

**THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF FOOD AID: A CASE OF ZIMBABWE**

By

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Thesis presented at the Institute for Social Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of the Western Cape in partial fulfillment of the MA Degree in Development Studies.



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## **DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and I have not previously in its entirety or part submitted it at any university for a degree.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



DECLARATION.....	2
LIST OF FIGURES .....	4
LIST OF TABLES.....	4
<b>ACRONYMS .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>KEY WORDS .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1. ....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>9</b>
1.1    THE RESEARCH PROBLEM.....	9
1.2    AIMS OF THE STUDY .....	10
1.3    MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY .....	10
1.4    RESEARCH HYPOTHESES.....	10
1.5    RESEARCH DESIGN.....	11
1.5.1  DATA SOURCES.....	12
1.5.2  PRIMARY SOURCES.....	12
1.5.3  SECONDARY SOURCES.....	15
1.5.4  LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY .....	15
1.6    RESEARCH AGENDA .....	16
<b>CHAPTER 2: .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .....</b>	<b>18</b>
2.1    THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF FOOD AID .....	18
2.2    GENERAL ASSUMPTIONS OF THE RATIONAL CHOICE THEORY .....	21
2.3    THE NEW POLITICAL ECONOMY OF DEMOCRACY .....	21
2.4    THE NEW POLITICAL ECONOMY OF INTEREST GROUPS .....	22
2.5    THE NEW POLITICAL ECONOMY OF DICTATORSHIP .....	24
2.6    CLIENTELISM AND NEOPATRIMONIALISM .....	26
<b>CHAPTER 3 .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>BACKGROUND OF FOOD SECURITY IN ZIMBABWE.....</b>	<b>29</b>
3.1    AGRO-ECOLOGICAL BACKGROUND .....	29
3.2    ECONOMIC BACKGROUND TO THE FOOD SECURITY SITUATION .....	31
3.3    BACKGROUND OF THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN ZIMBABWE .....	34
3.4    THE FOOD SECURITY SITUATION .....	39
<b>CHAPTER 4 .....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>FOOD AID DISTRIBUTION IN ZIMBABWE.....</b>	<b>44</b>
4.1    MAIN ACTORS IN FOOD AID DISTRIBUTION IN ZIMBABWE .....	44
4.1.1  THE GRAIN MARKETING BOARD.....	44
4.1.2  TRADITIONAL LEADERS AND COUNCILLORS .....	48
4.1.2  NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS .....	50
4.2    MAIN ACTORS' BENEFICIARY SELECTION CRITERIA.....	51
4.2.1  THE GRAIN MARKETING BOARD (GMB).....	51
4.2.1.1  GMB DE JURE BENEFICIARY SELECTION CRITERIA AND FOOD RATIONS.....	51
4.2.1.2  GMB DE FACTO BENEFICIARY SELECTION CRITERIA.....	53
4.2.1.3  GMB DE FACTO FOOD AID RATIONS .....	57
4.2.1.4  TRADITIONAL LEADERS' IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GMB DE FACTO BENEFICIARY SELECTION CRITERIA	58
4.2.1.5  COUNCILLOR'S IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GMB DE FACTO SELECTION CRITERIA.....	60
4.3    SUCCESS OF THE GMB TARGETING CRITERIA .....	62
4.4    TRANSPARENCY IN THE DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM.....	64

<b>CHAPTER 5 .....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS' (NGOS) TARGETING CRITERIA .....</b>	<b>66</b>
5.1    NGOS DE JURE SELECTION CRITERIA .....	66
5.2    NGOS DE FACTO SELECTION CRITERIA AND SELECTION PROCESS .....	67
5.3    POLITICAL INTERFERENCE IN NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS (NGOS) BENEFICIARY SELECTION CRITERIA .....	68
<b>CHAPTER 6 .....</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>74</b>
6.1    RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY MAKERS AND HUMANITARIAN AGENCIES.....	77
6.2    AREAS OF FURTHER RESEARCH .....	78
6.3    CONCLUDING REMARKS.....	78
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>79</b>
ANNEX 1:    INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE .....	85
ANNEX 2:    INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR FOOD AID EXPERTS .....	88
ANNEX 3:    INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR HOUSEHOLD INTERVIEWS AND POLITICIANS .....	89
ANNEX 4:    MAP OF ZIMBABWE: AGRO-ECOLOGICAL ZONES. ....	90

### List of Figures

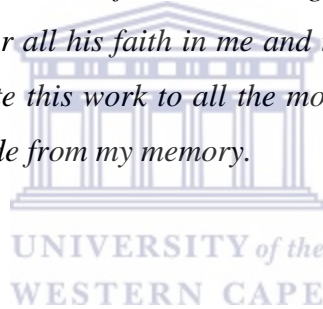
Figure 1.1    Provincial Map of Zimbabwe.....	14
Figure 4.1 1:    People's perceptions of success of the GMB targeting criteria. ....	63
Figure 4.1 2:    Households perceptions of the transparentess of the GMB beneficiary selection process.....	64

### List of Tables

Table 3.1 1    Basic Economic Indicators for Zimbabwe from 2001-2004 .....	33
Table 3.1 2:    Election Results for 2000 and 2002 in Zimbabwe .....	37
Table 3.3:    Projected Food Aid needs for the SADC countries.....	41
Table 3.4:    Total maize sales as a percentage of projected need per province. ....	42

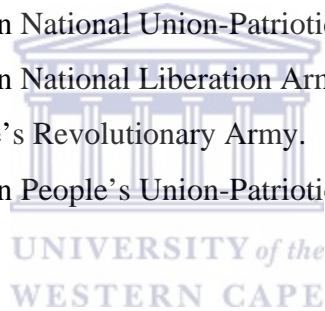
## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Firstly, my sincere gratitude goes to the ISD of the University for the Western Cape for giving me the opportunity to study in this unique programme. I also thank the DAAD for their financial support throughout my studies, without which, this would not have been possible. I am highly thankful to the United Nations World Food Programme for giving me the opportunity to work with them and grooming within me the spirit to work for humanity. Of utmost importance, my gratitude goes to my supervisor Sharon Penderis who worked tirelessly in order for me to come up with this work. I benefited greatly from her academic expertise. I am also highly indebted to my co-supervisor Dr Sylvia Schweitzer for her immense contribution to this work. I am also indebted to my MADM classmates in Cape Town, my old and all the new friendships that I maintained or made during this period, for their social and academic guidance which saw me through the whole time I was away from home. Above all, I thank God Jehovah for his blessings throughout. To my parents, I dedicate this thesis, my father for all his faith in me and to Mama for being a proverbs 31 woman in my life. I also dedicate this work to all the mothers and children whose hungry stricken faces have refused to fade from my memory.*



## ACRONYMS

CIO:	Central Intelligent Officers.
CSO:	Central Statistical Office.
DDRC:	District Drought Development Committee.
DFID:	Department for International Development.
FCTZ:	Farm Community Trust Zimbabwe.
GMB:	Grain Marketing Board.
GoZ:	Government of Zimbabwe.
MDC:	Movement for Democratic Change.
NGO/s:	Non Governmental Organisation/s.
UNFAO:	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation.
WFP:	World Food Programme.
WVZ:	World Vision Zimbabwe.
ZANU-PF:	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front.
ZANLA:	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army.
ZIPRA:	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army.
ZAPU-PF:	Zimbabwe African People's Union-Patriotic Front.



## **KEY WORDS**

Food-aid

Zimbabwe

Food-security

Hunger

Rational Choice Theory

GMB (Grain Marketing Board)

Neopatrimonialism

Clientelism

Vulnerability

Targeting



## ABSTRACT

The food security crisis which gripped the sub Sahara Africa after the drought in 1999/2000 threatened development initiatives in these countries. Zimbabwe's situation has since worsened and the country has failed to recuperate from the food problems, even after an improvement in the climatic conditions. International and local food aid activities then became a priority in the fight to sustain the right to food for the affected regions. It is argued in this research that if food aid is distributed on the basis of need it will enable the vulnerable populations recuperate from food insecurity problems. It is also postulated that if well implemented, food aid programmes are also able to play the dual role of averting starvation and leading to long term development. This thesis departs from the allegations of food aid politicisation in Zimbabwe.

Using the rational choice and neopatrimonial theories of individual behaviour, this research endeavored to ascertain whether political decisions influenced the government food aid distributions which were conducted through the Grain Marketing Board. In line with these theories, it is argued in this study that politicians behave in a manner that maximizes the fulfillment of their individual needs rather than the needs of the people who vote them in positions of power.

A qualitative approach was adopted in this study and data was gathered through household interviews in the Seke and Goromonzi districts of the Mashonaland East province in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, interviews were conducted with food aid experts from the governmental and non governmental organisations dealing with food security issues in Zimbabwe.

The findings of this research indicate that although it was stated that the GMB food distribution criteria was not determined by political affiliation, political decisions infiltrated the process. It is concluded here that in Zimbabwe, the right to food for some households was infringed upon because the government GMB food distributions were used by politicians to meet their needs of wooing political support rather than meeting the needs of the people.



# CHAPTER 1.

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

In 2002, southern Africa was hit by a severe drought, which crippled food security in the region. Of the six Southern Africa Development Community countries facing food shortages, the Zimbabwean situation was singled out as the worst scenario and to date the country is still battling to escape this quagmire.<sup>1</sup> Zimbabwe used to enjoy the status of being a breadbasket to its neighbours and to other parts of the world and was never imagined to be a potential case of failure to recuperate from food shortages. This is evidenced by the successful recoveries in previous equally drastic droughts such as the one experienced in 1992/1993.<sup>2</sup> It is reported that cereal production in Zimbabwe declined by as much as 65 per cent in the period 2001/2002.<sup>3</sup>

Realizing a potential humanitarian catastrophe, the government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) declared the food security situation in the country an emergency situation in February 2002 and appealed for humanitarian food aid a few months later.<sup>4</sup> The GoZ, through the Grain Marketing Board (GMB), launched a subsidized food aid (maize) distribution programme targeted at vulnerable rural populations. Food aid from the international donor community was also distributed through the Emergency Operation Programme of the World Food Programme. The GoZ was however, criticized for targeting households not on the basis of need but on political affiliation.<sup>5</sup> This research aims to answer the question of whether the GMB food aid distribution program was actually influenced by political interests or the political affiliation of vulnerable recipients. An additional objective of this study was to discover whether the GMB food aid failed to reach some vulnerable households because it was used to meet political ends. This research also examined the GMB food aid policies and criteria in Zimbabwe by examining and analyzing the 2002-2004 government public food aid distribution programmes.

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<sup>1</sup> Drimie, 2004:5

<sup>2</sup> Harman, <http://www.globalpolicy.org/soecon/develop/africa/2002/1112mugabe.htm>:5/04/2005

<sup>3</sup> SADC FANR Vulnerability Assessment Committee, 2002:2-4

<sup>4</sup> Mano, Isaacson & Dardel, 2003:5

<sup>5</sup> Morris and Lewis, 2003:16

## **1.2 AIMS OF THE STUDY**

It is against the above mentioned background that the overall aim of this research is to investigate whether political decisions influenced the manner in which food aid was distributed in Zimbabwe. Within this context the study also aspires to address the following more specific aims:

- To provide relevant theoretical underpinnings for the topic under investigation.
- To provide an analysis of the political, economic and agro-ecological background of the food security problems in Zimbabwe.
- To identify whether politics played a role in the distribution of food aid in the GMB food aid programme in Zimbabwe.
- To investigate whether certain vulnerable households were left out of the food allocation process because food aid distribution was marred by patronage and clientelistic tendencies.
- To provide general findings and recommendations for policy makers, governmental and non governmental organisations dealing with the food security issues in Zimbabwe.

## **1.3 MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY**

The motivation for the researcher to undertake research in the area of food aid emanates from personal interest born from work experience in this field. It is the researcher's conviction that scarce resources especially food, should be substantially utilised especially considering that development efforts in this field and hunger eradication remain a challenge in many developing countries and for the international society.

## **1.4 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

- Benefiting from the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) public food aid was determined by political affiliation.
- The GoZ Public Food aid failed to reach some vulnerable households because it was used to meet political ends.

## 1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

For the purposes of this study, there was a need to determine whether food was distributed on political grounds and whether it was used to meet political goals. In the efforts to identify whether benefiting from the GoZ GMB food aid was determined by politics, terms such as political affiliation (independent variable) and benefiting from food aid (dependent variable) were measured in this study. The term “benefiting from food aid” was easy to measure because this was defined as any person who accessed, whether freely or by means of purchase, maize or other staple cereals from the GMB food aid programme or other food aid programmes in the country. “Political affiliation” was measured in terms of which political party the major actors’ involved in the distribution of aid and individual households were affiliated to. However, political affiliation on its own was not sufficient to clarify the level of politics that influenced the food aid process such that there was need to identify the roles played by politicians/political leaders in the food aid distribution process. The roles played by politicians were measured by gathering information concerning who played vital roles in the distribution of aid. This entailed finding out who disseminated information concerning the food aid programmes and who was responsible for selecting beneficiaries of the programme. The research therefore analysed the role of various individuals involved in the food aid distribution process, from the GMB structures at national level to the village levels. Furthermore, the household targeting criterion that was used by the GMB in comparison to the criteria utilised by other NGO/agencies were also analysed to find out the role that politics played in this regard.

In terms of research methodology, a blend of both the qualitative and quantitative approaches has been utilised for gathering information. This was done through the use of semi structured interview questionnaires. This approach allowed for in depth discussions of issues hence was advantageous considering the diverse nature of issues that were being tackled. This methodology also enabled the gathering of more sensitive information than that what can only be quantified in terms of numerical values. In addition, qualitative

research allowed the researcher to reflect on new ideas encountered in the process of data collection.<sup>6</sup> The qualitative method therefore proved to be very valuable for this type of research.

### **1.5.1 Data Sources**

This research relied on both primary and secondary sources of data. This was done in order to improve reliability and validity of data on whether the food aid distribution was distributed on political grounds or not. The combined application of these two sources of data allowed for validity through cross checking between the two data sources. The limitations of these approaches however are that it is difficult for one to prove the reliability of the information gathered because one has to rely on people's perceptions of what transpired. Efforts were however made by the researcher to use secondary data from credible sources and to double check contents of reports with those of others with the aim of ensuring reliability.

### **1.5.2 Primary sources**

This study involved the gathering of information from various groups of stakeholders who are active in the area of food aid. A semi-structured questionnaire (see annex 1 for a copy of the questionnaire) was used for the collection of primary data. The use of semi structured interviews was favourable for this study because they allowed the researcher to have full control of the process by means of guiding the interviews through questions asked whilst also leaving room for both the researcher and the respondent to follow new leads.<sup>7</sup> Questions for this research were based on the theoretical discussions of the political economy of public goods as indicated under the rational choice theory and the political economy of interest groups, dictatorship and democracy.

Two districts were randomly sampled based on the 2000 Parliamentary election results. The aim was to select a district from both the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU-PF) ruling party and the main opposition MDC parties' strongholds. This was done in order to avoid obvious biases which would likely occur by focusing on only one group of people.

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<sup>6</sup> Neuman, 2003:171

<sup>7</sup> Bernard,191

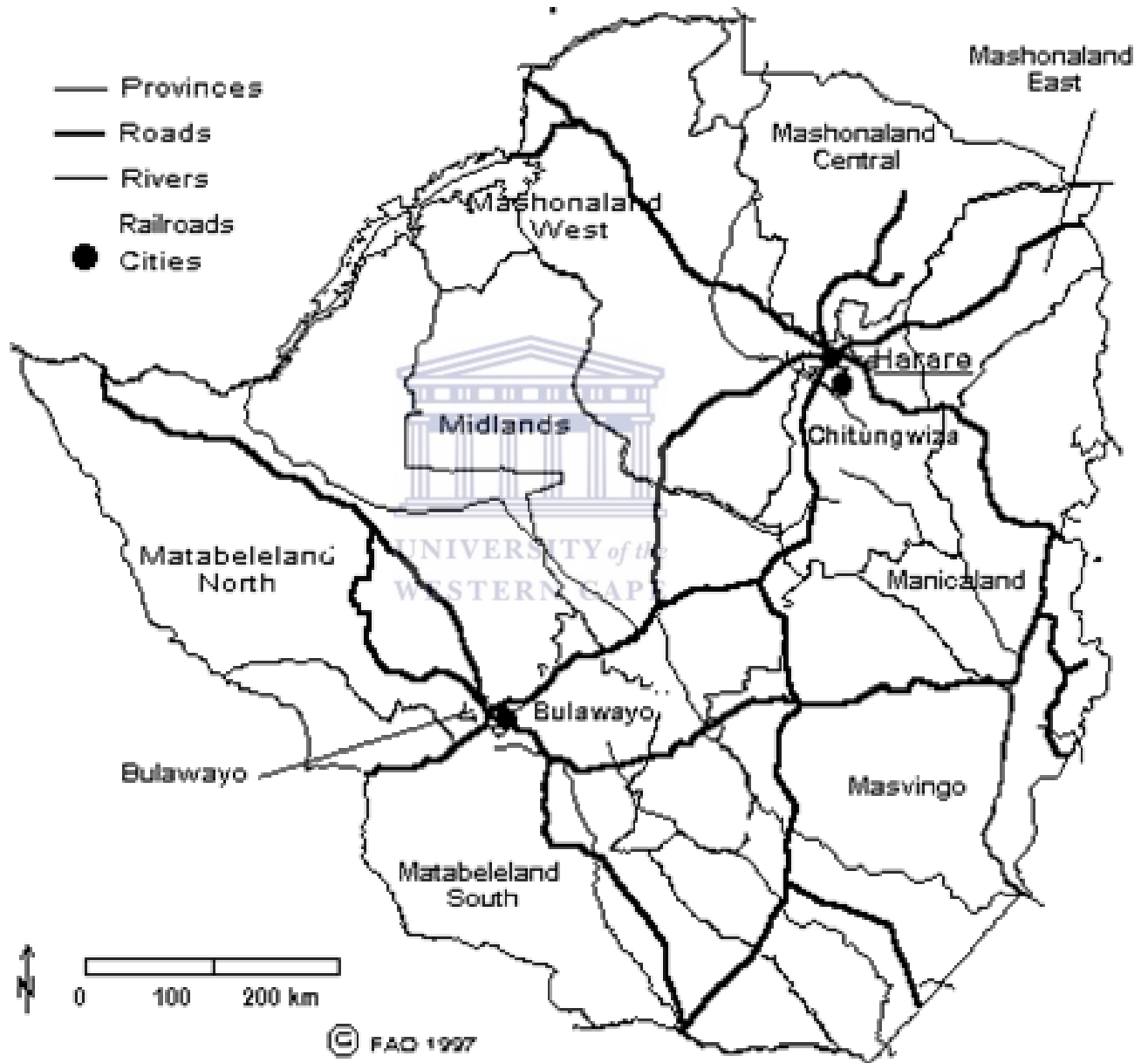
The districts which were selected for the purposes of this research are the Goromonzi district which is one of the strong holds of the ruling party in terms of public support and the Seke district where the opposition is popular. Both districts are in the Mashonaland East province of the country (see map of Zimbabwe in figure 1.1). A total of 30 household interviews were conducted, with fifteen households having been randomly selected from one village in each of the two districts. One interview was conducted in each selected household. This research will provide a discussion of the results from both districts simultaneously and comparisons will only be made where differences are significant enough to render such comparisons necessary.

This research also included conducting interviews with food security experts working in food aid NGOs/agencies. The food aid NGO/agencies included the World Food Programme (WFP), World Vision Zimbabwe, CARE International Zimbabwe, Save the Children (UK), Farm community trust Zimbabwe, OXFAM (GB) and Christian Care. One representative from each of the above organizations and five from the WFP were interviewed. Five interviews were conducted within the WFP organisation due to its leading role as the coordinator of humanitarian agencies dealing with food aid in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, interviews were conducted with two officers from the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) and an additional two interviews were conducted with the Ministries of Social Welfare and the Agriculture Extension Services Department in each of the two districts. This group of respondents was highly informative as they are the custodians of information concerning the GoZ welfare and food security activities, especially the food aid distribution programmes. Two group interviews (one per district) of four people each were also conducted with key political party supporters in the form of ward councilors, youth leaders and village and ward party coordinators. These provided pertinent information concerning the roles played by politics in the distribution of food aid. In addition to this information, secondary data was collected in the form of programme reports.

Given the volatile political climate in the areas of study, the researcher had to seek permission from the local authorities and this involved thorough explanations of the intentions and purposes for this research to some overzealous politicians. The interview questions were cross checked for validity and reliability through piloting with a group of experts working with NGOs in the area of relief and food aid. This allowed for

modifications and clarifications on questions which were not initially clear. Leads of possible sources were also acquired and followed through this piloting phase.

The Map below reflects the provinces of Zimbabwe:



**Figure 1.1** Provincial Map of Zimbabwe

### **1.5.3 Secondary sources**

In addition, secondary data played a significant role in providing information concerning food aid and politics in Zimbabwe. The recent years have seen massive sprouting of organizations dealing with food aid. Inevitably a host of literature on the manner in which food aid was distributed in the country has proliferated mainly from the unscientific sector such as the newspapers and electronic media. Civil society groups and NGOs such as Human Rights Watch (HRW), Amnesty International and Physicians for Human Rights have are some of the sources of literature. Data was therefore gathered through content analysis of reports from governmental organisations and NGOs (local and international) working in the food aid area in Zimbabwe such as the WFP and World vision, the media and the GMB itself. The validity of informal reports had to be cross checked with information from primary sources and other formal sources to negate the risk of utilizing information from unbalanced sources. Another challenge faced by the researcher pertained to some governmental sources refusing to provide information for reasons which were never clearly announced.

The main method of data analysis used for this study was the content analysis technique. This approach involves the transcription of collected data and the identification of major themes raised in the information gathered. In addition, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was also used to a limited extent, for the analysis of quantitative data and this mainly involved descriptive statistical analysis of data.

### **1.5.4 Limitations of the Study**

The qualitative approach adopted for this study however had its limitations. Firstly, problems experienced concerned possible interpretation of the same information given by different individuals. Also this method demanded a high level of expertise especially in probing for information from respondents, in order to acquire the targeted information. Finally, the approach followed can result in a lack of consistency and lack of reliability because at times the researcher employed different probing techniques and the respondents also prioritized particular issues and ignored others which may still have been relevant for the study.

Secondly, another limitation concerned the practicability of the study. The period in which this research was conducted was characterized by great political sensitivity because the research period coincided with the period when the country had just held a highly sensationalized parliamentary election. Also, the lack of political freedom in the country hindered efforts to consult with certain respondents as they feared for their lives during this time frame. In addition, the economic situation in Zimbabwe is highly unstable and during the period of this research the country was facing an excessive economic downturn as evidenced by the massive rates of inflation and shortages of foreign currency. This economic meltdown culminated to shortages of basic commodities such as fuel. As a result, serious transport problems were experienced and frustrated some of the researcher's efforts to reach some areas intended for this research purposes. Changes were however made in order to ensure that pertinent issues intended to be addressed by the research were dealt with significantly.

## **1.6 RESEARCH AGENDA**

This thesis is divided into six chapters. The first chapter has provided an introduction to the research problem, the aims of the research and the methodological approaches used in the study. The chapter also includes the research hypothesis. The rest of the chapters are organized in the following manner:

*Chapter 2* comprises a review of literature pertaining to the topic and studies that have been conducted in the political economy of food aid. Secondly, the theoretical framework of the study including a detailed outline of the rational choice theory is provided. Furthermore, discussions are provided of the new political economy theories of democracy, dictatorship and interest groups and clientelism theories, which are used as the theoretical framework for this study.

*Chapter 3* presents the agro-ecological, economic and political background of the food security situation in Zimbabwe.



*Chapter 4* provides a discussion of the research findings. The first part of the chapter discusses the roles of the main actors of food aid distribution in Zimbabwe, followed by a discussion of the targeting criteria used to identify beneficiaries.

*Chapter 5* provides an analysis of the implementation of the NGOs food aid beneficiary selection process. The chapter also provides an overview of the involvement of politicians in NGO's food aid distribution activities.

*Chapter 6* provides a summary of the findings and presents recommendations emanating from the research. It reflects on the research hypothesis and suggests measures for policy makers and other stakeholders towards addressing the distribution of scarce resources.



## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This chapter comprises a brief review of the studies that have been done on food aid and an outline of the theoretical framework that is adopted in this research. The first section opens with a discussion of the findings of researches which has been done on food aid in countries such as Ethiopia and Bangladesh. Afterwards, an analysis of the general assumptions of the rational choice theory is provided and is followed by the specifications of the new political economy of democracy, interest groups and finally dictatorship. The chapter closes with an analysis of the neopatrimonialism and clientelism theories which are also important for this research.

### **2.1 The Political Economy of food aid**

Food is the backbone of human life. Its importance therefore, cannot be underplayed. The United Nations declaration of the Millennium Development Goals has even delineated the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger as one of its most important goals, Furthermore, the second target of these development goals is to halve the population living in hunger by the year 2015.<sup>8</sup> It can be argued that the process of development is hindered if people are hungry, for the obvious reasons that lack of adequate nutrition adversely affects physical productivity. While it has been noted that food aid plays a significant role in alleviating countries from transitory food shortages and emergencies, it is emphasized that its role is undermined if allocation is based on political interests.<sup>9</sup> Webb also argues that food aid is able to save countless lives during emergencies and can enhance the ability of the poorest people to build sustainable livelihoods. Targeted food aid therefore has an impact on reducing the number of the people who are suffering from hunger.<sup>10</sup>

The UN Charter on the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural rights (Article 11) stipulates that all member state parties adhering to the Convention have a mandate to “recognize the right to adequate food....through (partly) developing or reforming agrarian systems in a way which ensures achievement of the most efficient

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<sup>8</sup> IMF:<http://www.developmentgoals.org/Poverty.htm> 29/04/05

<sup>9</sup> Shapouri and Rosen, 2001:1

<sup>10</sup> Webb, 2003:1-2

development and ensuring equitable distribution of world food supplies in relation to need".<sup>11</sup> Member states to the convention have further affirmed that food should not be used as an instrument for political and economic pressure<sup>12</sup>. Fully efficient food aid targeting is defined as that which includes only those intended to benefit from an intervention.<sup>13</sup>

It has been argued that the politicization of food aid compromises the food security situation of particular households.<sup>14</sup> Other ideas indicate that consumer subsidies or price controls which are untargeted tend to have less direct impact on vulnerable households than targeted ones.<sup>15</sup> Sobhan argues that, though ideally in cases of scarcity, food should be distributed on the basis of need, the reality is that political forces still operate on households' entitlement to food.<sup>16</sup> In addition, the very fact that the state chooses to involve itself in the distribution of food has been argued to reflect the role of political decisions.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, studies on the allocation of subsidized public food aid in Bangladesh identified that within the mechanisms of food distribution, the identification of beneficiaries and the pricing policy encompassed an interplay of political forces. In addition, it is suggested in these studies that a household's political power has significant influence on its ability to access food.<sup>18</sup> It has also been presented that in cases where the distributed food aid is either imported or donated, the politics of global food distribution play a significant role. Other arguments point out that the removal of political objectives associated with the allocation of aid could reduce the support of interest groups among donor countries and can lead to negative consequences on food aid budgets.<sup>19</sup> Research has also shown that donor countries' interests also have significant influence in determining the allocation of food aid and these interests tend to favour those interest groups on whom donor aid budgets depend. For example, the failure of the Bangladesh Public Food Distribution System in 1974 has been attributed to political decisions to suspend food aid to that country.<sup>20</sup> In Zimbabwe

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<sup>11</sup>[http://www.fao.org/documents/show\\_cdr.asp?url\\_file=/DOCREP/003/W3613E/W3613E00.HTM:18/05/2005:1535pm](http://www.fao.org/documents/show_cdr.asp?url_file=/DOCREP/003/W3613E/W3613E00.HTM:18/05/2005:1535pm)

<sup>12</sup> FAO, [http://www.fao.org/wfs/index\\_en.htm](http://www.fao.org/wfs/index_en.htm)

<sup>13</sup> Clay, Molla & Habtewold, 1998:1

<sup>14</sup> Clay et al, 1998:5

<sup>15</sup> Mano, Isaacson & Dardel, 2003:iii

<sup>16</sup> Sobhan, 1990:79

<sup>17</sup> Sobhan, 1990:82

<sup>18</sup> Sobhan, 1990:79

<sup>19</sup> Shapouri & Rosen, 2001:2

<sup>20</sup> Sobhan, 1990:83

reports indicate that food aid assistance from donors may have been constrained by the concern that the government's political agenda could interfere with food aid distribution.<sup>21</sup>

In addition, some studies on disaster relief identified that market mechanisms of food distribution were destroyed and overridden by political decisions. Decisions of “who consumed how much” were political decisions.<sup>22</sup> Sobhan also argues that governments which are mainly concerned with regime survival give preference to their interests rather than citizen needs. Regimes which seek votes from the rural populations are therefore likely to meet the needs of such populations only because doing so serves their interests in receiving votes.<sup>23</sup>

Numerous studies on the distribution of food aid have been conducted in Ethiopia, where food aid has been distributed over a long period of time. Studies, which analysed the food aid targeting criteria across rural areas in Ethiopia in the government and NGO programmes, identified that despite government policy papers stating that food should be targeted to the neediest households, there were no clear indications of how the needy were to be selected. The targeting criteria in most cases reflected the decisions of local authorities without any relation to observable household vulnerability. These studies argue that income should be the best indicator for targeting needy households and food aid targeting to the poorest groups of the society should remain the major objective of food aid.<sup>24</sup>

In conclusion, studies on the distribution of food aid have mainly been conducted by the implementers or sponsors of the food aid programs and it has been pointed out that there is still a deficit of empirical research on food aid targeting and its impacts.<sup>25</sup> This can be argued as applicable to the Zimbabwean context where food aid is still a novel phenomenon. This research therefore aims to depart from sensationalized allegations pertaining to the politicization of food aid and move towards scientific empirical testing. It is hoped that the findings of this research will contribute to the policies dealing with the

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<sup>21</sup> Mano, et al, 2003:6

<sup>22</sup> Sobhan, 1990 :84

<sup>23</sup> Sobhan, 1990:87-88

<sup>24</sup> Jayne,Staruss,Yamano & Molla, 2002:5

<sup>25</sup> Molla,et.al,1998:1

allocation of food aid with the aim of not only protecting the right to food, but also improving the food security of the most vulnerable groups for the purposes of development.

## **2.2 GENERAL ASSUMPTIONS OF THE RATIONAL CHOICE THEORY**

Political and economic scientists have developed theories that attempt to explain the behaviors of politicians and how political decisions are made. This study adopts the rational choice theory approach, which argues that politicians' behaviour is driven by the motives to maximize the number of votes that they will receive.<sup>26</sup> In the rational choice theory, individuals are seen as motivated by the wants or goals that express their preferences. Individuals act within specific given constraints and on the basis of the information that they have been given about the conditions under which they are acting. At its simplest, the relationship between preferences and constraints can be seen in the purely technical terms of the relationship of a means to an end. As it is not possible for individuals to achieve all of the various things that they desire, they must also make choices in relation to both their goals and the means for attaining these goals. The rational choice theory holds that individuals must anticipate the outcomes of alternative courses of action and calculate that which will be best choice for them. Rational individuals choose the alternative that is likely to give them the greatest satisfaction.<sup>27</sup>

The logic of rationality is therefore that individuals will take certain actions if the anticipated gains are more than those associated with not engaging in that particular action. The assumption is therefore that all human beings are capable of making rational choices. In Down's, words: "...an individual, party or a private coalition behaves rationally at all times; that is, proceeds towards its goals with minimal use of scarce resources and undertakes only those actions for which marginal returns exceed marginal costs."<sup>28</sup>

## **2.3 The New Political Economy of Democracy**

The major idea behind the new political economy of democracy is that politicians or political parties formulate policies strictly as a means of gaining votes. The theory points out that politicians seek office not because they are primarily interested in carrying out

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<sup>26</sup> Bloch, 1986:120

<sup>27</sup> Scott, 2000:121

<sup>28</sup> Downs, 1957:137

certain preconceived policies or to serve any particular interest groups, but they seek office in order to serve their personal interests. In other words, it is hypothesized in this theory that the social function of policy formulation is just a by-product of the politicians' private motive of acquiring income and gaining prestige through acquiring power.<sup>29</sup>

In addition, the rational choice approach asserts that individual citizens make decisions concerning voting depending on the utility or gains received or expected during the period of office of a particular political party. Wintrobe also echoes that the group, which exclusively receives privileges or other benefits from a political party, has strong reasons to believe that the political party will take care of its interests when it retains or assumes power. In simple terms, this means that the individual decision to vote for a political party is determined by what individuals perceive to have benefited during the term of office of that party in comparison to what they expect the other parties to do for them, based on the other parties' promises.<sup>30</sup>

Moreover, Downs argues that lack of information on which to base decisions on both the government and voters sides is also important. He asserts that voters do not always know exactly what the politicians have done or are doing. This is mainly because the process of acquiring and disseminating information requires resources, which are always scarce. It follows therefore that those individuals who are privileged with accessing these resources are able to provide the voters with adequate information, normally in favour of the group or political party to which they belong. It is those individuals who have access to scarce resources, who stand a better chance in gaining political influence than those who have no access to such resources.<sup>31</sup>

## **2.4 The New Political Economy of Interest Groups**

In general terms, the new political economy of interest groups presents the view that social balance is not realized because of problems of organization of interests. An interest group can be defined as a group of people who share common beliefs and objectives and have come together to serve specific common interests of their membership. Political parties are

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<sup>29</sup> Downs, 1956:136-137

<sup>30</sup> Downs, 1956:136-137

<sup>31</sup> Downs, 1957:139-140

also a type of interest group that exists primarily for exerting political influence as a means of affecting government policies or legislation.<sup>32</sup> Political parties' supporters can be regarded as interest groups whose aim is to attain certain benefits associated with their party's assumption of political power.

As indicated by Wintrobe, interest groups are most likely to provide their support for a political party if they perceive that the party has shown evidence of having utilized his political influence to accumulate resources to deliver the promises, mainly through diversion of resources meant for public goods, otherwise the politician risks being dismissed due to the perception of not being concerned with interest group's interests hence losing support. In other words, interest groups prefer a benefit, which is more than the average that any other politician is capable of delivering to the general public outside the particular interest group.<sup>33</sup>

Olson points out that individuals within larger interest groups, however, suffer from free riding problems. An individual's decision to participate in an action such as supporting a political party depends on whether others are participating or free riding. Free riding refers to the tendency of people to avoid participation in activities when others are actively involved. Free-riders are defined as those actors who do not shoulder their fair share of the costs of their use of or benefiting from a public good.<sup>34</sup> For politicians, free riding poses a problem when it results in failure to realize their wishes of being voted into power after providing some groups of people with goods or favours. The tendency for individuals to free ride is higher in larger groups because chances of a free-rider being discovered are lower because of the larger number of people involved than in smaller groups. Free riding occurs despite the possibility that perceived benefits associated with such behaviour as supporting a political party may be higher.<sup>35</sup> However, organizing large groups can be managed if, in addition to a public or collective good, one or more private goods are offered exclusively to the group members. This is referred to as a selective incentive. For example, a ruling political party can selectively provide its members only with resources such as food in order to maintain support and loyalty within the members. Politicians can withdraw their

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<sup>32</sup> Cornes & Sandler, 1996: [http://encyclopedia.lockergnome.com/s/b/Free\\_rider\\_problem:10/04/2005:1410hrs](http://encyclopedia.lockergnome.com/s/b/Free_rider_problem:10/04/2005:1410hrs)

<sup>33</sup> Wintrobe, 1998:31

<sup>34</sup> Cornes & Sandler, 1996: [http://encyclopedia.lockergnome.com/s/b/Free\\_rider\\_problem:10/04/2005:1410hrs](http://encyclopedia.lockergnome.com/s/b/Free_rider_problem:10/04/2005:1410hrs)

<sup>35</sup> Olson, 1965:61

favours if they do not receive the promised support from an interest group. In the relationship between politicians and interest groups, either party can fail to deliver their promises mainly because there are hardly any written contracts authenticating the promises made.<sup>36</sup>

## 2.5 The New Political Economy of Dictatorship

The assumptions about individual behaviour mentioned above can be applied to explain the behaviour of politicians in autocratic or dictatorial forms of governments just as they have been applied in democracies. “Autocracy is a form of government where unlimited power is held by a single individual.”<sup>37</sup> This is relevant to this study because Zimbabwe is certainly a country which can be described as being under autocratic rule. Olson argues that autocratic leaders also act rationally. He points out that the provision of public goods to a country by autocratic leaders is not done to serve the interests of the public only but mainly to serve their self-interests and personal gains.<sup>38</sup> According to Olson, political leaders or office holders in autocracies have encompassing interests and these encompassing interests vary with the size of the stake that they have in the society. Rationally, the greater the stake political leaders have in a society, the greater the incentives they have to provide for public goods for their particular society.<sup>39</sup> Olson argues further that an autocratic leader has an incentive to increase the productivity of everything and everyone in his domain will gain from this. It is argued that the autocratic leader has the incentive of extracting the surplus from this production for the whole society for his or her own purposes. He also argues that the rational autocrats will use some of their resources obtained through tax to return to society as public goods.<sup>40</sup> The higher the provision of public goods, the higher the society’s benefits hence the higher the gains of the leader (through tax). However, Fatton argues that dictators “... are more interested in their political survival.”<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, he asserts that “...individual state agents can utilize the powers vested upon them by the state, to pursue their own private motives.”<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, he argues that the “...state bureaucrats can also benefit from extracting economic surpluses from the masses and the state officials can

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<sup>36</sup> Wintrobe, 1998:29-30

<sup>37</sup> <http://encyclopedia.laborlawtalk.com>, 20/03/2004:1400hrs

<sup>38</sup> Olson, 1993:568

<sup>39</sup> Olson, 1993:569

<sup>40</sup> McGuire and Olson, 1996:80

<sup>41</sup> Fatton, 1992:22

<sup>42</sup> Fatton, 1992:44



develop political bases and control the allocation of resources....”<sup>43</sup> Buchanan also identifies the reality that politicians who try to go further in serving the public interest have a tendency of failing to survive in the political realm because serving public interest usually reduces the politician’s ability to serve the interests of special interest groups who might be influential in the selection of the politician into power. Politicians are therefore constantly forced to adhere to narrowly defined special interests otherwise they risk losing power.<sup>44</sup>

Wintrobe propounds that if a dictatorship is to have any permanence, institutions must be created or adhered to which eliminate the possibility of plots against the regime, through regular payments to the regimes’ supporters. He also points out that assuming that dictators are rational does not necessarily disregard the fact that they are capable of making erroneous decisions. In addition, dictators and the people that they rule suffer from what Wintrobe describes as “mutual communication problems” or lack of trust for each other. Both the dictators and their followers have a problem of presenting information that is most favourable to each other in order to maintain favour in each other’s sights. Followers of dictators normally provide information to show their loyalty to the dictator and to give assurance that they will continue to vote for him or her. On the side of the politician, this communication in both dictatorships and democracies is normally in the form of empty promises of support to the public.<sup>45</sup> Wintrobe however, points out that rational politicians have to provide citizens with some reasons to believe in them and they avoid cheating because the gains associated with assuming power are so large that on their own, they are enough to deter them from cheating their interest groups.<sup>46</sup>

Tullock asserts that individuals participate in collective action against a regime for their private benefits rather than devotion to the public. For example, he argues that organized protests against a regime are not easy and the probability of people opposing the government is mainly a function of people’s sense of economic contentment, which in this case is presented as having access to food. For politicians to avoid the risk of being voted out of office, they have to ensure contentment of those individuals or interest groups who

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<sup>43</sup> Fattouh, 1992:54-55

<sup>44</sup> Buchanan, 1993:1

<sup>45</sup> Wintrobe, 1998:25 , Rotberg, 2003:3

<sup>46</sup> Wintrobe, 1998:31

are likely to engage in collective action against them.<sup>47</sup> For the purpose of this study, food aid will be considered as a means that could be used by politicians in Zimbabwe, to serve the interests of particular interest groups who were likely to engage in action against the government as a result of the lack of contentment caused by food insecurity in the country. This brings us to the problems of clientelism and neopatrimonialism.

## 2.6 Clientelism and Neopatrimonialism

Clientelism occurs when patron-client types of relationships, based on the granting and giving of favours, pervade a political and administrative system, which is formally constructed on rational-legal terms. It has been argued that the convergence of ethnical interests after the decolonization of African states has resulted in patron client relationships and the personalization of states and authoritarian rule.<sup>48</sup> State resources are therefore not allocated according to a principle of economic rationality, but rather in terms of political rationality. The state in Africa has been argued as being shaped according to the wishes of the ruling politicians and as being utilized for the accumulation of personal gains and monopolization of the means of production by the same group of people.<sup>49</sup>

Neopatrimonialism is a broadly accepted term, used to describe clientelistic forms of political behaviour. Neopatrimonialism is therefore a form of clientelism which captures the reality that African states are hybrid states in which patrimonial activities coexist with modern bureaucracy. These states have clear constitutions which distinguish private from public functions, yet they are overridden by patrimonial behaviour which entails politicians and officeholders' expropriation of state resources for their personal benefits.<sup>50</sup> Neopatrimonialism emerges due to the major reason that individuals who acquire power fail to distinctly separate their individual goals from the public goals. Private goals are fulfilled at the expense of public goals. Neopatrimonialism therefore entails the scenarios facing most African states due to failure to maintain themselves as entirely public entities, divorced from the personal interests of constituent individuals.<sup>51</sup> Neopatrimonialism has been argued to be a continuation of patrimonialism which prevailed in colonial states and

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<sup>47</sup> Tullock, 1987:1-17

<sup>48</sup> Carment, 2003:412

<sup>49</sup> Chabal & Daloz, 1999:10

<sup>50</sup> van de Walle, 2001:52

<sup>51</sup> Clapham, 1996:45

which entailed the personalization of state property by the colonial leaders. Neopatrimonialism is therefore a practice of patrimonialism in the independent state by those who assumed power after independence from colonial rulers.<sup>52</sup>

Authority under a neopatrimonial state is ascribed to a person instead of an office-holder. This person is powerfully anchored in the social and political order. The ruler makes appointments of public personnel on the basis of patronage rather than merit.<sup>53</sup> Power in this case is exercised not as public service but as private property. Decision making power is centralized on the powerful authority. Those placed lower in the political hierarchy are just placeholders whose fate is in the hands of the political leader, to whom they owe loyalty. Those individuals aligned to the leadership have better chances of attaining their personal goals. Loyalty and kinship ties are therefore the backbone of such a system.<sup>54</sup>

Chabal and Daloz argue that the rational thing for politicians and state bureaucrats (patrons) is not to serve the state but to serve their communities and kin (clients).<sup>55</sup> The neopatrimonial state is therefore “a fertile breeding ground for clientelism” because of existing inequalities between those within and without government. “Patron-client relationships cannot be underestimated because they are characterized by resilience and flexibility and a degree of rationality for the interests of both patron and client which enable them to survive even the most drastic efforts to suspend them”. Control of the state means power to allocate benefits without obligations to maintain justice or efficiency as doing so may result in loss of political support. Those who provide support to a ruling politician will therefore realise their economic or social needs whilst those who are not identified as supporters are discriminated against irrespective of their neediness. Clientelism becomes the best option for as long as people are vulnerable to political and economic problems because it provides the only hope of alleviation from such vulnerability.<sup>56</sup> Exclusionary policies that favour one group of people have been described as major sources of erosion of

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<sup>52</sup> van de Walle, 2001:117

<sup>53</sup> Chabal & Daloz, 1999:6

<sup>54</sup> Clapham, 1996:46-49, Bayart, 1993:82

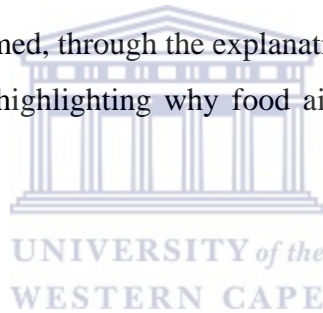
<sup>55</sup> Chabal and Daloz, 1999:15

<sup>56</sup> Fatton, 1992:

state legitimacy.<sup>57</sup> It has been argued that food policies have been employed as major instruments utilized by African governments to maintain neopatrimonialism.<sup>58</sup>

In summation, the Rational Choice Theory adopted in this paper indicates that individuals are motivated by their personal preferences. The New Political Economy of Democracy explains that politicians in democratic systems formulate policies as a means of saving their own interests, which is maximizing votes in order to maintain power. Autocrats provide public goods not to serve public interests but mainly to serve their own interests and personal gains. On the other hand, the New Political Economy of Interest Groups indicate that supporters of politicians, as interest groups also aim to attain certain benefits associated with their parties' assumption of political power. Finally, theories of neopatrimonialism and clientelism argue that states fail to adequately provide for all their citizens because resources are allocated not on the basis of need but to serve political interests.

This theoretical framework is aimed, through the explanation of the behaviour of politicians that it provides, at assisting in highlighting why food aid could have been politicized in Zimbabwe.



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<sup>57</sup> Carment, 2003:415

<sup>58</sup> Bird, Booth & Pratt, 2002:5-6

## CHAPTER 3

### BACKGROUND OF FOOD SECURITY IN ZIMBABWE

This chapter presents an outline of the food security situation in Zimbabwe from the year 2002 to 2004. The chapter begins with a description of the agro-ecological characteristics impacting on the agricultural productivity of the country. This is followed by a description of the economic background characterizing the food crisis in Zimbabwe where reasons for the food crisis facing the country are presented. Afterwards, an analysis of the political climate under which the food problems have emerged and in which food aid activities have been implemented is provided. The final section of this chapter provides a description of the food security situation prevalent in Zimbabwe between the period of 2000 and 2005. This is aimed to provide a background to the research problem.

#### 3.1 Agro-Ecological Background

Zimbabwe lies in the southern part of Africa and has a total land area of 39, 6 million hectares. Approximately 33 million hectares are reserved for agriculture purposes while the rest is reserved for national parks, forests and urban settlements. Climatic conditions in the country are mainly subtropical with one rainy season between November and March and this is the season when agriculture activities are at their peak.<sup>59</sup> Five natural regions with varying degrees of annual rainfall and production potential characterize the climate of the country. This agro-ecological climate impacts differently on the farming activities therefore agriculture production varies significantly across these regions. An outline of the geo-ecological zones<sup>60</sup> is presented below and a visual reflection of the geo-ecological zones is provided in annexure 2.<sup>61</sup>

#### **Region One and Two ( I & II ): Specialised and diversified intensive farming**

Annual rainfall is more than 750 mm in Region One and increases to more than 1000mm in Region Two. The latter is the most productive region of the country. The main agricultural activities include forestry, fruit production and intensive livestock rearing. Major crops are

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<sup>59</sup> AQUASTAT: <http://www.fao.org/ag/agl/aglw/aquastat/countries/zimbabwe/>

<sup>60</sup> Central Statistical Office (CSO), 1998:8

<sup>61</sup> [http://www.fao.org/documents/show\\_cdr.asp?url\\_file=/docrep/X5594E/X5594e03.htm](http://www.fao.org/documents/show_cdr.asp?url_file=/docrep/X5594E/X5594e03.htm) viewed on 3 October 2005

tobacco, maize and wheat. These regions cover 65 600 square kilometers which constitutes 17% of the total land area in the country.

**Region Three ( III ): ( *Semi-intensive farming* ).**

Annual rainfall varies between 650 and 800 mm. Main agricultural activities include livestock breeding, fodder and cash crops. Cash crops are mainly in the form of cotton, which has recently been diversified from previously commercial farms to small-scale subsistence farmers. This area has a marginal production of maize, tobacco and cotton. It covers 72 900 square kilometres and constitutes 19% of the total land area in the country.

**Region Four ( IV ): ( *Intensive farming* ).**

Annual rainfall is between 450 and 650 mm. Covering about 147 800 square kilometres (38% of total area), this area forms the largest part of the geographical regions in the country yet has next to least favourable climatic conditions for agricultural production. The specializations of this area include extensive livestock breeding and production of drought-resistant crops such as small grains (i.e. millet and rappoko).

**Region Five ( V ): ( *Semi-extensive farming* )**

The region receives too low and erratic rainfall to sustain even the most drought resistant crops. The main agricultural activities in this area include extensive cattle and game ranching and covers 104 400 km square kilometres which constitutes 27% of the total land area.

The natural Regions I and II are usually used as commercial farmland, which has since been disrupted by the fast tracking of land reform. As indicated above, the bulk of the land is located in the low potential Natural Regions IV and V. This land is mainly communal hence any slight unfavourable climatic changes are likely to worsen food productivity of the communities in this area.

Another problem hampering agricultural activities is the country's lack of irrigation capacity. The trend in the country has been that irrigation was concentrated in the large-scale commercial farms. This left the small farms and communal lands vulnerable to

unfavourable rainfall conditions. The negative impact was mostly felt during the recent period of recurrent droughts. In order to address the situation, the GoZ initiated some projects to introduce irrigation on the smaller scale farms, but these efforts have been hindered by the lack of capital and water availability. It has been suggested that irrigation is able to bring about economic progress in the form of improved infrastructure such as roads and electricity. This can result in improved access to food and health services for the communities.<sup>62</sup>

The urban populations in Zimbabwe were not spared from the food shortages, although these have been particularly acute in the communal (rural) areas and most especially those falling within Regions Three, Four and Five. Consequently, household poverty is intense in these communal areas as a result of the low-potential of the land in these regions.<sup>63</sup> Food aid interventions from the humanitarian agencies and the GoZ were therefore concentrated in these areas. Given this background, one can clearly see that an interplay of various factors contributed to the looming food shortages in Zimbabwe, thereby rendering food aid interventions inevitable. In an effort to contextualize the food aid interventions, it is important also to understand the political climate that characterized the country at the period under study. The next section of the paper thus presents the economic background characterizing this period of food problems and food aid distributions in Zimbabwe.

### **3.2 Economic Background to the Food Security situation**

Until the late 1990s, Zimbabwe was one of the fastest growing economies in the sub Sahara African continent. It was the world's largest producers of tobacco and a major exporter of food to its neighboring countries.<sup>64</sup> However, economic problems started to loom in the country and in 1999 Zimbabwe faced an unprecedented economic and social crisis. The economic problems have been largely attributed to the poor implementation of the IMF structural adjustment policies<sup>65</sup> and the land reform strategies, which resulted in losses of

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<sup>62</sup> AQUASTAT: <http://www.fao.org/ag/agl/aglw/aquastat/countries/zimbabwe/>

<sup>63</sup> CSO, 1998:52

<sup>64</sup> Europa Development:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/body/country/country\\_home\\_en.cfm?cid=zw&status=new](http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/body/country/country_home_en.cfm?cid=zw&status=new). 25 October 2005.

<sup>65</sup> Kagoro cited in Cornwall,2003:8

livelihoods for a significant number of the population and had an extremely negative impact on the foreign currency revenue of the country.<sup>66</sup>

By 1999 the economy in Zimbabwe was already ailing due to the detrimental effects of the poor implementation of the structural adjustment programmes. Real economic growth decelerated from an average annual rate of 4% during the period before the structural adjustment programmes were introduced to 0, 9% after the structural adjustments.<sup>67</sup> By 2000, unemployment rates of above 60% resulted in the erosion of household savings and the diminishing of purchasing power and eventually decreased household food security levels substantially.<sup>68</sup> A report issued in 1999 by the Central Statistical Office estimated that 76 percent of Zimbabwe's population lived in poverty which is “widespread and severe, poverty, with a high degree of inequality, even by regional standards”.<sup>69</sup>

As indicated earlier, the land reforms which were implemented in 2000 (see section 5.1.4) exacerbated the economic downturn in the country. This led to a reduction in foreign exchange reserves, impacted by the reduced tobacco and cotton exports, and placed increasing pressure on food imports.<sup>70</sup> In addition, markets for beef and dairy products were lost hence exacerbating the foreign revenue.<sup>71</sup> The tourist industry also suffered a downturn following the attacks against the white farmers as a consequence of the poor implementation of the land reform and hence also reduced the foreign revenue. Furthermore, the growing scarcity of foreign exchange resulted in price increases for industrial materials and this translated into the closure of a significant number of industries, worsening unemployment and reducing purchasing power of the affected families. A looming electricity and fuel crisis caused by the foreign currency shortages faced the country. The fuel shortages threatened to cripple the manufacturing industry and agriculture sector and impacted negative on the already weakened productive sector and the distribution of food within the country<sup>72</sup>. Table 3.1 highlights the basic economic indicators characterizing the country according to the United Nations analysis.

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<sup>66</sup> Hammar,Raftopolous & Jensen,2003:105

<sup>67</sup> Kanyenze, 2003:15.

<sup>68</sup> WFP: EMOP10290, 2003:4

<sup>69</sup> CSO,2003:4

<sup>70</sup> Hammar,Raftopolous & Jensen,2003:105 & Drimmie,2003:24

<sup>71</sup> Robertson cited in Cornwall,2003:47

<sup>72</sup> Robertson cited in Cornwell,2003:48



**Table 3.1 1 Basic Economic Indicators for Zimbabwe from 2001-2004<sup>73</sup>**

Indicator	Time Frame			
	2001	2002	2003	2004
GDP(USD bn)	4.7	4.8	4.6	4.6
GDP per capita (US\$)	365	373	359	354
GNI per capita (US\$)	434	422	387	351
Real GDP growth	-7.6	-2.7	-4.9	-9.7
Inflation	74.5	134.5	384.7	381.4
Current account balance (% GDP)	9.8	-11.9	-8.3	-6.8

It can be deduced from the data indicated above that inflation rose from 74.5% in 2001 to a yearly average of 381.4% by 2004. Inflation is still accelerating, but the official inflation figures are illusory because they are based on controlled prices which do not reflect prices in the thriving parallel market.<sup>74</sup> High levels of inflation are associated with the inability to access basic goods and services for livelihood. The consumer price index for the month of September 2003 reflected a year on year change of 419% for food items, 275% for medical care and 262% for education<sup>75</sup>. These astounding inflation figures reflect how the livelihoods of Zimbabweans were restrained. The year on year inflation was largely accounted for by increases in the average price of basic commodities such as bread, meat, cereals, fruits and vegetables. The living standards of people therefore fell drastically from 2001 to 2003.<sup>76</sup> The black market proliferated and some basic commodities could be found there. The black market prices however escalated beyond the reach of the average Zimbabwean, in the urban but especially in the communal areas.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>73</sup><http://unstats.un.org/unsd/snaama/resultsCountry.asp?Country=716&SLevel=99&Selection=country&x=44&y=10#GNI>

<sup>74</sup> Europa Development:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/body/country/country\\_home\\_en.cfm?cid=zw&status=new](http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/body/country/country_home_en.cfm?cid=zw&status=new). 25 October 2005.

<sup>75</sup> Central Statistical Office, 10 October 2003.

<sup>76</sup> CSO, 2003:1.

<sup>77</sup> Central Statistical Office (CSO):<http://www.herald.co.zw:15.09.2005>.

### 3.3 Background of the Political situation in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe attained independence from Britain after a liberation war which was led by the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) and Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) forces which were aligned to the ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU parties respectively. The former was highly dominated by the Shona people in the Northern part (Mashonaland) of the country and the latter being largely comprised of the Ndebele people from the Southern part (Matebeleland). The ZANU PF party leader, Robert Mugabe, became the country's first democratically elected prime minister in 1980 and assumed presidency in 1987. He is still in power.<sup>78</sup>

Immediately after independence, divisions within the two major parties were brought about by power struggles between the ZANLA and the ZIPRA forces, which were liberation combatants aligned to the two parties respectively. The divisions threatened to shake the ZANU-PF's position of power. The ZANU-PF led 5<sup>th</sup> brigade branch of the Zimbabwe defence forces army retaliated in 1983, and attacks popularly known as the Matebeleland massacres, were made against the ZIPRA and the general Matebeleland people, who were rendered as planning to topple the ruling party.<sup>79</sup> Reports indicate that thousands of atrocities, including mass murders, beatings and maiming took place.<sup>80</sup> It is estimated that more than 6000 people were killed in these massacres. This marked the first brutality of the ZANU-PF rule and the perpetrators were never put to retribution.<sup>81</sup>

According to the constitution of Zimbabwe, which was drafted under negotiations for independence at the Lancaster House conference in Britain in 1979, the country is a multi-party democracy. The president<sup>82</sup> and legislators are elected into power through democratic elections which are held every six years and five years respectively.<sup>83</sup> It is however generally believed that the ruling of the ZANU-PF has resulted in a de-facto one party state. Political analysts contend that the ideology of the ZANU-PF party aimed at establishing

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<sup>78</sup> Election Commissions Forum For SADC Countries( ECFSADC),2000:12

<sup>79</sup> Blair,2002:29

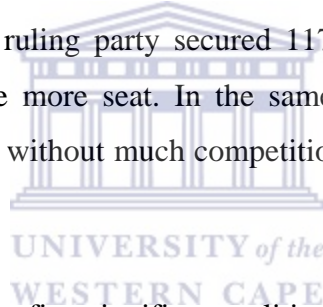
<sup>80</sup> Legal Resources Foundation (LRF) and the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP): [http://www.hrforumzim.com/members\\_reports/matrep/matreppart2a.htm](http://www.hrforumzim.com/members_reports/matrep/matreppart2a.htm),ECFSADC,200:12& Kagoro cited in Cornwell,2003:10

<sup>81</sup> Melbar,2002:9

<sup>82</sup> Zimbabwe Constitution, Article 58: Section 29(1),1996:18

<sup>83</sup> *ibid*, Section 41:23

this one-party state.<sup>84</sup> It has been pointed out that this was de-facto achieved when ZANU-PF managed to coerce the equally popular PF-ZAPU into a Unity accord which was signed in 1987.<sup>85</sup> The Unity accord also marked the end of the massacres against the PF-ZAPU and its people. The sixth article of the Unity accord reveals that the two parties sought “to establish a one party state”. The president also presented that: “when you hear us talk about a one-party state, we are thinking that a one party state would give Zimbabwe greater space and greater democracy”. Critics however argued that the one party state was unfavorable because it makes leaders complacent because of a lack of political competition.<sup>86</sup> The leadership of President Mugabe has also been accused of being synonymous with dictatorship.<sup>87</sup> In addition to the support that the ZANU-PF party had attained from the people, due to its role in liberating the country from the colonial regime, the unity accord also strengthened the support by fighting off any significant political opposition against the party. ZANU-PF hence enjoyed relative peace and political monopoly for more than a decade.<sup>88</sup> The second elections held in 1986 saw the party winning with very little opposition. Again, in 1990 the ruling party secured 117 seats out of the 120 that were elected and in 1995 it won one more seat. In the same period, President Mugabe also managed to retain his leadership without much competition.<sup>89</sup> This peace was however not to last for another decade.



In 1998, the country witnessed the first significant political violence since the Matebeleland Massacres. This violence was characterized by police and army brutalization of civilians who participated in the food riots that year. These food riots emanated from shortages of basic food commodities such as bread, vegetable oil and maize meal. This was also amid speculations that a new political party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) was rising, perpetrated by the discontent emanating from the poor economic scenario, which was prevalent in the country.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Mandaza and Sachikonye, 1991:1

<sup>85</sup> Makumbe cited in Cornwall,2003:35

<sup>86</sup> Moyo, Makumbe, Raftopoulos, 200:42

<sup>87</sup> Makumbe cited in Cornwall,2003:29

<sup>88</sup> Blair,2002:37

<sup>89</sup> ECFSADC,2000:12

<sup>90</sup> Hammar,Raftopoulos&Jensen,2003:6-8

In 1999, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) was formed to oppose the ZANU-PF in the 2000 parliamentary elections. The party is headed by Morgan Tsvangirai, and Gibson Sibanda who are both ex-leaders in the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Union (ZCTU) and of the National Constitutional Assembly. The NCA is a coalition of NGOs and civil society groups born to campaign for a more democratic constitution in Zimbabwe, and the ZCTU is the mother board of workers trade unions which stands for the grievances of the country's working class. Some political analysts have described Mr. Tsvangirai's moves as capitalizing on the negative relations that the ruling government had created with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) after failing to meet its debt obligations and failing to address social problems of poverty and unemployment in the country. This is born from the fact that Mr. Tsvangirai made it clear that his party supports the "free market" and the IMF's structural adjustment programme. The MDC's slogan "Chinja Maitiro, Gugula Izenzo" meaning "Let's change things" is an attempt to mobilize support on the basis of discontent with the Mugabe regime.<sup>91</sup>

The challenges the MDC posed to the ZANU-PF were evidenced in the manner in which the party managed to gain political support within a short time after its inception.<sup>92</sup> In February of 2000, the government held a constitutional referendum aimed at amending some important aspects of the constitution. The NCA, from which the leadership of the MDC was born, played a significant role in campaigning for a no vote against the referendum. This was achieved when the majority voted against the referendum. It is agreed that the fact that the proposed constitution, among other things, allowed for the president to stand for two more terms of office reflected that Mr. Mugabe was to strengthen his grip on power hence the no vote.<sup>93</sup> The ruling party and the government blamed the MDC for coercing people against their favour.<sup>94</sup> Moyo, Makumbe and Raftopoulos point out that a growing critique of ZANU-PF's monopolization of politics emerged in the context of the erosion of the ruling party's legitimacy and hegemony in the country.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Cornwall,2003:18

<sup>92</sup> Makumbe cited in Cornwall,2003:27

<sup>93</sup> *ibid* & Cornwall,2003:13

<sup>94</sup> Cornwall,2003:8

<sup>95</sup> Moyo, Makumbe and Raftopoulos,2000:22

The loss of the referendum vote in 2000 therefore marked the first defeat of the ruling party since independence in 1980. This defeat has been termed as the first major wake up call sent to the ruling party. To win back the waning political support, the Government engaged in several desperate measures. It has been suggested from some quarters that the land reform initiated in 2000 was the most powerful weapon that the government resorted to use for winning back political support. This followed the fact that the majority of the black poor still had no meaningful land to cultivate hence equipping them with land would be a significant step towards improved livelihoods.<sup>96</sup>

In June of 2000, the MDC became the first party that managed to gain significant support in the country since independence. It won 57 out of 120 seats in the parliamentary elections and in the presidential elections that followed in 2002, the party's leader lost to Mr. Mugabe by a slight percentage.<sup>97</sup> The table below indicates the results of the 2000 parliamentary and 2002 presidential elections.<sup>98</sup>

**Table 3.1 2: Election Results for 2000 and 2002 in Zimbabwe<sup>99</sup>**

<b>Party</b>	<b>Percentage votes 2000 Parliamentary election</b>	<b>Percentage votes 2002 Presidential election</b>
<b>ZANU-PF</b>	48.32	56.2
<b>MDC</b>	47.05	42.0
<b>Others</b>	4.63	01.4

Since the apparent success of the MDC, the country has witnessed a breakdown in the rule of law, which was marked by the invasions of the formerly white people owned land, led by the Zimbabwe Liberation War Veterans Association affiliated to the ZANU-PF.<sup>100</sup> Additionally, the political freedom in the country has lessened considerably. Civil society operates on a volatile environment characterized by torture to anyone who is seen as going against the government of the day. Those who speak out against the government are also

<sup>96</sup> Makumbe cited in Cornwall,2003:27, Hammar, Raftopoulos & Jansen,2003,19 and the whole book presents a thorough analysis of the land reform process in Zimbabwe.

<sup>97</sup> ECFSADC,2000;52

<sup>98</sup> ECFSADC:2000;52

<sup>99</sup> ECFSADC,2000;52 and <http://psephos.adam-carr.net/countries/z/zimbabwe/zimbabwe20002.txt> and SADC Parliamentary Forum,2002:9&22

<sup>100</sup> ECFSADC:2000

considered to be enemies or sellouts to the white people who have been rendered as enemies to the country because of their alleged affiliation to the MDC party. Draconian laws synonymous with the colonial regime, which limit the freedoms of the country's populous, have also been introduced. For example, the most unpopular has been the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) which inhibits gatherings of people in numbers of more than five without the clearance by the police. This was apparently meant at inhibiting the MDC from campaigning for political support.<sup>101</sup> The country has also since witnessed an increase in the abuse of human rights and the deprivation of the freedom of expression for the media and the public at large.

Reports of the campaigns for the referendum, parliamentary and presidential elections in 2000 and 2002 respectively, indicate that these prohibitive laws have been used to thwart any meaningful demonstrations or gatherings by the civic society or the political opposition.<sup>102</sup> In other research carried by the AMANI Trust and the Physicians for Human rights, it has been revealed that the police, the army and the state secret security agents (CIO) topped the lists of those engaging in massive brutal attacks on the MDC leadership and civilians, especially those who participated in peaceful demonstrations against the government.<sup>103</sup> A new breed of perpetrators of violence also arose from the youth militias who have been trained under the national service programme. Critiques have argued that the militias are trained on the propaganda of the ZANU–PF in a bid to make them the watchdogs of the ruling party in the communities in which they live in. Evidence amassed by human rights organisations in the country, apparently based on the testimonies of some of the repentant militias, reveal that the training which they are put through, instills violence in them especially against the MDC supporters. Others also confessed to having killed, maimed raped or committed crimes against people suspected or known to be of the opposition.<sup>104</sup> This violence also served to instill fear especially in the rural populace, hence thwarting chances of rebelling against the ruling party. In some cases, the traditional leadership has been cited as being watchdogs of the ruling party, working hand in hand with the other agents of violence to ensure support from their communities.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Hammar,Raftopoulos & Jensen,2003:61

<sup>102</sup> EFSADC, Blair, Henning, SADC Parliamentary Forum,2002:xi

<sup>103</sup> AMANI Trust,2002:11&Physicians for Human Rights,2002:6

<sup>104</sup> ibid

<sup>105</sup> Human Rights Watch Consultant,2005:31,Human Rights Watch,2003,11

Furthermore, since the conception of the white tolerant strong political opposition in the country, the ruling party has increasingly become suspicious of the western countries which they suspect of endeavoring to topple the ruling regime. It is largely assumed that these suspicions follow the fact that the MDC absorbed a sizeable number of the white commercial farmers whose land was seized for redistribution. Some of these whites were the top leaders and sponsors of the MDC party.<sup>106</sup> Consequently, relations between the ruling party and the western world continue to worsen by the day. As a sign of discontent, the European Union and the United States of America imposed smart sanctions on the president and the senior members of the ruling party which restrict travel to European countries and a freeze on all their assets abroad. The western countries have presented that the Zimbabwean situation is void of any meaningful democracy.<sup>107</sup> This dramatic crescendo of political events characterises the environment under which food problems in Zimbabwe have arisen.

### **3.4 The Food Security Situation**

As indicated before, in 2002, the food security in the Southern Africa region was reported to be at its lowest level since 1992, when a devastating drought struck ten countries in the region. Out of these, six countries namely, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe were left with approximately 13 million people facing a severe food crisis. These countries had generally benefited from sustained periods of peace and stability in past years, allowing national governments to focus on development priorities.<sup>108</sup> However these shocks threatened to erode these development efforts.

Just as the severity of the food security crises varied from country to country, so did the contributing factors. In Zimbabwe, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (UNFAO), cited in WFP, argued that the Government's inability to buy and import sufficient grain, a ban on private sector commercial grain imports and price controls resulted in the draining of the country's food stocks.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Cornwall,2003:21

<sup>107</sup> <http://www.immigration.com/newsletter/zimbabwe.html>

<sup>108</sup> WFP EMOP 10200,2002:1

<sup>109</sup> WFP EMOP10240,2001:4

Importantly also, the land reform undertaken by the government in the same period was also blamed for the collapse of the commercial farming sector. In 2000 the government of Zimbabwe undertook a land reform programme which was aimed at distributing land from the large scale farmers to small scale farmers and the poor landless families in the country. The programme was however implemented in a hurried and haphazard manner. This led to disruptions of the country's commercial agricultural sector and impacted negatively on the food security of the country. It is generally contended that the land reform programme resulted in a massive decrease in the production of the maize, a staple food crop, because of underutilization of the redistributed land by its new owners.<sup>110</sup> Bird, Booth and Pratt presented that the land distribution in Zimbabwe was used by the ruling party as a means to woo political support instead of addressing the land problems of the poor people that it was supposed to. They argue that inherent in this land distribution were neopatrimonialistic tendencies defined through the fact that the government used state resources to meet its own interests, in this case abuse of land at the expense of food security.<sup>111</sup>

Estimations of crop production in 2002 indicated that cereal production fell by 57% as a direct result of the year 2001's already poor harvest. During this period the country suffered from a lack of grain for sale for the majority of the people.

In addition, the food security of the country was exacerbated by extremely high rates of HIV/AIDS,<sup>112</sup> which affects approximately 24% of the productive adult population.<sup>113</sup> In 1998/1999 a decrease in crop acreage was identified as related to the HIV/AIDS impact, such as reduction of labour due to deaths.<sup>114</sup>

In the period between 2002 and 2003, Zimbabwe continued to face massive food shortages despite other countries having recuperated from the crisis.<sup>115</sup> In fact, during this period, the country was reportedly facing an estimated total cereal deficit of 1,869,000 metric tonnes (MT). This situation continued into the period after the 2003-2004 harvests when reports showed that the country faced an estimated cereal gap of more than 1 million (MT) and a

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<sup>110</sup> Drimmie, 2003:24

<sup>111</sup> Bird, Booth & Pratt, 2002:8, see also Sachikonye, 2002:15-17

<sup>112</sup> Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET), 2003:1

<sup>113</sup> World Health Organisation (WHO):2004

<sup>114</sup> Futures Group International, 1999

<sup>115</sup> FEWSNET, 2003:1



potential net import requirement of approximately 800,000 MT for the 2003/04-consumption year.<sup>116</sup>

Table 3.3 illustrated below reflects the populations in need and the food aid needs for the affected SADC countries during the period of June 2003 to April 2004.<sup>117</sup>

**Table 3.3: Projected Food Aid needs for the SADC countries.**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Population in need as a Percentage (%ge) of total Population</b>	<b>Cereal food aid needed as a %ge of national requirements</b>
<b>Zimbabwe</b>	46	33
<b>Malawi</b>	28	11
<b>Zambia</b>	21	10
<b>Mozambique</b>	3	2
<b>Swaziland</b>	21	7
<b>Region</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>13</b>

According to indications from the joint WFP and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) assessments of 2003/2004, the causes of food shortages in this period still emanated from erratic weather conditions and accelerated household economic decline. Deaths from HIV/AIDS also continued to cripple the productivity of the agriculture sector.<sup>118</sup>

In Zimbabwe, these food shortages and massive economic decline consequently threatened the lives and livelihoods of a significant number of households and potentially even of whole communities. These also included the redundant farm workers, many of whom were

<sup>116</sup> World Food Programme Emergency Operation ( WFP EMOP) 10290.0:1

<sup>117</sup> WFP EMOP 10200:2

<sup>118</sup> WFP EMOP 10290, 2003:1

left out of the land reform programme and therefore had no land to cultivate. Some assessments also revealed that even some of the newly re-settled farmers lacked adequate resources to meet all their food needs.<sup>119</sup> Generally, an overview of the SADC region has also led to conclusions that the nutritional situation in the Southern Africa region is characterized by high levels of chronic malnutrition especially among children of less than five years of age. Malnutrition is known to be a potential cause of physical and mental retardation.<sup>120</sup>

The government of Zimbabwe on its own however, continued to lack the capacity to import adequate amounts of maize to cover the persistent cereal deficit.<sup>121</sup> A reflection of this incapacity is provided in Table 3.4 which presents the actual maize distribution as a percentage of actual projected need per province.

**Table 3.4: Total maize sales as a percentage of projected need per province.<sup>122</sup>**

Province	2002	2003	2004
	%	%	%
Harare	837.49	589.39	629.93
Mash West	5.31	3.08	5.14
Mash East	27.42	15.89	16.65
Mash Central	15.11	8.76	7.81
Manicaland	44.03	20.57	19.73
Midlands	40.83	12.77	23.08
Mat South	39.24	23.82	34.54
Mat North	42.74	23.98	36.00
Bulawayo	96.07	55.67	68.82
Masvingo	39.22	24.11	27.50

From the above illustration, it can be observed that the GMB only managed to meet more than half of the total maize requirements in two provinces, that is, Bulawayo and Harare, in

<sup>119</sup>Parliament of Zimbabwe, Report of the Portfolio Committee on Agriculture and Land Affairs (S:C6):2003:9 & 12

<sup>120</sup> WFP EMOP 10290:1

<sup>121</sup> FEWSNET, 2003:4,Zimrights-Solagral,2002:1-2 and recently also the Zimbabwean permanent secretary for Agriculture, Simon Pazvakavambwa announced that the GMB was only importing less than half the cereal requirements of the nation: Zimbabwe Herald, 7<sup>th</sup> September 2005.

<sup>122</sup> Derived from GMB, 2005:1

the period between 2002 and 2004. Thus, the food shortages resulted in a desperate situation across the country that required immediate humanitarian assistance. Relief aid was consequently a significant part of the efforts put forward to fight against starvation in the country. These efforts involved participation of both the government and the international community through governmental and non-governmental organizations.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FOOD AID DISTRIBUTION IN ZIMBABWE**

This section provides a discussion of the findings of the empirical field research. The chapter firstly presents an outline of the main actors of the food aid distribution in Zimbabwe which were the GMB and NGOs. The roles played by the traditional leaders and the councillors within the GMB programmes are also highlighted. Thereafter a discussion of the implementation of the de jure and de facto beneficiary selection criteria of the GMB and the NGOs programme will be presented.

#### **4.1 MAIN ACTORS IN FOOD AID DISTRIBUTION IN ZIMBABWE**

This section presents an outline of the main actors of food aid in Zimbabwe. The main actors that were involved in the food aid distribution in Zimbabwe were the GMB and a number of international and local NGOs who operated under the World Food Programme umbrella. The GMB programme mainly involved the distribution of subsidised maize to the vulnerable rural people in the country. On the other hand, the international donor community, led by the World Food Programme of the United Nations teamed up with international and local NGOs and also distributed relief aid to the vulnerable populations. The sections below present a detailed outline of the food aid programme of the GMB and to a lesser extent of the NGO sector because the main scope of this research focuses on the activities of the GMB.

##### **4.1.1 The Grain Marketing Board**

The GMB is a parastatal of the government of Zimbabwe, which plays a leading role in the food security upkeep of the nation. The history of this board dates back to the colonial era, having been formed under the Maize Control Act of 1931. The major purpose of the board was to enable producers to get a fair share of the local markets and to guard against producers' losing out to externally guaranteed markets. Another goal was to guarantee the availability of adequate food supplies for the local people either from internal production or from food imports. These aims still comprise the focus of the GMB, but the board has also moved further from development and social aspects of food security to the

commercialization of the agricultural products of the nation.<sup>123</sup> Despite its incapacity resulting from the problems of lack of foreign currency, the GMB attempted to address food shortages facing the people through engaging itself in the distribution of aid. This move by the state, of engaging itself in matters of food aid, is in line with Sobhan's argument that such actions reflect the role played by political decisions in the allocation of scarce resources.<sup>124</sup>

Even though the board claims that its activities take place without political interference, criticisms have been leveled against the structure of the board in terms of its directorate and the manner in which tasks are fulfilled at the senior level.<sup>125</sup> As indicated under the theory of neopatrimonialism, the roles of government bureaucrats cannot be separated from politics because the same bureaucrats who sit in government offices and parastatals are selected by senior government members who themselves are appointed on a political ticket.<sup>126</sup> This is also the case with the GMB situation. To give examples, firstly, the board recently appointed a former senior member of the defence forces, Colonel Samuel Muvuti, as the GMB's Chief Executive Officer. This is clearly a political decision and has enhanced animosity between the ruling party and the opposition.<sup>127</sup> Secondly, the appointment of a senior ZANU PF member (a boss of the controversial secret agency of the ruling party, the Central Intelligence Officers (CIO)) as the chairperson of the food security taskforce, which is responsible for major decision-making within the board, has amassed suspicions towards the supposed political neutrality of the board's activities. Others have likewise argued that the move by the president, of placing the GMB under a taskforce for security issues where issues to do with the state security, (defence) especially secret agent activities are dealt with, is a move with political connotations. These arguments assert that by so doing, the GoZ has moved the right to food further away from those aligned to the opposition, thereby creating discrepancies in the manner in which food is allocated within the country. The

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<sup>123</sup> Interviews with Mr. Tendai, 15 June 2005, Ms. Nyowani, 16 June 2005, Stoneman & Thompson, 1994:20 and GMB: [www.gmbdura.org](http://www.gmbdura.org).

<sup>124</sup> Sobhan, 1990:82

<sup>125</sup> MDC shadow Minister Mr. Renson Gasela cited in The Zimbabwe Herald, 18 August 2005.

<sup>126</sup> Interview with Mr. Pasirayi, 15 July 2005

<sup>127</sup> Both local and international observers have expressed concern towards the manner in which democratic institutions are observed by the country's government and the ruling party and its leader have been labeled dictators by political observers at large.

arguments are born from the general contention that in Zimbabwe, the defense forces have been pronounced to be the machine gun of the ruling party.<sup>128</sup>

Furthermore, interviews with some staff of the board revealed that the appointment of the staff of the GMB is to an extent, dependent upon candidates' identification with the ruling party. Indications are that their survival in office depends on the political heavyweights who sit in the highest chairs of the board. One employee of the board reiterated:

“...even though we are appointed on the basis of our educational qualifications and capabilities, it is an unwritten law that one has to be a supporter of the ruling party, pledge your support after assumption of office or at least pretend that you are part of them, otherwise you lose your job”.<sup>129</sup>

The policies implemented by the GMB concerning the food security issues of the country seem to reflect influence of politics. Firstly, the GMB maintained a monopolisation of the importation of staple grains in the country for a long period of time.<sup>130</sup> This monopoly resulted in the restriction of the movement of grain into the country. Roadblocks were mounted between the years 2002 and 2004, to control the movement of grain from the rural areas to the urban areas. Farmers were also forced to sell exclusively to the state marketing board at prices which were normally below market prices resulting in reduced incentives to sell, hence exaggerating the grain shortages.<sup>131</sup> The move to relinquish the GMB of its monopoly over grain importation was only announced in August 2005 despite calls for liberalisation from as early as 2000.<sup>132</sup> Massive calls for liberalisation especially amounted from private traders who had the capacity to assist in alleviating food shortages in the country. Amnesty International asserted that the monopoly of the state-controlled Grain Marketing Board has been used by the government to manipulate food for political purposes.<sup>133</sup> Similarly Jaynes and Jones reasoned that: “while the need for more flexible price setting in a market environment has been underscored ... senior politicians still

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<sup>128</sup> Makumbe, cited in Cornwell, 2003:38-39

<sup>129</sup> Interview with Mrs. Magaro & Mr. Tendai, 15 June 2005

<sup>130</sup> Jayne & Jones, 1996:2-3

<sup>131</sup> Ibid

<sup>132</sup> The UN recommended for the liberalization of the importation of maize see above discussions under the Country Background Section

<sup>133</sup> Amnesty, 2004:1

continued to exercise their control over the marketing boards' price setting in Zimbabwe.”<sup>134</sup>

Secondly, the lack of adequate policies concerning the gathering of food security information resulted in the use of inaccurate methods of data collection concerning expected crop yields in the country. It was identified that the crop forecasts had been based on expected averages (1.5 tonnes maize /hectare) which had been applied across the country despite the differences existing across the different agriculture zones in the country.<sup>135</sup> Thus the food allocated was not sufficient to cater for the food needs of all needy people.<sup>136</sup> At the beginning of the 2004 harvesting period, the WFP was forced to withdraw its services from the 4.5 million people it was feeding in the country after the GMB had confessed recuperation from food shortages, as a result of erroneous decisions based on inaccurate planning methods. Consequently, food allocations per province were based on these incorrect forecasts. Commenting on the food situation of the country, the President uttered: “We are not hungry, why foist this food on us? We don’t want to be choked.” This falsification of the country’s food scenario was argued as a way in which the government used food policies as a political weapon.<sup>137</sup>

Finally, a lack of enabling working relationship with other stakeholders in the fight to restore food security may have resulted in the failure of the GMB to achieve the mandate of the food aid programmes. It is the contention of other actors in the food distribution process that the GMB programmes were highly inaccessible to stakeholders.<sup>138</sup> The public was not given the opportunity to review policies that affected them, for example through community meetings. Also there were limited information services.<sup>139</sup> Information on the food distribution was not easily accessible and ordinary people were afraid of raising questions or complaints. Food experts from NGOs indicated that their efforts to get figures on GMB stocks were often frustrated. Information concerning food aid was constantly guarded jealously and this resulted in inadequate planning for addressing the food needs of

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<sup>134</sup> Jayne& Jones, 1996:2

<sup>135</sup> Parliament of Zimbabwe:10 November 2004:6

<sup>136</sup> ibid

<sup>137</sup> Human Rights Watch, Consultancy, 2005:46

<sup>138</sup> Interview with Ms. Mutopo,12 July 2005, Mr. Nyamutsaka 15 June 2005 & Mr. Muneka,10 July 2005 & Ms Makonese,10 July 2005

<sup>139</sup> Interview with Mr. Pasirayi,15 July 2005

the country. It was concluded that this scenario left inadequate room for the complementing of relief efforts.<sup>140</sup>

#### **4.1.2 Traditional Leaders and Councillors**

As mentioned earlier, this research also focused on analyzing the roles of other actors within the GMB food distributions. This section will provide a brief analysis of the roles of the traditional leaders and the councillors in the rural communities.

A traditional leader is a legitimate ruler of the people by virtue of their claim to ownership of a particular area of land. The legitimacy of a traditional leader is based on a shared value system and is also derived from kinship and descent.<sup>141</sup> In Zimbabwe, traditional leaders are the chiefs, village heads and headmen. The village head has jurisdiction over one village (on average, 25 households), whereas headmen have jurisdiction over more than five villages. The chief is the overall leader with jurisdiction over many villages and sometimes even whole districts. According to the tradition and culture of the people, a traditional leader is supposed to work towards maintaining the moral values of the society and guard against cultural erosion.<sup>142</sup> The survival of traditional leaders in power is purportedly not dependant on maintaining favours in the eyes of the people, but in executing their roles as proficiently as they can. Traditional leaders are normally looked upon as moral leaders, hence draw a lot of respect from their people. A good traditional leader is not expected to discriminate or favour only one group of his people.<sup>143</sup>

The authority and legitimacy of the traditional leaders was however altered after independence with the introduction of new local government structures for resource management. This saw the emergence of the elected village development committees (VIDCOs) and ward development committees (WADCOs) with the former being led by the village heads and the latter by councilors.<sup>144</sup> Mamimine and Mandiverengei assert that these structures are more political than administrative structures.<sup>145</sup> The interaction of this traditional leadership with the modern government institutions have led to a compromise in

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<sup>140</sup> Interview with Mr. Ganga, 12 July 2005 & Mrs. Veremu, 15 June 2005.

<sup>141</sup> Mamimine & Mandiverengei, 2001:2

<sup>142</sup> ibid

<sup>143</sup> ibid

<sup>144</sup> Mamimine & Mandiverengei, 2001:3

<sup>145</sup> ibid



the legitimacy of the traditional leaders and resulted in their becoming political party agents.<sup>146</sup> It is pointed out that the modern institutions of governance (councillors) have tried to woo traditional leaders and the communities to their side.<sup>147</sup> Thomas also argues that these structures have resulted in the emasculation of traditional institutions and asserts that this was done in order to serve the needs of the new political order.<sup>148</sup>

To elaborate further on how the traditional leaders in Zimbabwe have become engraved into politics, it is important to provide a brief background. After assuming independence, the ruling ZANU-PF party introduced monthly allowances to benefit the traditional leaders in the country. Just after the 2002 presidential elections, the government significantly raised the allowances of the traditional leaders by an average of 300%. Chiefs were also allocated with lucrative vehicle schemes and benefited from a fast tracked rural housing electrification programme. The government revealed that these allowances were made as fulfillments to promises made during the run up to the 2002 presidential elections.<sup>149</sup> These moves have led to propositions that the ruling party wanted to ensure that traditional leaders remain loyal to the ruling party. In fact it has been argued that these efforts were done to create incentives for the local leaders, so they could keep their eyes on the political activities of the people within their areas and to campaign for the ruling party, thereby ensuring that the ruling party maintains support in the rural areas. Opposition parties have argued that this scenario has resulted in the ruling party maintaining the largest number of votes in the rural areas as evidenced by the election results since the year 2000.<sup>150</sup> The following is a brief account of the councillor's roles.

A councillor is a local government official responsible for coordinating governance issues at ward level. A councillor is voted into power on a political ticket and the position is not necessarily based on one's proven capability of executing government tasks but on their political muscle.

Within the GMB programmes, the roles of the traditional leaders and councillors were mainly concerned with the selection of food aid beneficiaries, registration and

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<sup>146</sup> Human Rights Watch, 2005:14

<sup>147</sup> *ibid*:4

<sup>148</sup> Thomas, 1991:10

<sup>149</sup> Human Rights Watch Consultancy, 2005:25

<sup>150</sup> 65% of the household interviews in both districts

dissemination of information concerning the food aid programmes, such as the dates of registration into the programme and the dates of food aid deliveries.<sup>151</sup> It was also indicated that the local leaders could also collect money from registered households and would in turn purchase the maize and distribute it to the respective beneficiaries. Alternatively, the GMB stipulated that respective households purchase maize from the GMB selling points when they were available at the ward level or district levels.<sup>152</sup> In Goromonzi, though the councillors played a larger leading role than in the Seke district, the field research results showed a small difference of 7% from the traditional leaders. In the Goromonzi district it was also identified that besides the two forms of leadership playing the major roles in terms of beneficiary selection, self selection (whereby households volunteer to have their names placed on the list) also occurred in some cases, especially when initially selected households failed to purchase the food because of various reasons, for example lack of money or lack of need.

The traditional leaders and councillors also played a role in the NGO programmes. According to the research findings, in the Seke district, it was identified that the traditional leaders (village head and/or headman/chiefs) were most influential in the selection of beneficiaries at village levels.

The involvement of the traditional leaders and councillors in the identification of beneficiary households can also be argued as involving political connotations. It has been asserted that at the village level, politics played a significant role in determining who gets what. Later on, under the section on “the major actors’ beneficiary selection criteria” (chapter 5.3), the positions of these two forms of leadership will be examined in order to clarify why their involvement in the allocation of resources lead to allegations of politicization of food aid.

#### **4.1.2 Non Governmental Organisations**

This section looks at the role of NGOs or humanitarian agencies as major actors in the distribution of relief food in Zimbabwe. The section will not dwell on the nitty-gritty’s of the NGO operations, but will afford a brief overview of the NGO activities in order to

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<sup>151</sup>All household interviews and two GMB experts

<sup>152</sup>Interview with Mr. Tendai, 15 June 2005

highlight issues related to this research's interests. The NGO food aid regime was led by the United Nations World Food programme and other major donors such as the British Department for International Development (DFID).<sup>153</sup> As pointed out earlier, the humanitarian intervention was necessitated by the call from the Government of Zimbabwe in 2000, for external assistance to address the food problems facing the country. The goal of their programmes was therefore to complement the government efforts of hunger alleviation. According to the WFP, the purpose of the humanitarian intervention was to prevent loss of life, through provision of adequate food to the affected people in order to prevent deterioration of their nutritional status. Furthermore, this intervention was to preserve productive assets such as livestock and to guard against stress migrations from Zimbabwe to neighbouring countries. Migration has been rampant within the productive age population from Zimbabwe, especially to South Africa.<sup>154</sup>

## **4.2 MAIN ACTORS' BENEFICIARY SELECTION CRITERIA**

The following section deals with the beneficiary selection criteria. A discussion is presented of both the de jure and de facto criteria implemented by the GMB and the other main actors within the GMB food aid programmes (traditional leaders and councillors). Thereafter, the NGOs beneficiary selection criteria will be examined in order to compare the activities of the two food aid regimes.

### **4.2.1 THE GRAIN MARKETING BOARD (GMB)**

#### **4.2.1.1 GMB de jure beneficiary selection criteria and food rations**

The GMB's mandate was to improve household and national food security. The GMB relief programme beneficiary selection criteria had three components to it. Firstly a cash disbursement programme was run where priority was given to the destitute, elderly, chronically ill and disabled who received US\$4.55 per month food purchasing. Secondly, cash for work programmes were run by the rural district councils which saw able bodied, but vulnerable households, participate in development projects in return for the above mentioned amount of money. Finally and more important to this research, is the programme component which involved the sale of subsidised food to vulnerable households.<sup>155</sup> Here,

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<sup>153</sup> WFP/GoZ MOU, 2002: 2 & DFID, <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/countries/africa/zimbabwe.asp> : 20 July 2005

<sup>154</sup> WFP EMOP10140, 2001:8

<sup>155</sup> WFP EMOP 10140, 2001:6-7

priority was to be given to households headed by people who were not able to earn livelihoods due to illnesses, disability, old age, orphan hood or others related to such, and who were not benefiting from the NGOs relief aid. Secondly, the GMB maize was meant to benefit able bodied individuals in the rural areas who did not fall under the social welfare category, but lacked adequate means to meet their food requirements.<sup>156</sup> The beneficiary selection criteria of the GMB subsidised maize programme was therefore designed to ensure that vulnerable households obtain access to their staple grain. Vulnerability in this programme was defined as those households lacking the means to access food.<sup>157</sup>

At the inception of the GMB food distributions, it was announced that maize would be allocated per province according to the level of vulnerability.<sup>158</sup> Maize allocation in the GMB programme was actually done at three levels. Firstly, maize was allocated from the national reserves to the provinces. At provincial level, maize was allocated to various districts within the provinces. Maize was distributed from the district depots to the wards where selected households would finally access the maize. The allocation of aid was supposed to be based on the vulnerability figures provided by the Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZIMVAC), a joint committee comprising the Zimbabwean government in collaboration with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation and the World Food Programme. This meant that in order for a province, district, ward and household to benefit, they were supposed to fall within the vulnerability status.<sup>159</sup> The GMB has depots whose sizes vary according to the agricultural productivity within a particular province or districts all over the country. At the end of each agriculture season, available levels of food stocks also vary in the respective depots, depending on the productivity of the area. This fact was supposed to determine the amount of maize made available from the national reserves to specific districts.<sup>160</sup>

According to the GMB, household selection was supposed to be done in a participatory manner. To elaborate, it was indicated that households who lacked food as indicated above

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<sup>156</sup> Memorandum of Understanding between WFP and GoZ, 2003:2

<sup>157</sup> Interviews with Mr.Tendai, 15 June 2005, Ms.Nyowani,, 16 June 2005 ,Mr. Munaki ,10 July 2005 & Mrs. Patience,20 July 2005

<sup>158</sup> Interview with Mr.Tendai, 15 June 2005 , WFP Memorandum of Understanding with the GoZ.2003:3

<sup>159</sup>Interviews with Mr.Tendai, 15 June 2005, Ms. Mutopo, 12 July 2005,Mr. Nyamutsaka, 15 June 2005& Mr. Muneka,10 July 2005.

<sup>160</sup> Interview with Mr. Tendai, 15 June 2005

were supposed to register with their local leaders in order to access the maize. The process of beneficiary selection required that the local leaders, in the form of traditional leaders and councilors, conduct the registration of vulnerable households who could afford to purchase the subsidised food. The affected households were supposed to avail themselves at food aid meetings which were called by the village heads. It was also intended that the qualified government Social Workers at district levels should assist in the identification of such households. These would in turn submit the names to the traditional leaders and councillors who would register the households or individuals for food aid purchasing. Furthermore, realizing that many more rural households were vulnerable to the food aid shortages, the GMB programmes were also extended to reach other rural households who did not necessarily meet the vulnerability criteria as explained above but were facing food shortages. Still, first preference was to be given to the neediest cases.<sup>161</sup>

In terms of food aid rations, the general consensus on nutrition is that a human being can live on 10 kilograms of maize meal as a monthly ration and meet the required calories for survival.<sup>162</sup> The GMB also revealed their intention to sell maize in 50 kilogram rations.<sup>163</sup> The average household size in Zimbabwe is five people; hence 50 kilograms would be reasonably sufficient for the nutritional needs of an average household.<sup>164</sup>

#### **4.2.1.2 GMB de facto beneficiary selection criteria**

In times of food shortages, the GMB has been blamed for failing to meet the food requirements of the nation due to the implementation of poor strategies and policies.<sup>165</sup> The GMB asserted that the allocation of maize at the provincial level was done in proportion to the number of needy people (projected consumption) in each province and in all nine provinces of the country.<sup>166</sup> An analysis of the reports pertaining to this allocation strategy, however, highlights shortcomings in the criteria used for the allocation of food at the provincial levels. It was noted from data gathered from the GMB, that the Harare region was allocated the highest figure of subsidized maize, yet the GMB policy stipulated that

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<sup>161</sup> Interviews with Ms Patience, 20 July 2005, Mrs. Magaro & Ms. Nyowani, 16 June 2005.

<sup>162</sup> Interviews with Mrs. Pairamanzi, 15 June 2005 & Ms. Nyamuzinga 12 July 2005, Ms. Makonese & Mr. Muneke, 10 July 2005

<sup>163</sup> GMB, 2000:5

<sup>164</sup> CSO, 1998:10

<sup>165</sup> Bird, Booth and Pratt, 2003:8 and FEWSNET, 2003:4

<sup>166</sup> GMB:2005:1

subsidised maize would not be distributed in the capital because people were supposedly better off than in the rural areas.<sup>167</sup> These inconsistencies in a way serve to indicate the lack of transparency that surrounded the GMB food distributions.

In the Seke district some respondents asserted that it was clear that the GMB food was being used for political ends because the times at which maize was more available mainly coincided with the time at which elections for councils, parliament or presidential positions were held. It was identified that, for example in the period just before the 2002 presidential elections, maize was far more available in the area, afterwards, the commodity became scarce for some time and resuscitated with the campaigns of the 2005 parliamentary elections which commenced in early 2004.<sup>168</sup> In the Goromonzi district, it was gathered that the food aid allocations were more consistent than in the Seke district, but had become more pronounced after the ZANU-PF candidate Mr. Hebert Murerwa, won the parliamentary elections.<sup>169</sup> Experts argued that this pattern of food aid targeting reflects the high-jacking of relief programmes by the state to serve its own interests<sup>170</sup> and is tantamount to neopatrimonialism.

Neopatrimonialism in the targeting criteria of the GMB food aid was also reflected through tendencies of nepotism and patronage which were reported in these programmes. For example, it was revealed in some reports that some senior politicians were seen in their personal vehicles driving off from the GMB, loaded with the relief maize for the people in their constituencies.<sup>171</sup> The logic of these patrimonial relations is that only those known to the party leader, would receive aid.

It was also gathered that due to the corrupt nature of the senior politicians involved, a significant amount of the food ended up benefiting people who were not vulnerable.<sup>172</sup> It was identified that the majority of households who benefited from these programmes were headed by people with good livelihoods within the communities. For example, in both districts 60% of the interviewed beneficiaries of GMB food were households who own

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid

<sup>168</sup> Interview with Mr. Muyengwa, Ms. Mativenga and Mr. Dema, Seke , 20 June 2005

<sup>169</sup> Household Interview with Mrs. Takaedza, 10 July:2005

<sup>170</sup> Interview with Mr. Muneka, 10 July 2005

<sup>171</sup> Interviews with Mr. Tendai, 15 June 2005, Ms. Veremu, Mr. Nyamutsaka,,Harare:15 June 2005

<sup>172</sup> Interview with Mr. Munaki, 10 July 2005

adequate land for subsistence farming or had livelihood means for providing a steady income, such as drivers and petty traders. In some cases, these groups benefited at the expense of households headed by unemployed and elderly people.

Informants from NGOs pointed out that in other urban districts, excluding the capital, food was accessible directly through the GMB depots. However, for one to be allowed the opportunity to purchase this subsidized maize in these small towns, there was need for one to get a letter from the local leaders, mainly the ward councilors in this case, as proof of vulnerability.<sup>173</sup> It was also gathered through some household interviews<sup>174</sup> that in the Mutonda area of Goromonzi, some villagers were asked to produce ZANU-PF membership cards or produce letters from the ZANU-PF councillor of their local wards stating that they should be given access to the GMB subsidised maize.<sup>175</sup> It was also reported that during election campaigns, voters were threatened with starvation unless they voted for ZANU-PF.<sup>176</sup> This was reiterated in other reports from other areas of the country, besides the case study areas of this research, especially in the Matebeleland and Masvingo provinces where the ruling party is less popular.<sup>177</sup>

Acquiring authentication of vulnerability from local leaders was pointed out to have been difficult, especially for people who were known or suspected to be of political affiliations different from these leaders.<sup>178</sup> It was therefore reasoned that the move of appointing politically aligned leaders to such authority positions was proof that the GMB food was distributed on grounds of political affiliation. In 2004 the deputy minister for Public Affairs announced at a public meeting that, "...we will be available only to those who dump the opposition and work with ZANU-PF". The government would "start feeding its children before turning to those of the MDC"<sup>179</sup> In addition, arguments raised indicated that politicians, especially members of the ruling ZANU-PF party, claimed that the GMB food

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<sup>173</sup> Interview with Mr.Ganga,12 July 2005

<sup>174</sup> Interviews in Goromonzi households with Ms. Masawi, Mr. Mashiri & Ms. Machadu,10 July:2005

<sup>175</sup> Out of all the household interviews held, none of the interviewees reported to having asked to produce a party membership card but some people said they knew kin in other areas who had been asked to do so.

<sup>176</sup> Amnesty International, 2004:1

<sup>177</sup> Interviews with all food aid experts(see annex for list of names) see also, Physicians for Human rights,2002:14 The Daily News, 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> March 2002

<sup>178</sup> Physicians for human rights, 2002:16,Amnesty International Press Release,5 April 2002

<sup>179</sup> The Standard 18 July 2004

belonged to the government, hence only belonged to the ZANU-PF members, because to them the government equals ZANU.<sup>180</sup>

Furthermore, it was identified that the government bureaucrats who are given office, not on the basis of clientelism or patrimony but on merit, such as the social welfare workers and the agriculture extension workers, found it hard to implement policies that were meant for the good of the overall public since they were constantly faced with politicians whose aims were not aligned to the government's aims.<sup>181</sup> It was pointed out in an interview with a GMB official that in some cases, a senior politician would bring a list of people to the depot, and whether these people met the official targeting criteria or not was hardly verifiable because doing so would be interpreted as challenging the political leaders.<sup>182</sup> As a result, the GMB officials would turn a blind eye on such corrupt activities and conduct business as usual or else risk losing their jobs. In most cases, some war veterans (ex-fighters of the liberation war) were indicated to be 'topping the list' of those who engaged in such behaviour.<sup>183</sup>

In another instance, the district administrator revealed that the Member of Parliament for that constituency had questioned why food had been allocated to an area, which was known to comprise largely supporters of the political opposition. He also revealed that his efforts to try and have food allocated within the district in a justified manner were frustrated by political figures who always called his office dictating where the food should be distributed.<sup>184</sup> In addition, the SADC taskforce assessments on the food security situation in the country reported that in one village, grain was being sold through the offices of the political party. The report further indicated that even in the new resettled farming areas, the ability to purchase grain from the GMB was allocated to households by the leadership in the new villages.<sup>185</sup> The selling of food through a political office is clear evidence of food politicisation because this would definitely lead to the exclusion of those households who do not identify with that particular party. This was argued as a way in which the ruling

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<sup>180</sup> Human Rights Watch Consultancy: 2005:24, Interview with Ms. Veremu, 15 June 2005 & 60% Household interviews in Seke & Goromonzi districts.

<sup>181</sup> Interview with Ms. Nyowani, 16 June 2005 & Ms Patience, 20 July 2005

<sup>182</sup> Interview with Mr. .Munaki, 10 July 2005

<sup>183</sup> Ibid

<sup>184</sup> Mr. Chimanzi, 12 July 2005

<sup>185</sup> Save the Children( UK) Southern Africa Development Committee Vulnerability Assessment Committee:2002:4



party used its power to punish the supporters of the opposition parties.<sup>186</sup> The GMB maintained that it had ensured that the programmes benefited the public, yet some reports indicated that a large quantity of the food was reserved for special purposes such as feeding the prisons and government training institutions, including the controversial militia colleges.<sup>187</sup>

The GMB ran its programme as if it was meant for the community leaders to benefit instead of the people.<sup>188</sup> It was apparent in this research that the village heads and councillors did not do enough to alert their community members of the criteria they were using for beneficiary selection. This meant that transparency was not prevalent in the manner in which beneficiaries were selected. Some GMB officials also pointed out that there were no modalities put in place for monitoring the authenticity of beneficiaries. The onus was merely given to the local leaders to make sure that deserving households were given a chance to access the food.<sup>189</sup> This lack of monitoring can be interpreted as showing a lack of concern of the GMB board.<sup>190</sup> On the basis of the above factors, one can assert that the decisions of allocating food to the provinces and districts of the country were based upon the decisions of politicians which were meant to suit their own agendas. The conclusion reached here is therefore that the selection of food aid beneficiaries at village levels were done to serve political interests resulting in some vulnerable households failing to access food aid.

#### **4.2.1.3 GMB de facto food aid rations**

The GMB appeared to have no strict rations. This was blamed on the inadequacy of the GMB food supplies in the rural areas. Due to these short supplies, it was identified that in most cases, households ended up sharing a 50 kg bag per two or three households depending on the severity of the situation.<sup>191</sup> Some informants at household level argued that given the average household size of five people, this food ration was not sufficient to meet the recommended calories requirements for human beings, even just for one week.

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<sup>186</sup> Amnesty International,2004:1

<sup>187</sup> GMB , 2004:1 & Interview with Mr. Tendai, 15 June 2005

<sup>188</sup> Interview with Ms.Machadu,10 July 2005, Mr. Chabvuta,17 August 2005, Mr Ganga,12July 2005, Ms. Pairamanzi,15 June 2005 & Mr. Pasirayi, 15 July 2005.

<sup>189</sup> Ms. Mutopo,12 July 2005,Mr. Muneka,10July 2005, Ms. Pairamanzi,15 June 2005,Mr. Chabvuta,17 August 2005 & Ms. Patience,20 July 2005

<sup>190</sup> Mr. Mazubhe,14 July 2005

<sup>191</sup> Parliament of Zimbabwe,2003:5&12

Many of the interviewees therefore denounced these meagre rations pointing out that the food allocated per household was not sufficient to exhort the mandate of the programme as that of addressing food shortages. In addition, the informants maintained that this type of assistance was a form of mockery by the GMB.<sup>192</sup> Others also indicated that the fact that the public accessed only a small fraction of the maize imported by the GMB for public consumption shows that the intention of the food aid was not for the benefit of the public, but rather for political interests. The larger amount of maize was allegedly reserved for top officials of the ruling party and the government.<sup>193</sup>

It was also established during the household interviews that the village authorities managed the excess demand by households for GMB grain by selecting households to purchase grain on a rotational basis. In some cases, it was also highlighted that the village heads had not much say towards the amount of food allocated such that they had to resort to letting households share the little available.<sup>194</sup>

#### **4.2.1.4 Traditional leaders' implementation of the GMB de facto beneficiary selection criteria**

Johnson Mnkandla, a magistrate from Bulawayo in Matabeleland, pointed out in a meeting held in June 2004, that “Food has been politicised. Chiefs have been politicised. The distribution structure that exists does not benefit the Zimbabwe people, only supporters of the government.”<sup>195</sup> These views were echoed by informants in this research. It was revealed that some village heads have been sidelined from participating in important activities in their local areas, after being suspected of being supporters of the opposition party. It was also noted that in some cases, councilors were making lives difficult for those village heads who did not show loyalty to their parties, for example through withdrawing favours from a village, which they knew, or suspected not to be on their side. In the food aid process, such villages were reported as having received smaller and inconsistent maize supplies. In the Seke district, it was gathered that one of the villages was receiving a

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<sup>192</sup> Interviews with Ms. Nyamuzinga, 12 July 2005, Mr. Nyamutsaka & Ms. Veremu, 15 June 2005 & Six household interviews in both districts

<sup>193</sup> Amnesty International, Press release, 2002:5 April

<sup>194</sup> The Parliamentary Taskforce for Food Security, 2004:12 and from household interviews in both districts

<sup>195</sup> Kubatana.net Reports, 2005:38

smaller allocation of GMB maize, because the village head was a known opposition supporter. Given this situation, traditional leaders were therefore found to be drawn into politics, either by choice or by necessity.<sup>196</sup>

In other instances, village heads refused access for some new households in their areas to register for the GMB food aid. Certain households who migrated from farms to settle in communal lands are not identified as legitimate owners of their land. These mainly comprise ex-commercial farm workers who were displaced during the land reform programme. A significant number of these ex-commercial farm workers were left homeless after the farms, on which they were inhabitants, were possessed by the government for redistribution purposes.<sup>197</sup> This resulted in these households relocating to other areas in search for greener pastures and new homes. Their arrival was however associated with much suspicion, especially as they were labeled as supporters of the main opposition party by virtue of them having worked for white farmers and having protested against the fast track land reform which robbed most of them of their means of livelihood. It was reported to this effect that when food aid was sold in some villages, the “new comers” were normally considered as a last priority to purchase the food despite their vulnerability.<sup>198</sup>

Information gathered from this research also highlighted that the village heads did not consult other stakeholders, such as the social welfare officers, in the selection of beneficiaries. Arguments arising from this scenario present that this lack of consultation hindered transparency in the implementation of the food programmes.<sup>199</sup>

The above discussions have illustrated that the involvement of traditional leaders in the food aid programme brought about inequalities between those closer to the leaders and those not of the same political affiliation. The discussions have indicated that the selection of food aid beneficiaries through the channels of traditional leadership resulted in mishaps such as diversion of food aid and interferences even in programmes outside the jurisdiction of these leaders. It has also been argued that the political co-opting of the traditional leaders has robbed this leadership of their legitimacy towards the people that they are supposed to

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<sup>196</sup> Human Rights Watch Consultancy, 2005:30 and Interview with Muyengwa, 20 June 2005.

<sup>197</sup> Parliament of Zimbabwe, 2003:3-15, Human Rights Watch, 2003:19

<sup>198</sup> Two household interviews in Goromonzi, Ms. Veremu, 15 June 2005 and Amnesty International, 2004, 5 April

<sup>199</sup> Interview with Ms Patience, 20 July 2005

lead. However, in some cases reports indicate that certain village heads were transparent and fair enough to register vulnerable people, but councillors sometimes frustrated their efforts.<sup>200</sup>

#### **4.2.1.5 Councillor's implementation of the GMB de facto selection criteria**

The role of the councillor within the GMB selection criteria was marked with what can best be described as power struggles against the traditional leaders. These power struggles negatively influenced the beneficiary selection process.<sup>201</sup> The disruptions of aid as a result of power struggles between the leadership were reported in both districts. It was gathered from the interviews that councillors also participated in identifying food aid beneficiaries at ward levels. Discoveries were made that in most cases, at the village level, the village heads or headmen would have already identified and compiled lists of people to benefit from the GMB food aid programme. The councillor – is this the correct spelling – see next line – on the other hand, would also bring their own lists of potential beneficiaries and the councillors would in some cases collect the money from those who would have been registered to benefit from the food in order to directly purchase the maize on their behalf. On the date of distribution, the councillors would clash with village heads because the number of beneficiaries from both lists would obviously exceed the amount of supplied maize. In most cases, the councillor won the battle because of their political muscle.<sup>202</sup>

It was also indicated that in some cases, the councillor would delete the names of people not known to be keen supporters of their party from the beneficiary lists compiled by the village heads and replace them with their own kin. In many instances, statements such as: “this food is from the government and we do what we give it to whom we want”, were mentioned as having been voiced by politicians at food distribution meetings.<sup>203</sup>

In other cases some councillors hijacked the food aid distribution meetings and turned them into discussion forums for political party issues. The food distribution points were also reported as events where people would wear their regalia for the ruling party with

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<sup>200</sup> Ibid

<sup>201</sup> Interview with Mr. Nyamutsaka, 15 June 2005, Mr. Ganga, 12 July 2005, Ms. Masawi, 16 July 2005 and Group interview with Mr. Chinyoka & Mr. Bishop, 11 July 2005.

<sup>202</sup> Interview with Mr. Muyengwa, 20 June, 2005, Ms. Makonese, 10 July 2005 & Mr. Nyamutsaka, 15 June, 2005.

<sup>203</sup> Mr Ganga, 12 July 2005 & Four household interviews in Goromonzi.

inscriptions of campaigns for the ruling party leaders.<sup>204</sup> These scenarios would members of the opposition present in difficult situations, as they would be persecuted for their (or suspected) political affiliation. The enabling environment for such issues to occur at meetings meant for food aid distributions can be argued as clear indication of the power that politics assumed in the food aid distributions.

In Goromonzi, the councillors were reported as having played an even more significant role than the village heads. It was pointed out that the councillor was instrumental in ensuring that the MDC supporters were excluded from benefiting from the GMB programme. In this area, some MDC affiliates pointed out that they had faced great challenges in accessing the GMB food aid.<sup>205</sup> Other informants pointed out that it was clearly communicated to them that they should not waste their efforts by availing themselves at the food aid purchasing points as long as they were members of the opposition. The councillor's political power therefore determined who ate what. The closer one was to the councilor, the better their chances of accessing the government food aid.<sup>206</sup> In the Seke district however, the councillors were reportedly domineered by village heads in terms of household beneficiary selection.<sup>207</sup>

In several cases, people would register through their village heads to work in the cash for work programmes with the hope that they would use the earned cash to purchase food from the GMB. It was however revealed that certain councillors would deny them the opportunity because of their unfavourable political affiliation. The right to food was therefore infringed upon.<sup>208</sup>

Other reports indicated also that the GMB was using the councillors, together with the militias, to distribute the subsidised maize. It was also pointed out in these reports that the councillors and militias were demanding ZANU PF-identity cards before beneficiaries were allowed to purchase the grain.<sup>209</sup> Furthermore, Amnesty International described the abuse of access to food aid as being instigated by the militias in some districts of the country. The

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<sup>204</sup> Interview with Ms. Nyamuzinga, 12 July 2005.

<sup>205</sup> Interviews with Mr. Chitate\* & Mr. Matara\*, 20 July 2005

<sup>206</sup> Interview with Ms. Takaedza, 10 July 2005.

<sup>207</sup> Four Household interviews in Seke, 20 June 2005.

<sup>208</sup> Mr. Chimanzi, 12 July 2005.

<sup>209</sup> MDC, 2004:104.

reports noted that the youth militia who were normally stationed outside queues for grain purchasing were targeting MDC supporters for assaults and intimidation to prevent them from getting food.<sup>210</sup> This was clearly done in order to discriminate those who did not adhere to the calling of the ruling party.<sup>211</sup>

One can argue that these defects in the implementation of the GMB targeting criteria by the traditional leaders and the councillors as discussed above are tantamount to undermining the global efforts to eradicate hunger.<sup>212</sup>

### **4.3 Success of the GMB Targeting Criteria**

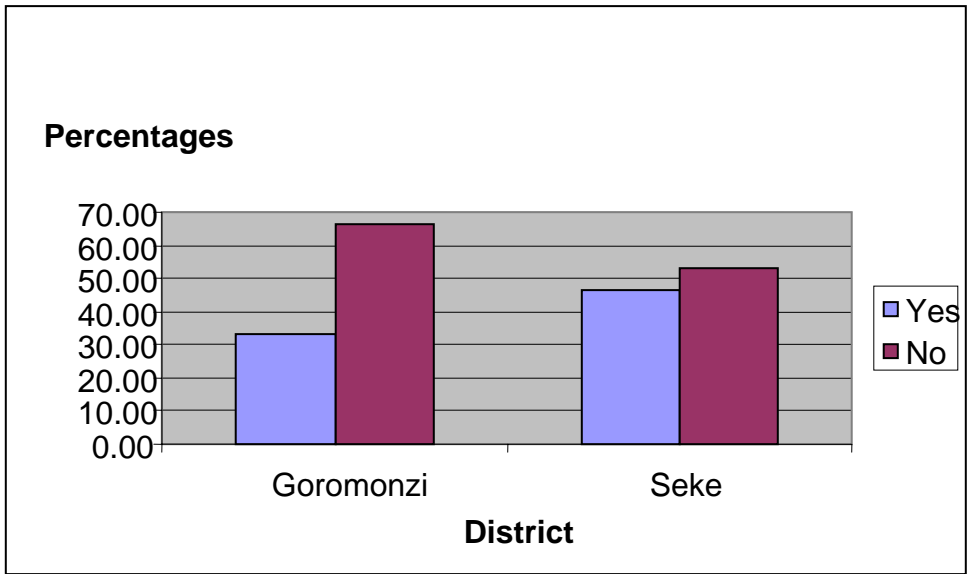
Figure 4.1 indicated below illustrates the perceptions of the household interviewees on the successfulness of the GMB targeting criteria on vulnerable households in both districts. In order to elaborate on the process of beneficiary selection by the GMB, questions were asked at household level also concerning the success of the process. It can be seen from the graph that 66% of households in Goromonzi indicated that the criteria was not successful against 34% who said it was successful. In the Seke District, 54% of the respondents indicated a lack of success, whilst the remaining 46% pointed out that the targeting criteria had been successful. The main problem encountered in this district was that the majority of interviewees at household level had inadequate knowledge of the GMB criteria.

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<sup>210</sup> Amnesty International press release, 2004:2.

<sup>211</sup> Human Rights Watch Consultancy, 2005:22

<sup>212</sup> Andersen, Nygaard, and Ratta :1995:1



**Figure 4.1 1: People's perceptions of success of the GMB targeting criteria.**<sup>213</sup>

It was also apparent from the research that the GMB had not achieved much in terms of both raising awareness of their programme and disseminating information concerning the actual households targeted. As a result, communities resorted to their own definitions of vulnerability, and this included anyone who lacked food, without giving priority to the most needy. Respondents also retorted, however, that whatever the targeting criteria was, it did not allow for the targeting of many vulnerable households.<sup>214</sup>

It was identified that the majority of households who benefited from these programmes were headed by people of a higher socio-economic status within the communities. For example, in both districts interviews indicated that 60% of the GMB beneficiaries were people who own adequate land for subsistence farming, or were people with formal employment such as drivers. These benefited at the expense of households headed by unemployed and elderly people. Instead of selecting people on a clear criteria based on vulnerability, some politicians chose to give priority to the people that were instrumental in voting them into power.<sup>215</sup>

<sup>213</sup> Author, 2005

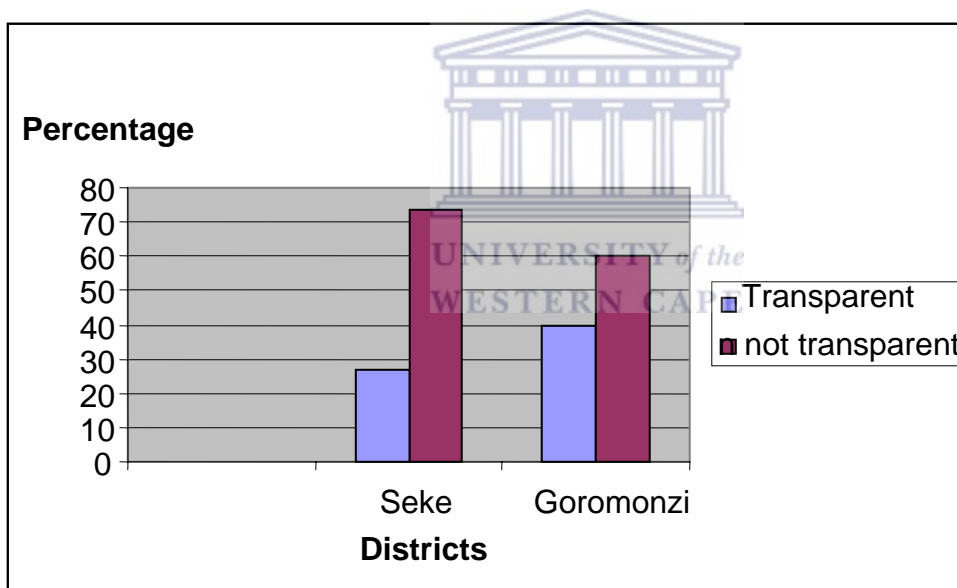
<sup>214</sup> All experts & Household interviews: only 25% households reflected adequate knowledge of GMB criteria

<sup>215</sup> Interview with ZANU PF ward coordinator in Goromonzi district

The criteria was therefore not well adhered to and the GMB officials pointed out that there were no modalities put in place for monitoring the authenticity of beneficiaries. The onus was just given to the local leaders to ensure that deserving households were given an opportunity to access the food.<sup>216</sup> This lack of monitoring can be interpreted as a lack of concern on the side of the GMB board.<sup>217</sup> To argue that food distributions were fair and transparent under such conditions will therefore be a gross oversight.

#### 4.4 Transparency in the distribution system

The calls upon the government by various stakeholders to ensure transparency and accountability in the operations of the GMB also served as evidence that there was a widely accepted view that the targeting and beneficiary selection criteria lacked transparency. The following graph is an indication of the perceptions of household interviewees pertaining to the level of transparentness that prevailed in the beneficiary selection process.



**Figure 4.1 2: Households perceptions of the transparentness of the GMB beneficiary selection process.**<sup>218</sup>

As reflected in the Figure 4.2, the majority of respondents in both districts perceived the selection of beneficiaries as having been largely biased and unfair. In the Seke district, 72% of the interviewees expressed that the process was not transparent, whilst in the Goromonzi district only 40% of the respondents felt that the system was transparent. The general

<sup>216</sup> Five NGO experts

<sup>217</sup> MDC party coordinator in Goromonzi district

<sup>218</sup> Author, 2005



consensus amongst the interviewees was that the leaders did not consult with them hence the decisions made in most cases were biased. Most of the responses cited political biases. For the group of respondents who indicated that the process was fair, discussions revealed that, in some cases, the village heads had managed to ensure that many households benefited from the food aid through establishing rotational systems where households would take turns to benefit from the food programmes. Others however still maintained that even for one to be selected for the rotational benefiting, they had to be known to the leaders.<sup>219</sup>

On the basis of the above factors, one can assert that the decisions of allocating food to the provinces and districts of the country were based upon the decisions of politicians to suit their own political agendas.



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<sup>219</sup> Interview with Ms Shamiso in Goromonzi

## CHAPTER 5

### NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS' (NGOs) TARGETING CRITERIA

This chapter discusses the empirical research findings with regards to the Non governmental organisations food aid beneficiary selection criteria. Initially, the chapter provides analyses of both the de jure and de facto selection criteria. Afterwards, the chapter provides a discussion of the challenges posed by the interference of politics in the NGOs food aid programmes.

#### 5.1 NGOs de jure selection criteria

At the initiation of the relief programme, the WFP indicated that “the beneficiary targeting criteria would be determined by the WFP, in conjunction with its implementing partners and in consultation with the communities, local authorities and the GoZ.”<sup>220</sup> Local authorities in the NGO programmes were defined as the traditional leaders in the form of Chiefs and village headmen and the councillors and the government through relevant ministries such as the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Socials Welfare, and the Ministry of Agriculture through the Agriculture Extension Services (AREX) department. For this programme, the sample criteria for identifying the beneficiaries’ were set as: female headed households, terminally ill without means of support, widows and widowers, orphans, the elderly and the handicapped. In addition, households which had no or low cash crops, livestock less than a defined number (varied per district), no fixed or temporary salaried employment, no fixed or temporary employment, no petty trading or small business and finally, no or low remittances from kin or children living outside the country were also used as criteria for identifying beneficiaries.<sup>221</sup> The WFP also suggested that strong monitoring of all commodity movements and distribution was a critical component of the relief programme in order to guard against possible misuse of food aid, especially for purposes of political campaigns.<sup>222</sup> The WFP also stipulated that geographic targeting of areas would be implemented meaning that food would be moved to all areas indicated as vulnerable under the vulnerability assessments that were conducted prior to the

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<sup>220</sup> EMOP 10240,2001:7

<sup>221</sup> EMOP 10140,2001:8

<sup>222</sup> Ibid:9

commencement of the relief programmes.<sup>223</sup> Most of the NGOs mentioned were distributing food under the partnership of the WFP, hence were mandated to adhere to its conditions as mentioned above. However, other NGOs were distributing food aid with criteria determined by the nature of their organisation, for example, the Help Age Zimbabwe distributed food aid to the elderly people in homes for the destitute and the Farm Community Trust only distributed food to ex-commercial farm workers

## 5.2 NGOs de facto selection criteria and selection process

Whereas the GMB operations were not well regarded by the people in the interviewed communities, the NGOs programmes were quite popular within the communities. The NGOs seemed to have done a tremendous job in ensuring that vulnerable households benefited from the food aid.<sup>224</sup> It was contended that the NGOs beneficiary selection process was transparently conducted and inclusive. According to reports from various informants, the beneficiary selection criteria were well adhered to. It was identified in both districts that the NGOs had exerted significant efforts towards ensuring community participation in their food programmes.<sup>225</sup>

Various informants revealed that NGOs conducted meetings with local leaders and other stakeholders to discuss their selection criteria reflected above in order to ensure that the components of the criteria were sufficiently versatile to respond to the social and economic characteristics of the communities in the respective districts. For example, in peri-urban districts, low income figures were raised in the districts situated further away from the towns, because it was generally agreed that people residing in peri-urban rural districts were able to earn better incomes. The Districts Drought Relief Committees (DDRC) were set up by the district councils to deal with food security issues at district levels were consulted in the process of criterion setting. The DDRCs comprised district stakeholders such as social welfare and nutrition officers, GMB and NGO representatives.<sup>226</sup> Thereafter, NGOs called for public meetings at ward levels. It was also established that the involvement of traditional leaders in terms of the actual beneficiary selection was limited to

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<sup>223</sup> Zimbabwe Assessment Mission Report, WFP/East and Southern African Bureau, October 2001:12

<sup>224</sup> DFID,2003:4

<sup>225</sup> Household Interviews in both districts.

<sup>226</sup> Mr.Chimanzi,12 July 2005, Mr.Mabasa,10 August,2005, Mr. Nyamutsaka, 15 June 2005 & Ms. Makonese, 10 July,2005& Mr..Munaki,10 July 2005.

the authentication of legitimacy of citizenry in their jurisdiction areas. Furthermore, local leaders were informed of and invited to witness all stages of the programme from the beneficiary selection stage to the distribution of food, hence transparency was maintained throughout the process.

In terms of beneficiary selection, it was highlighted that the communities were highly involved and encouraged to conduct community targeting. To elaborate, it was pointed out that after calling for public meetings at ward levels, the NGO field workers would explain the rationale and the targeting criterion of the programmes to the people. Villagers would therefore be allowed to rank each household within their villages according to the level of vulnerability, with the consent of the rest of the village members. The final beneficiary registers would be compiled by the overseeing NGO workers. It was indicated that at least one stakeholder such as AREX workers, district nutritionists and social workers were always present at the registration meetings and this was done in order to authenticate the system.<sup>227</sup> This method was presented as having allowed adequate targeting of the most vulnerable households as intended by the humanitarian programmes. Also, this led to conclusions that the NGO programmes were conducted in a more transparent manner in comparison to the GMB programmes. Evidence that the communities were adequately involved in the implementation of the selection criteria was discovered in the research through the fact that communities had adequate knowledge of the humanitarian agencies targeting criteria.<sup>228</sup>

### **5.3 Political Interference in Non governmental Organisations (NGOs) beneficiary selection criteria**

The NGOs endeavored to avoid distributing food aid on political grounds. However, it was identified that their efforts were frequently met by a hostile political environment. It was revealed that political interference managed to find its way and hampered some of the programme's activities. According to the findings of this research, the NGOs operated in a background characterized by political polarization and antagonism. Also, the Government

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<sup>227</sup> *ibid*

<sup>228</sup> 90% of households interviewed in Seke and Goromonzi districts confessed adequate knowledge of the targeting criteria.

of Zimbabwe made it difficult for open dialogue to be maintained with donors and relief agencies.<sup>229</sup>

Traditional leaders, councillors and some senior politicians such as members of parliament and Governors were reported as having instigated some political interference in the NGO food programmes. For example, the WFP Mashonaland Sub Office reported that during the household ranking process, some traditional leaders unscrupulously diverted food aid meant to benefit genuine households by conniving with some rogues in their communities to create ghost households and then benefit personally from the food allocated to these ghost households.<sup>230</sup> Some reports from the humanitarian agencies also revealed that some village heads were taking away food from particular households who did not show favour to their political parties.<sup>231</sup> It was also reported that in some cases traditional leaders disrupted NGO food aid distributions citing political interference. The traditional leaders who were, in most cases, not eligible for the humanitarian aid (because their allowances were above the stipulated income level for vulnerability) accused the NGOs of being instruments of the opposition parties. This created a difficult working environment for NGO operations and in most cases resulted in some vulnerable households failing to access food aid until the matters were resolved.<sup>232</sup>

For instance, in the Goromonzi district, some village heads chased away workers of World Vision which was distributing food aid in the area claiming that they were distributing food aid to the members of the opposition party.<sup>233</sup> In some cases it was cited that village heads were robbing beneficiaries of their food through asking for redistribution of the humanitarian food to be shared with those not vulnerable and in most cases, their kin or family.<sup>234</sup> In a report compiled by the British Department For International Development (DFID) it was also disclosed that some children of known MDC supporters were denied supplementary feeding which was being distributed by NGOs in rural schools. Some

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<sup>229</sup> The select committee on International Development: 2004:point 79

<sup>230</sup> Mr.Nyamutsaka,15 June 2005 & Mr.Muneka,10 July 2005

<sup>231</sup> WFP, Mash SO ;2004:5,Human rights Watch,Consultant,2005,Physicians for Human Rights,2003

<sup>232</sup> Interviews with Ms Veremu,15 June, 2005, Ms Pairamanzi,15 June 2005.,Mr Ganga, Mr. Muneka & Mrs. Makonese 10 July, 2005 & McIvor, 2002:2

<sup>233</sup> Interview with Ms Nyamuzinga,12 July 2005 & Mr.Nyamutsaka,15 June 2005.

<sup>234</sup> WFP Mashonaland Sub Office Report: 5 April 2004,

traditional leaders revealed that they were only operating according to the instructions from politicians, especially the councillors and members of parliament.<sup>235</sup>

According to most NGO reports, problems were encountered when they announced that their activities were based on neutrality or, in other words, that their agenda was not to promote any political or religious agendas, but to serve the needy populations in all areas of the country.<sup>236</sup> This declaration of neutrality preached by all NGOs operating under the humanitarian umbrella was however received with a lot of skepticism and suspicion by the government officials. According to Save the Children UK, country representative,

the "...government authorities expressed concern that, for some agencies, the primary motive for assisting people in Zimbabwe had less to do with humanitarianism and more to do with the foreign policy objectives of the governments with whom Zimbabwe has developed a war of words in the past few years".<sup>237</sup>

This statement reflects the ordeal of suspicions under which the humanitarian organisations were subjected to, by the senior government officials and politicians from the ruling party. Such suspicions therefore resulted in sour relations between the government officials and NGOs. The politicians themselves expressed fear that the humanitarian agencies were opening the eyes of the people, hence for fear of losing supporters they would rather meddle with the affairs of aid agencies in order to monitor closely their activities on the ground.<sup>238</sup> For example, the President of Zimbabwe, Mr. Mugabe confirmed these suspicions when in an interview with the UN Secretary General, he alleged that there was a tendency among NGOs, of taking advantage of channeling humanitarian food aid to promote their own agendas of political interference.<sup>239</sup> In an earlier utterance concerning humanitarian operations, the President had stated that:

"While Zimbabwe accepts drought-related assistance from the international community, we remain quite wary of countries and organisations which seek to take advantage of our moment of need to attenuate our sovereignty ..."<sup>240</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> DFID,2003:February 13

<sup>236</sup> Interviews with Ms. Mutopo, 12 July 2005, Ms. Paimanzi,15 June 2005, Mr. Nyamutsaka & Ms. Veremu,15 June 2005 and the neutrality criteria is documented in the MOU between GoZ and WFP,2002

<sup>237</sup> McIvor, 2004:4

<sup>238</sup> Interviews with Mrs. Bishop, 11 July 2005. & Ms Mutopo,12 July 2005

<sup>239</sup>The Zimbabwe Herald Reporter: <http://www.zimbabweherald.com/index.php?id=47270&pubdate=2005-09-26>

<sup>240</sup>Speech made at the opening of the third session of the fifth parliament just after the 2002 presidential election cited in IRIN(United Nations News), 2002;23 July

In most cases, humanitarian agencies reported that as a result of these suspicions, even what was supposed to be normal speech, was easily interpreted as carrying political connotations.<sup>241</sup> For example, World Vision reported that the main reason why they had been asked to terminate food distributions in Goromonzi at one point, pertained to the food distribution system which they were implementing which entailed arranging households into groups of five and allocating respective rations to the households to distribute amongst themselves (in order to make the process faster). The politicians interpreted this as some form of hidden campaign for the MDC.<sup>242</sup>

The following reasons have been posed to explain this contestation from the government of Zimbabwe. Firstly, it has been argued that the government of Zimbabwe felt that its legitimacy (which is normally associated with the provision of aid to a government's citizenry) was at stake since the non governmental agencies had removed the government from the central role of aid distribution. Previously, the government and senior politicians had enjoyed the role of distributing food aid as seen in the previously experienced emergencies such as the commonly cited 1992-9993 droughts. The positive relations that the government enjoyed with the international community during the 1980s and 1990s meant that much of the aid at that time was channeled directly through line ministries such as health, social welfare and agriculture.<sup>243</sup> The Zimbabwean government's highly visible control and coordination of the 1992 aid effort was often cited in later elections as evidence of the ruling party's concern for those who had been affected by food shortages at that time.<sup>244</sup>

The political fragmentation that is currently characterizing the political climate of the country has however resulted in the local and international communities questioning the government's legitimacy. Conflict between the GoZ and NGOs has therefore mainly emanated from the fact that the aid effort in the current food aid distributions is much more evidently an 'external' intervention. Worsening the situation also, is the fact that those countries that have been most blatant in criticising Zimbabwe's political leadership have

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<sup>241</sup> McIvor,2003:3

<sup>242</sup> In Zimbabwe the number five is associated with the main opposition following its adoption of the open palm with five fingers as its party symbol.

<sup>243</sup> McIvor, 2003:1.

<sup>244</sup> Humanitarian Network,2003:1-5

donated much of the aid. In many instances, some government officials have claimed that the aid delivered by the NGOs was an indictment of the government and was aimed at highlighting the GoZ's inadequacies pertaining to the provision of its citizenry.<sup>245</sup> These allegations have been denounced as political gimmick from the perpetrators and meant to divert attention from their own shortcomings.<sup>246</sup>

Furthermore the interference of politics perpetrated by the ruling party senior officers in government, into the NGO food aid distributions, reached its climax with the introduction of the NGOs Policy bill.<sup>247</sup> This bill, which was released by the ministry of Social Welfare at the peak of food aid distributions in 2004, reflected the desire of the government to take control of the NGO operations. Interestingly also, the introduction of this bill coincided with the commencement of the campaigns for the 2005 parliamentary elections for the country. It has been conferred that the GoZ endeavored to put the NGO operations under the scrutiny of the politicians through the NGO Policy, which besides other issues mandated that food aid be channeled through the government structures such as the highly controversial councillors.<sup>248</sup> Additionally, these arguments propound that through accusing NGOs of food aid politicization, the GoZ aimed to take over the expropriation of international aid. It was also the contention of others that the GoZ and the ruling party hoped to hijack the international aid programmes in order to woo political support.<sup>249</sup>

Additionally, in another incident, a political analyst aligned to the ruling regime, whilst hailing the President's utterances on the politicization of aid by NGOs, presented that: "the state is the voluntary manufacturer and distributor of necessary commodities hence food aid in Zimbabwe should be distributed by the state only, through government ministries, and not through humanitarian organisations."<sup>250</sup> Retaliations to these utterances have stated that whilst these and other concerns raised by President Mugabe such as that "food aid, to a large extent, cripples the commitment and seriousness that should attend to agricultural development on the continent", are sensible, their intentions are of denouncing the role of

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<sup>245</sup> Hammar, Raftopoulos & Jensen, 2003:50 & ZANU PF District Coordinator, Goromonzi

<sup>246</sup> Mr. Mazubhe, 14 July 2005.

<sup>247</sup> Ms. Nyamuzinga, 12 July 2005, Ms. Makonese, 10 July 2005 & Ms Veremu, 15 June 2005.

<sup>248</sup> United Nations Relief and Recovery Unit (RRU): 30 Sep 2004 & Zimbabwe National Association of NGOs (NANGO), <http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=43054> .

<sup>249</sup> Humanitarian Network, 2003:3, Physicians for Human Rights Denmark, 2002:12, Human Rights Watch Consultancy, 2005:19 & Amnesty International 5 April, 2002.

<sup>250</sup> The Zimbabwe Herald: 7 October 2005.



NGOs in distributing food and have therefore been rendered flawed. This is due to the fact that in Zimbabwe, the state failed to manufacture the commodity for distribution to its citizenry, hence there was no other way that it could do so without external assistance.<sup>251</sup>



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<sup>251</sup> Ms Mutopo, 12 July 2005, Mr. Chabvuta, 17 August 2005 & Mr. Pasirayi, 15 July 2005 & Mr. Mabasa, 10 August 2005.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The overall conclusion reached in this research is that politicians in Zimbabwe used the government food aid programmes for their benefits of winning political support from the people. The major finding of this research is that food aid beneficiary targeting was manipulated to suit the needs of the politicians who were at the management of the GMB food aid distributions and this led to some vulnerable households failing to benefit from the food aid. This research therefore verified the hypotheses that benefiting from the government of Zimbabwe public food aid programme was determined by political affiliation and that the government of Zimbabwe food aid failed to reach some vulnerable households because it was used for political ends of wooing political support.

Politics is a multifaceted concept which cannot be encompassed by a single element. This study therefore focused on analyzing the policy dimension through identifying how the behaviour of policy makers influences the manner in which policies are made and implemented. This political dimension was helpful in providing a general indication of the manner in which the government food aid programmes in Zimbabwe were implemented. This research derived hypotheses from the rational choice theory which argues that individuals behave in a manner which ensures that they attain maximum benefits hence politicians make policies in order to serve their own goals rather than those of the people who vote them into power. Also, the concept of neopatrimonialism was used, which asserts that political leaders allocate resources to those people who are loyal to them and likely to serve their needs. In order to find out whether food aid was used by politicians to meet their political needs, the targeting criteria, process and the roles of the major actors within the food aid distribution process were analysed.

In line with the theoretical explanations, this research identified that the key actors (politicians) within the GMB food aid distribution manipulated the food aid distributions for their own benefits. The research results discovered that the GMB's mandate of reaching out to the most vulnerable people in the affected communities was not adequately met because it was overridden by politicians' goals. By involving politicians in the beneficiary selection process, the GMB created room for political intentions to infiltrate the targeting

process. This means that the manner in which the targeting process of the food aid beneficiaries was implemented had loopholes which were capitalized by politicians who hijacked the process for their own benefits. The channels through which the GMB food aid beneficiaries were selected also reflected the fact that political decisions infiltrated the food aid programmes.

It was also identified through this research, that the GMB management and the major actors within the GMB food aid programmes were aligned to the ZANU-PF ruling party. This compromised the political neutrality of the GMB as a government parastatal expected to serve the country's citizenry regardless of political identity. Consequently, the political affiliation of the board's management influenced decision making regarding the allocation of food towards their party's favor. It has been argued that political influence at the board's senior management led to the discrimination of people from benefiting from food aid on grounds of political affiliation. Food aid was therefore used for purposes which were not stipulated in the GMB targeting criteria. For example, it was also discovered that food was concentrated in the militia training institutes in urban districts such as Harare, instead of feeding the rural population which had been identified as more food insecure. The desire for politicians to serve their own needs therefore resulted in some vulnerable households being excluded from the food programmes.

Additionally, concerning whether the beneficiary selection criteria enabled successful targeting of the most vulnerable households, it was identified that the GMB food aid targeting process was not efficient because some households which had better means of livelihood benefited at the expense of the less food secure households. The research discovered that this was due to the rationality and neopatrimonialistic tendencies of those in authority of the GMB food aid programmes.

In Zimbabwe, even the traditional leaders have lost legitimacy in the eyes of their communities following their co-opting into politics, especially into the ruling ZANU PF party. The involvement of the traditional leaders and councillors as responsible authorities for the selection and authentication of food aid beneficiaries resulted in the right to food for those unknown to be keen supporters of the political leaders being infringed upon. Another observation made is that the traditional leaders such as the village heads acted more

towards ensuring that the ruling party gained support or maintained its reputation from the rural people. They were caught up between the purposes of serving the needs of the people and pleasing the politicians. Inevitably, they prioritised the hand that feed them and that is the ruling party. On the same basis, some councillors overlooked the criteria of selecting beneficiaries and instead, prioritised selecting their supporters and others within their political circles and their kin. Some households were excluded from benefiting from the food aid because they were considered as sell outs or enemies of the ruling party leadership.

The differences which were noted between the GMB and the NGOs beneficiary targeting criteria also highlighted the influence of political decisions in the distribution of food aid. It was identified that the NGO criteria were more clearly stated and adhered to than the GMB criteria. The NGOs stipulated that food aid would target the most vulnerable people under well defined categories and strictly on the basis of need. The fact that the NGOs clarified at the inception of their food programmes that their food aid distributions were based purely on political neutrality meant that their programmes were able to meet the most vulnerable households without being used for political purposes. The NGOs guarded against political interference through avoiding political figures in the beneficiary selection process. Politicians were only invited to attend the process as a way of maintaining transparency in the NGOs activities. Nonetheless, the desire for politicians to hijack the food aid programmes to uplift their political images were evidenced through the manner in which they disrupted some of the NGOs programmes. For example, some politicians hijacked the food aid meetings and turned them into political campaigns. Some threatened the NGOs against revealing the truth of the origin of the food programmes or castigated them for distributing food to the political opposition. Additionally, the fact that the politicians misrepresented the origins of the humanitarian aid by telling people that the food aid which was distributed by the NGOs was being provided by the government and the ruling party meant that they sought to restore their legitimacy in the citizenry through using the food aid as a political tool. It has been argued that the mere involvement of the Government in the allocation of scarce resources reflect political decisions.<sup>252</sup> The government food programme was therefore not concerned with addressing the food needs of the people but with maintaining its political image which was threatened by the political opposition which

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<sup>252</sup> Sobhan, 1990:82

was gathering momentum in the country. Whereas, the NGOs programmes provided significant and reliable rations and conducted monitoring and evaluations of their projects to ensure that beneficiaries were not being shortchanged by the programme implementers, the rations which were provided to beneficiary households by the GMB were not adequate to cater for the needs of the people. The provision of meagre rations by the GMB, such as having three households sharing a 50 kg bag of maize, can be interpreted as “window dressing” of the intentions of assistance. The GMB food aid was therefore not significant enough to benefit the people but served the needs of the politicians. For example, in the communities, some villagers hailed their political leader’s names as having served them from the life threatening food crisis yet they were still living in the quagmire of food problems.

Furthermore, the fact that the GMB did not provide for a monitoring system for the food aid distribution process meant that there were no cross checks for transparency. This means that errors of inclusion or exclusion went unnoticed hence some of the food ended up being sold at the black market after having been allocated to those who had no need for it. Also the lack of involvement of the community who were supposed to benefit from these programmes in for example, setting up of the targeting criteria was also a loophole which was capitalized by politicians to stamp their authority and gain support through allocating food to their affiliates.

### **6.1 Recommendations for policy makers and humanitarian agencies**

On the basis of these findings, the main policy recommendation is that the government should prioritise the needs of its citizenry in order for the affected households and the country to recuperate from the food problems. In order to avoid the use of food as a political weapon, there is need for the government of Zimbabwe to establish a politically neutral management. The NGOs and other humanitarian agencies working to address food security problems should endeavor to maintain a stance of political neutrality in order to ensure that all needy people benefit equally from the food resources.

It can be argued also, that failure of the government to reconsider the manner in which food resources are distributed among the people will only worsen the image of the government

in the eyes of the people. It is foreseeable that in the long run, external organizations such as the international humanitarian organisations will gain more favour with the people than the government, as the short history of the food aid programmes between these two regimes operating in Zimbabwe has shown.

## **6.2 Areas of further research**

For the purposes of further research, there is a need to look at comparing the impact of political interference between the governmental food programmes and the NGOs programmes on the management of such programmes.

## **6.3 Concluding Remarks**

From the above discussions, the general observation is that the domination of addressing the food needs of the people by political intentions in the distribution of food aid has negative consequences on the food security of the people affected and the country as a whole. Food security is important for the overall health of the population and consequently the general productivity of the population. A food insecure population can not significantly contribute to its social and economic development because all efforts will be exerted towards accessing and fulfilling the primary food needs. If the discrepancies highlighted here are not addressed, the economy of the country will continue to suffer from the problems of poor socio-economic development.

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## **Annex 1: Interview Questionnaire**

Location: District -----Village-----

Name of Interviewer-----

### *Section A*

1. Age of interviewee:
2. Occupation of household head-----
  - 2b. Monthly income of household \$Z-----

### *Section B*

1. In the period 2002-2004, did your household ever experience any staple food shortages?
2. Which organizations were distributing food aid in your area of residence?
3. Did your household ever benefit from food aid from either the GMB or other organizations?
4. If your area or household benefited from food aid, can you name the organizations that provided food aid?
5. If you received food aid from the GMB, answer the following question:
  - a) Who informed you about the food aid programme?(neighbours, kin, government officials, political leaders or other)
6. In your local area, who was mainly responsible for the identification of food aid beneficiaries?
7. What do you think of the manner in which the people who selected households to benefit from food aid handled the process?
8. Do you think that the political party to which you belonged played a role in determining your chances of accessing food aid?
9. Were you or other people that you know, asked to divulge your political affiliation during food aid distribution meetings or in the presence of your local leaders? If so can you name any reasons for doing so?
10. Do you know of any persons who were refused registration or access to food aid?
  - 11b) If yes, can you name the reasons why these people were refused access to food aid?

11. Do you think that the distribution criteria enabled successful targeting of vulnerable households? *If not* what do you think should have been done, to improve the process?
12. What do you think about the argument that food was used as a political weapon?
13. Which political party do you support?

***Interest Groups: Key supporters of political parties at village level***

1. Which political party do you support?
2. What is your motivation to support this political party or any other party that you may wish to vote for?
3. How did the political party that you support contribute to your accessing food aid?
  3. b) Do you think that political party which you support contributed in determining your chances to access food aid?
4. Do you think that your expectations regarding food security were met or are being met as a result of your political affiliation?

***Political leaders at district and village levels***

1. What role did you or other politicians play in the distribution of food aid in your area?
2. If you played a role in identifying beneficiaries, what criteria did you use to do so?
3. What is your opinion regarding the manner in which food aid was distributed in your area?

***Experts from GMB and Other NGOs***

**Name of Organisation----- Position held -----**

1. What were the criteria used by your organization in the selection of food aid beneficiaries?
2. What were the criteria used for the selection of food aid administrators at ward and village levels?
3. Do you think that the food aid criterion of the GMB was adhered to?
4. Do you think that the distribution criteria enabled successful targeting of vulnerable households? *If not* what do you suggest could be done, to improve the process in the future?

5. Was there adequate awareness raised in the public concerning the GMB food aid selection criteria?
6. Did your organization ever receive any interference concerning the food aid distribution process? If so, what form of interference was it?
7. What can you say on the argument that the GoZ food aid distribution was politicized?
8. In your opinion, what was done that could be changed to improve targeting of food aid?



## Annex 2: Interview Schedule for food Aid Experts

Name (*=not real name)	Position and Organisation	Date of Interview
Miss Blessing Nyamuzinga	WFP vulnerability & Mapping Officer	12 July 2005
Miss Patience Mutopo	WFP Field Monitor, Goromonzi	12 July 2005
Mr. P.Ganga	WFP Programme Assistant (Mash East)	12 July 2005
Mr. Chimanzi	WFP Head of Mashonaland Sub Office	12 July 2005
Ms. Pairamanzi	Save the Children (UK) Field Coordinator	15 June 2005
Mr. Nyamutsaka	World Vision Field Coordinator	15 June 2005
Miss. Paidamoyo Veremu	Farm Community Trust Zimbabwe, Field Officer	15 June 2005
Mr. Pasirayi	Crisis Zimbabwe, Information Officer	15 July 2005
Mr. Chabvuta	Human Rights Watch Zimbabwe, Programme Officer	17 August 2005
Mr. Tirivangani Mabasa	British Council Zimbabwe	5 August 2005
Mr. Muneka*	Christian Care Field Officer	10 July
Ms. Makonese	CARE, Zimbabwe	10 July 2005
Mr. Muneka*	Christian Care Field Coordinator, Goromonzi	10 July 2005
Mr. Mabasa	British Council, Zimbabwe	10 August 2005
Mr. Tendai	GMB, Harare	15 June 2005
Ms. Nyowani	GMB, Seke	16 June 2005

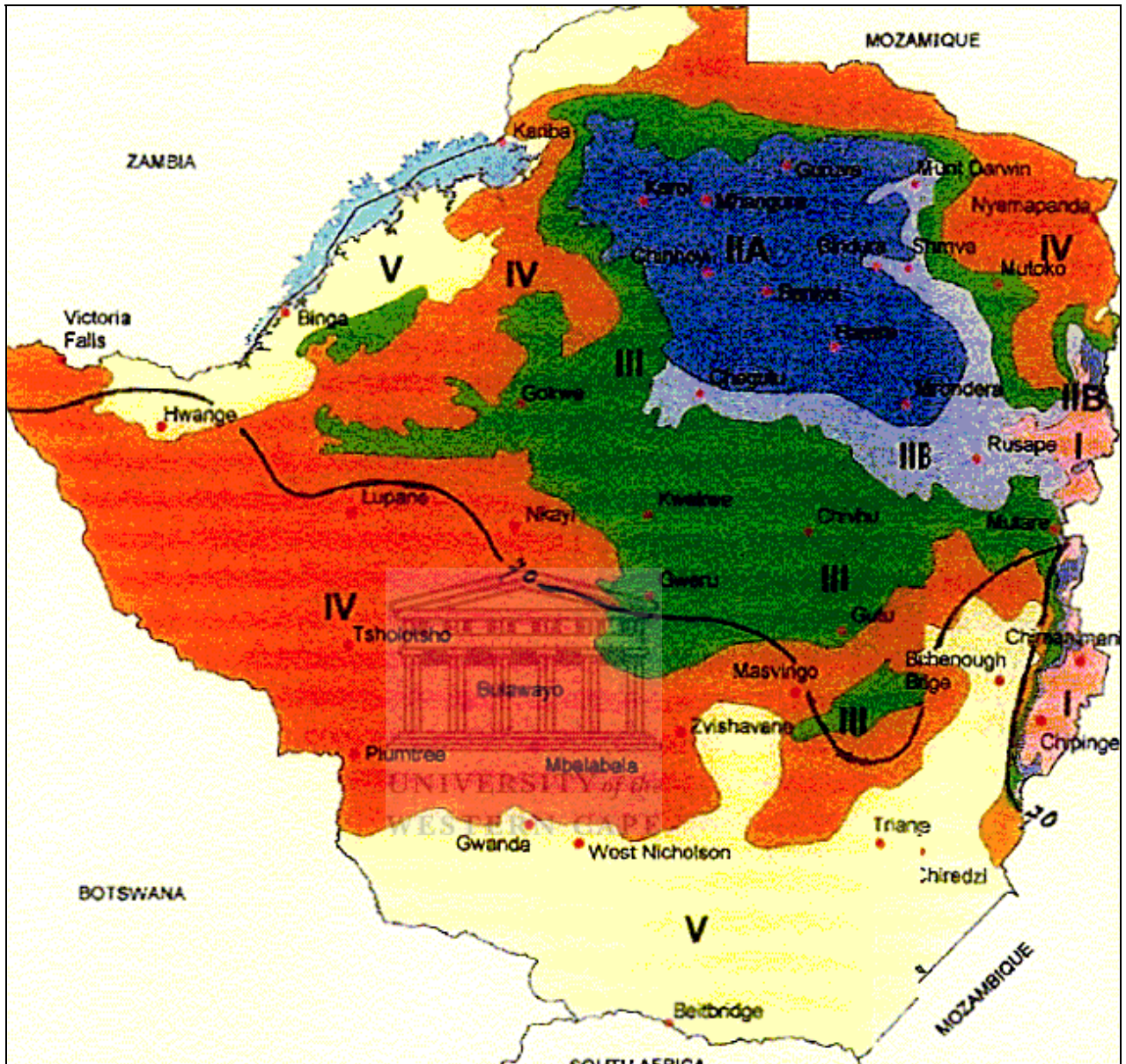


Mr. Munaki	GMB, Goromonzi	10 July 2005

**Annex 3: Interview schedule for Household Interviews and Politicians**

Mr. Muyengwa	Village Head, Seke	
Mr. Chinyoka*	MDC Party coordinator, Seke	11 July 2005
Mr. Bishop	MDC Councillor, Seke	11 July, 2005
Mr. Mazubhe	MDC Party Coordinator, Goromonzi	14 July 2005
Mr Chitate	ZANU-PF, Youth Leader, Goromonzi	14 July 2005
Mr. Matara	ZANU-PF Youth Leader, Goromonzi	14 July 2005
Mr. Zimbiru	Village head, Goromonzi	16 July 2005
Mr. Kombe	ZANU-PF Councillor, Goromonzi	18 June 2005
Mrs. Takaedza	Household head, Goromonzi	10 July 2005
Mrs. Shamiso	Household Head, Goromonzi	10 July 2005
Mr. Mashiri	Household Head, Goromonzi	10 July 2005
Ms. Masawi	Household Head, Goromonzi	10 July 2005
Ms. Machadu.	Household Head, Goromonzi	10 July 2005
Mr. Dema	Household Head, Seke	21 June 2005

Annex 4: Map of Zimbabwe: Agro-ecological zones.<sup>253</sup>



<sup>253</sup> Zimbabwe Agriculture Extension services, surveyor General, 1998:  
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