (Kugelman & Hathaway, 2011). Thus, any negative shift in the income of this group seriously affects their food security.

Within the sector of the poor, some groups are more affected than others by this situation, groups such as women and those living in rural areas (Malaba, 2006). In most economies, poverty has taken on the face of women, with the gender imbalances of power present in an increasing number of households. It is not surprising that an increase in the levels of poverty has adverse effects on women and their food security (ibid). In Zimbabwe there are many women and child headed households due to death, rejection or abandonment, amongst other reasons. It has been found that poverty is still more prevalent in rural Zimbabwe than it is in urban Zimbabwe (Waite, 2000). This is linked to the inaccessibility of most of the rural areas. However patterns of migration in the mid-2000s showed a rise in urban-rural migration when those in urban areas were unable to meet the rentals and failed to make ends meet, and so tended to migrate back to their home villages (Potts, 2008). Thus, with the steep rise of urban-rural migration in the mid-2000s, migrants to rural areas from urban areas found themselves without employment or under-employed. The incomes of the urban poor in Zimbabwe tend to be insufficient to cater for their food requirements (Stevens & Mugova, 2006). Despite such issues, the urban poverty and food insecurity discourse has remained marginal. Although, the introduction of multiple currencies in 2009 succeeded in stabilising the economy to some extent, poverty levels have remained high. The average income is not keeping pace with the continuing rise in prices of commodities and state services such as health and education. The poor find their children staying at home, having no more than one meal a day, and not attending school (ibid).

Poverty is a crucial factor when it comes to issues of food insecurity (USAID, 2009). It is difficult for an individual to go and work the field for his/her sustenance when s/he is hungry or sick. The conditions of poverty affect every aspect of a person's life, intensify suffering and make people vulnerable to disease (WHO/FAO, 2002). For example, the 2008 cholera epidemic that affected most of the high density areas in Zimbabwe such as Kuwadzana and Glen Norah crippled large neighbourhoods and resulted in the deaths of approximately 1000 people (ibid). The lack of clean water, meant to be provided by the government, led to the spreading of the epidemic to levels that it should not have reached. It was due to the work of organizations as UNICEF that Zimbabwe in the affected areas was provided with clean water in the areas where it was most needed. The cycle of poverty continues unabated in Zimbabwe and entraps those affected (UNCTAD, 2008a). For instance, the sickness and death of a parent ultimately means that their children will experience the same degree of suffering, if not worse, as, like their parents, they grow up in poverty, have their own children and the cycle continues. In Zimbabwe there is little or no income coming in to support the families caught in this cycle, and thus their level of buying power is very low and insufficient to meet their most basic needs (USAID, 2009). With the effects of the drought being combined with the decline in the economy the situation has worsened. Although the government has embarked on feeding programmes, such as the national Basic Commodity Supply Side Intervention (BACOSSI), evidence suggests that the programmes are not reaching those in most need, and that they the poor have not benefited from these schemes (Cornia, 2001).

Although government subsidies on some commodities did initially help to control prices of basic goods and services (Murwira, *et al.*, 2000), and to stabilise the cost of living of the people of Zimbabwe, the unavailability of goods in shops made this initiative pointless, as evidenced by the long queues for basic commodities from 2007 to early 2009. The introduction of multiple currencies in 2009 did very little to alleviate this situation, instead increasing the problems for the poor (Patel, 2007). At the onset, the suspension of the Zimbabwean dollar brought about many challenges to the communities in Zimbabwe as access to foreign currency was difficult even after a hard day's work especially for the rural folk. This had an effect on planning for the cropping season as they could not afford the agricultural inputs available (Stevens & Mugova, 2006). Furthermore, some of the seeds sold were not genuine as criminals sought to exploit the circumstances. Thus, while the rich got richer the poor became even poorer. The result was the

beginning of ‘hustling’ for exchange rates, with ordinary people operating like the “*bureau de change*” money exchange (this was before the introduction of dollarization). This created a strong black market that, in the prevailing informal atmosphere, came to control the economy whether the government was willing to accept it or not.

The failure of the Structural Adjustment Programmes, the global recession, and global food price hikes have all contributed to the worsening urban economic conditions in Zimbabwe. In this context it can be said that one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), that of halving the number of people living in poverty by 2015, may not be achievable within Southern Africa (United Nations Population Fund, 2007). Thus, we cannot expect any significant progress in alleviating food insecurity in the near future.

3.3.2 Inflation

Inflation is the yearly alteration in consumer prices in comparison to that of the previous year’s consumer prices (IMF, 2011). Inflation in Zimbabwe reached a record high level and was one of the prominent economic terms in the nation. It rose from a rate of 32% in 1998 to 133% at the end of 2004 and 246.7% in 2005, while the exchange rate fell from 24 Zimbabwean dollars per US dollar to 15,200 in the same time period (ibid). Various factors are claimed to have been the result of this, for instance Zimbabwe’s involvement in the 1998-2002 war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (ibid). This war was responsible for hundreds of millions of dollars from the economy being siphoned for this cause. Thus, failure to comply and meet budgetary goals led to the suspension of desired support from the IMF.

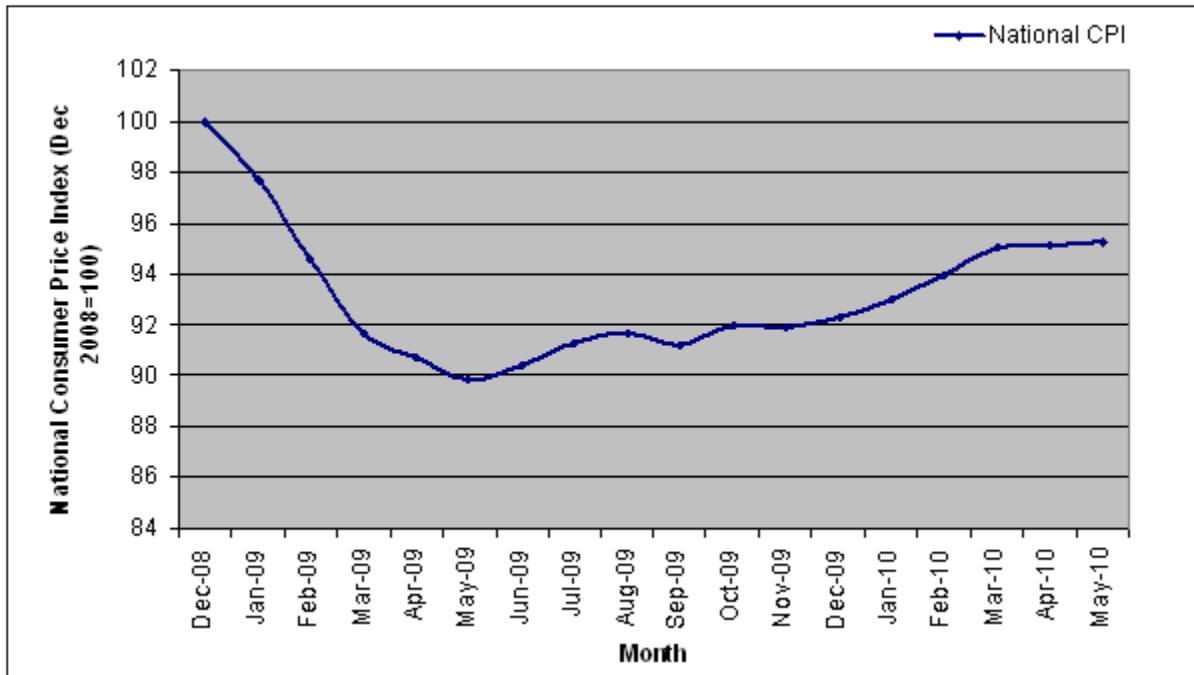
It became common knowledge in Zimbabwe that the prices of goods would change frequently, in some cases three times a day (Biti, 2009). In an attempt to curb inflation and to manage this out-of-control situation, the Reserve Bank governor, Gideon Gono, introduced bearer notes with expiry dates. However, this was not effective as the notes continued to be in use long after their expiry dates (Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, June 2008). Printing the notes was also an expense that the government could not sustain so they had to find other means of boosting the economy (Biti, 2009). In my opinion the printing of notes only increased the rate of inflation and was a pointless exercise because, although Zimbabweans wanted a stable local currency, this period in

Zimbabwean history only succeeded in encouraging and promoting corruption and created a society driven by the desperate need and desire for money to meet their daily requirements. The consequence can be that, once people have tasted 'the sweet life' of riches and wealth, it is not easy to go back to ordinary tastes, although this observation can be contested. Thus one can see that the purchasing power of the people was weakened and presented a great challenge to the government, particularly when it came to issues of food security (Clemens and Moss, 2005).

Inflation resulted in continuing price increases, which in turn continued to raise the cost of living in Zimbabwe (Jayne, *et al.*, 2006). The increase in the price of fuel led to the increase in transport costs, which in turn increased the prices of commodities (Patel, 2007). The unavailability of goods and services, combined with the high inflation, propelled the introduction of the Basic Commodity Supply Side Intervention (BACOSI) programme. However, its effectiveness was reduced by the unavailability of some of the commodities that were meant to be part of the hamper of basic necessities, as well as by corruption when some unscrupulous people took the BACOSI hampers and sold them at exorbitant black market prices (The Herald, 2 March 2011). One could argue that the situation may not have developed as it did had people resisted and stopped purchasing goods at these prices, thus forcing those selling on the black market to reduce their prices and sell them at the normal rates (*ibid*). However, the economic situation was very dire, and trying to be an honest person could result in the starvation of your family. Although it is easy to blame the government for the downfall of the economy, it could also be argued that the people of Zimbabwe bear some responsibility for the situation, by contributing to the growth of the black market, thus helping to exacerbate the problem (*ibid*). The more the people bought the commodities on the black market the more they were supporting the parallel market.

The shifts in the pricing of oil on the global arena also made significant impact on the pricing of foodstuffs (Patel, 2007). This propelled the already dire situation in Zimbabwe, as the economy was not stable enough to be able to keep up. The global recession also played a part and is still affecting the economic viability of the struggling nation as citizens' struggle to make ends meet.

Figure 1: National Consumer Price Index (December 2008-May 2010)



Source: Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe

3.3.3 Introduction of multiple currencies

Inflation rates have greatly been reduced with the adoption of the American dollar and South African rand currencies as legal tenders in the country. Consequently, the national Consumer Price Index (CPI) has increased by merely 1 percent since the Zimbabwean dollar was abandoned in 2009 (Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, 2010). However, in May 2009 following the deflationary period, demands on prices has been increasing, with mounting fuel costs (Patel, 2007), service charges, wage rates and the depreciation of USD against the Rand, causing a rise in import prices in US dollar terms (ibid). Furthermore, economic issues could return if the shortage of foreign currency continues to escalate.

The introduction of the use of the dollar, rand, pula and other world major currencies in Zimbabwe came as a God send to the people in 2009 (The Zimbabwe News Daily, 27 June 2010). Although at the outset the amounts of foreign currency within the country were too limited to sustain it and its economy, as the years progressed this system began to 'settle' quite well and has helped in the stabilizing of the economy. The suspension of the Zimbabwean dollar

and introduction of multiple currencies has resulted in tangible effects on the economy. For instance, for the first time in more than a decade, Zimbabwe has registered a positive economic growth rate and average production activities have leapfrogged from less than 10% in January 2009 to above 35% by end of December 2009 (ibid). In short, the introduction of the multi-currency regime has improved the country's economic health. However, this has also been a disadvantage as some prices are 'rounded up' to avoid giving change, or in supermarkets one is offered small items such as sweets instead of change in cents, or a credit note to be carried forward to the next purchase at the supermarket. Adopting a multi-currency system has enabled the import and export trade of goods and commodities and enabled the country to have well stocked supermarkets and given the citizens options of foodstuffs. At least now the major issue is that of access in terms of purchasing power unlike that of availability of food and commodities.

Nonetheless, due to the demand of foreign currency in the nation other issues came up that inversely affected food security. For instance, landlords now claim rent in foreign currency and have at times been known to increase rental amounts without warning. These measures were said to be undertaken in order to guard against inflation, but unfortunately they only further impoverished the general population that is renting households and makes them more vulnerable and susceptible not only to food insecurity but also to homelessness. The introduction of multiple currencies resulted in a lot of challenges to the rural folk as some retail shop started refusing to accept the Zimbabwean dollar even before the official announcement (Jayne, *et al.*, 2006). So though one had money, in the form of Zimbabwean dollar, they would be suffering from hunger and starvation because of the lack of access to food.

3.4 Chapter summary

Recently FAO has attributed the causes of hunger to insufficient global harvests, the global economic crisis, increased unemployment, and the low income levels of the poor in terms of having access to food. All of these factors have contributed substantially to the food crisis in Zimbabwe. The international community has also been undergoing a dire economic crisis with the global recession. Although the recession has affected the whole world, the impact on Zimbabwe has been to further exacerbate the food crisis into a famine. This chapter has explored

in detail the various factors contributing to a food security crisis in Zimbabwe, showing how each factor, while being both a cause and contributor to the food security crisis, cannot be seen as operating in isolation to bring about the present humanitarian crisis in the country.

The following chapter will examine in more detail the role and effects of inflation on food security, and accessibility to basic commodities in Zimbabwe, such as the creation of an informal economy and a thriving black market. It will describe and analyse government initiatives, such as the BACCOSSI, to control and manage this crisis, and will examine the effects of sanctions on the economy as well as the impact of the crisis on the people in terms of gender inequality and education.

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Chapter IV: Assessment of the causes of Food insecurity

4.0 Introduction

Since 2000 food insecurity in Zimbabwe has been the product of a number of complex interlinked forces: environmental, political, and socio-economic. Although many food systems in the world have become diversified and are more accessible to people, this has not yet happened on a universal scale. There have been various reasons why such changes have not taken effect in Zimbabwe, including a decrease in per capita income, market liberalization, inflation, urbanization and the decrease in direct foreign investment, all resulting in an increase in food insecurity. Thus, this decade (2000-2010) has marked a period of food shortages and an economic regression as the country underwent something of a revolution whose result was the introduction of many policies whose purpose was to try to curb growing food insecurity (WFP, 2009). The president, Comrade Robert G Mugabe, introduced the national Basic Commodity Supply Side Intervention, popularly known as BACOSSI, to help the populace to function during a period when it was almost impossible to sustain any kind of normal supply and demand in the economic situation (The Herald 17 July 2008). Basic commodities became scarce in the supermarkets which limited their access by most people. As a result a black market emerged which could supply the commodities, but at exorbitant prices, which further exacerbated inflation and high food prices. This chapter will be assessing the inter-twined causes of food insecurity as discussed in the previous chapter.

4.1 Political Evaluation

Food insecurity in Zimbabwe has been blamed on the implementation of the FTLRP by most media sources such as CNN and BBC. Most media agents, regional and international alike, have shifted the media spotlight towards land reform as the root cause of the decline of the Zimbabwean economy and food insecurity in that country. This was interpreted as a means of the government gaining support of the voters especially after the rejection of the referendum in 1998 (South China Morning Post, 1998). Nonetheless, it can be argued that the government of Zimbabwe at the time of drawing up the land reform programme was interested in the wellbeing of its citizens and pushed through with the resettlement programme as it was not moving at the

pace that had initially been anticipated at independence (GOZ, 2006). Unfortunately, the timing in line with the upcoming elections leaves a question over the motive on the part of the government.

The land resettlement policy was approached in an overzealous manner and hence the reason why it was not as successful. Those in positions of power were still enjoying the benefits of leadership and forgot the reason why they had been engaged in the liberation struggle. The criterion on which the land redistribution was based did not specify that only farmers who had the agricultural knowledge would be eligible, in order to ensure that the resettlement programmes would empower those who were able to farm irrespective of the level and scale of production (Chisvo, 2000). At the same time, the government should have put in place strategies that would maintain and promote productivity. These could be in the form of provision of farming essentials such as seed and fertilizers, but most of all a careful selection of the individuals to be settled in the productive areas and a provision of the infrastructure necessary for productive farming. The government should have also been actively involved in alleviating the constraints inhibiting productivity (GOZ, 2006). Land should have been valued at the market rate regardless of who is the buyer or the seller; this gives the land commercial value and as a result investors will be encouraged to invest in the farming sector, as will conservationists. It is also essential to note that, while the nation's employees may rely on the agricultural sector, only the experienced and capable farmers should be given 100% support to ensure food security, whilst non-farmers can be aided in other ways that will contribute to boosting the economy.

4.2 Alternative sources of income to access food

Most communal households involved in agriculture resorted to other sources of livelihood such as; sales of food and cash crops, casual labour, vegetable growing, petty trade and remittances (Hicks, 1993). These alternatives came in handy to provide for basic needs, besides food from their own farms. However, in rural areas most of these complementary livelihood activities were unreliable especially under the fragile economic and political environment. This is because temporary work opportunities with large farmers (seasonal crops or tea plantations) are reliant on the ability of the farmers' fiscal state and the coverage of the seasonal crop. Unfortunately,

during the crisis years, these farmers also have problems accessing credit to fund their production, let alone to hire labour (Sen, 1981).

Officially, there is no evidence on remittances coming from abroad. Nonetheless, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe estimates the remittances to range between fifty and a hundred American dollars (\$50-\$100) for individual and families and \$100 million in total entering the country (CHS, 2009). However, this number maybe underestimated and may neglect informal channels that do not necessarily reflect the remittance state entry. During the drought of 1992, Hicks (1993) claimed that coping households' engaged in traditional seasonal coping mechanisms', received remittances from relatives working in the cities, and also received assistance in the form of targeted relief aid from humanitarian organisations. However, today, city to rural remittances are also under immense pressure. For instance government employees in the cities receive currently only an allowance of USD 150 (FAO, 2008). These leave minimal amounts to be sent to relatives in the countryside.

Inasmuch as farm animals are considered valuable in Zimbabwe (Scoones, 1992:334), especially in the dryer agro-ecological zones (IV – V), the calamity in 2008/2009 resulted in communal farmers selling their livestock to richer farmers or to cities for slaughter. Due to vulnerability, many households' farm animals were drastically reduced by selling as a last resort due to desperation (Borsotti, 1993). The Community and Household surveillance, in March 2010, found about 40-50 percent of rural households owned livestock with an average of 2 to 3 cattle per household. However, today the sale of farm animals has been reduced. Nonetheless, poultry has gained popularity by up to 17-18percent of rural households (CHS, 2011).

Though the formal sector collapse during the crisis till early 2009 this left a gap and aided the poor people to resort to the informal sector of buying and selling. This gave room for people to cope in a collapsed economic environment (Gandure & Morongwe, 2006). However, the situation in urban areas has stabilized and some of the big businesses have improved. In my opinion, it would be amiss to assume that the informal sector is now largely gone because coping opportunities are still relatively low for some. Nonetheless, the formal sector has opened doors for some but not all, thus underemployment and unemployment is still rampant (UNDP, 2010).

The Government is on average paying USD 150/employee, which through the multiplier effect generates income for other urbanites (FAO, 2010). Overall, the situation seems to have improved, but it's not clear how many people are still in deep poverty (ibid).

4.3 Food assistance requirements

Market liberalisation has opened doors for traders to bring in food into the country to where there is demand. Food availability, therefore, is no longer the main issue. Nonetheless, there still are many food insecure people without access to the available food to satisfy their basic food requirements. Furthermore, affordability is of great concern amongst many Zimbabweans because without formal employment there is no guarantee of having access to the foreign currency to have sufficient buying power (FAO, 2008). As such there is still a vital need for food assistance to cater to the proportion of the population that is still food insecure.

4.3.1 Support to food supply

During the crisis year's it was always a challenge to have adequate access to food. However, during the 2009/10 marketing year, actors in the private market proved that they can guarantee the availability of food in markets for households with enough purchasing power (ZimVAC, 2006). If it were not for the insufficient financial resources, the poorly funded GMB and actors in the private market could have the physical capacity to provide for adequate food (Jayne, *et al.*, 2006). Nevertheless, the current liberal import policy should be continued, with the provision that financial capital to GMB importers and traders continue to be made available for their operations. Ultimately, this would help diminish provisional food shortages through hoarding and price hikes during that period of dry spells and economic or political instability. This could be a strategic grain reserve (SGR) which would ensure the availability of food especially the staple grain, maize, at all times (Borsott, 1993).

4.3.2 Support to the food insecure

Regardless of the availability of food, those from poor household should be assisted in a timely manner. This will help avert exposing them to periods of malnutrition, hunger and starvation; also it would reduce increases in child malnutrition. Support from the community social

networks, state programmes (BACOSS) and NGO support (food aid) would be very effective in achieving this goal (Devereux, 2006). However, to be fully effective food assistance should be suitable to the circumstances of households: targeted to assist those assisting orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) and also it should be specific to assist groups who are unceasingly food insecure including those affected by HIV and AIDS.

4.4 Government's Responses to Food insecurity

The Zimbabwean Government's failure to address food insecurity and its causes has largely affected women's lives in terms of their access to land and other food related resources, such as food aid. However instead of appreciating women's situations and supporting their needs, the government has simply clamped down on their survival strategies (Malaba, 2006).

The Government needs to recognize and acknowledge that a large number of households are now female-headed and start mobilizing support for them to access land and fulfill their social and financial responsibilities (Waite, 2000). It is questionable, however, whether the Government will be motivated and able to do so, considering that it is largely driven by 'traditional' patriarchal ideas (ibid). Instead of focusing on the symptoms of poverty and patriarchal systems, the Government needs to rid itself of its own Victorian mindset and put some effort into supporting the mothers of the nation. It needs to ask the question: what purpose does aid serve if it is simply sucked into the usual crevices of corruption, instead of reaching those who really need it? Development programmes and professed 'interventions' need to keep in mind the precise contexts in which their beneficiaries live, as well as the power structures that regulate those contexts (ZimVAC, 2006). It should no longer be a case of simply throwing money or food at the problem, but one of providing a well-thought-out sustainable solution to food insecurity in Zimbabwe. The action of the government to address food insecurity is thus of grave concern.

4.4.1 Department of Social Welfare

The Department of Social Welfare (in the Ministry of Public Service, Labor and Social Welfare) has the responsibility to cater to the needs of the vulnerable households. Those regarded as

chronically food insecure are: households with orphans and vulnerable children, households with disabled persons, female-headed households, elderly-headed households and child-headed households. The Department of Social Welfare has in place Public Assistance Programmes (PAP) for the vulnerable household and the Public Works Programme (PWP) that targets vulnerable households with able bodied persons to take part in rigorous public works provided by local authorities (GOZ, 2006). This is so as to ensure food security to the vulnerable community. The introduction of the national Basic Commodity Supply Side Intervention (BACOSSI) was so as to help the populace to function during a period when it was almost impossible to sustain any kind of normal supply and demand economic situation (The Herald 17 July 2008).

4.4.2 The World Food Programme

The World Food Programme (WFP) is the largest relief agency providing food assistance in the country. WFP's food assistance programmes in the country include Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) which supports transitory food insecure rural areas who have exhausted their own production and do not have income-earning opportunities (FAO &WFP, 2009). The WFP reached approximately 4.5 million people by October of 2009, through the VGF mechanism (ibid).

4.4.3 C-SAFE

C-SAFE is the second largest food relief group in Zimbabwe that provides food assistance. It is a syndicate of three agencies; CARE, World Vision and Catholic Relief Service (CRS) with its own food channel. By March 2009 it catered to a total of around 2 million beneficiaries (FAO, 2010). It provided programmes including safety net programmes, Food for Agriculture, Food for school services, and school feeding. It came in handy especially with the inability of the government to cater for the whole population. These programmes were mostly carried out after or before the "lean season" which gave the beneficiaries an idea of what is to come or the aid that they required at the right time. However, their activities may be discontinued in the future due to the absence of the government monitoring of their activities especially in determining their beneficiaries (FAO, 2010).

Nevertheless, the national shortage is still a problem in the country and, external food aid should be perceived as a partial solution within the context of overall domestic availability. Given the lack of access to basic food because of declining purchasing power, assistance to the food insecure population is more determined by their household food gap than the national food gap.

4.5 Recommendations

In order to boost the capacity to increase food production the government should invest more in emergency assistance programmes that provide good seed and fertilizers (FAO, 2008). It is essential for farmers to receive the adequate market incentives. It is also important for that policy to be implemented as the prices received by farmers are below the minimum support prices announced by the Government. Small-scale irrigation schemes around the country that require upgrades, and, new ones could be established and alleviate the hardships suffered by some communities during dry years (ibid).

Food assistance programmes to address the needs of the chronically food insecure should be continued and implemented in an adequate manner. This could be achieved through the support vulnerable households such as those affected by HIV and AIDS, those supporting orphans, the destitute and the Mobile Vulnerable Populations (MVP). Food security is dynamic; therefore, it should be monitored to evaluate the needs of the transitory food insecure (ibid). Information from ZimVAC, CHS and WFP plays a significant role when it comes to sources of information. Accurate systematic information for both urban and rural food insecurity is necessary to be able to achieve successful food assistance. Furthermore, these food security monitoring findings will enable the government and other non-governmental organisations to adjust and improve the food assistance requirements in a suitable manner.

The May 2010 ZimVAC Assessment report suggested that food assistance programmes should be able to carry the vulnerable to the next harvest (ZimVAC, 2010). The report recommended that the Government and international community work together to direct its programmes of assistance to those in need. Not only should the food assistance be in the form of food supply but also in the form of inputs. Therefore, this will empower those households that already grow their own vegetables and crops by using irrigation schemes, good seed and fertilizers for

example. It also went on further to encourage the Government to continue the import policy on liberalized food grain to locally improve food availability.

4.6 Chapter Summary

In recent years, it has become clear that climate change is an inevitable process (Moser & Satterthwaite, 2008). The link between climate change and food security is clear (Patel, 2007). It has made a significant impact on the environment and has also aided in the degradation of land making productivity difficult. This chapter has assessed a combination of factors that have made a significant impact on food insecurity in terms of productivity, poverty and hunger in Zimbabwe. The main focus has been on how these various factors have influenced productivity and continue to threaten the quality of life and survival of many Zimbabweans.

This chapter and thesis have demonstrated the strong connection between the political, environmental and economic factors, which in combination have and continue to cause food insecurity in Zimbabwe. It has also suggested certain strategies that the Zimbabwean government urgently needs to adopt to avert a serious humanitarian crisis in the country and in the long term it is hoped, restore the country to its status as the breadbasket of Africa.

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